

The San Juan Rodworks Fryingpan 8'6" 4 weight review:

Because some of you out there might not have seen the review on The San Juan Rodworks Gunnison 9' 5 weight review, I am going to do a little bit of a rehash on the company's Information.

San Juan Rodworks offers two 4-piece fly rod series. The "Gunnison" which is a fast to medium fast action rod ranging from a 6'6" 2 weight to a 9' 8 weight, and the "Frying Pan" which is a medium or moderate action rod ranging from a 7'6" 3 weight to a 9' 8 weight. All rods come with an extra tip section. The price, \$225.00

Since this is an online company, they offer free priority shipping and a risk free 30 day try it and if you don't like it, send it back for a full refund policy. They actually send you a return shipping label. They have a no hassle lifetime warranty which **doesn't** include sending the entire rod back to the company. They will simply send the replacement section to you for a \$26.00 shipping and handling fee, and ships the next business day. If the problem is due to a manufactures defect, there is no charge for replacement at all.

The San Juan Rodworks Fryingpan 8'6" 4 weight 4 piece Fly Rod

Gary Davis with San Juan Rodworks asked me if I could review a model of the Frying Pan series and I said I would like to. He said, "pick a model and we'll get it to you". I choose the 864-4 model because moderate action rods are known for their ability to present a dry fly with finesse and in my book, an 8'6" 4 weight is the consummate dry fly rod. The rod arrived as usual a few days after our conversation. I removed the rod from its nicely embroidered cordura covered PVC rod tube and I gave the rod a thorough inspection in which I found that there were several differences between the respective rod series. The Fryingpan rod has a more classic look to it than the techier Gunnison rods, with a different style of anodized aluminum hardware on the reel seat and the burl wood insert is not channeled like the Gunnison reel seat. It is a standard round insert like you would find on almost any fly rod on the market. It has a quality cork grip and the matte black blank has black thread wraps with red metallic accents making the rod a real eye catcher. The rod is equipped with gun metal colored anodized ceramic stripping guides, light wire snake guides, tip top and hook keeper. The ferrule connections have alignment dots for ease of assembly. And like all San Juan Rodworks rods, the New Mexico Red Sun emblem is emblazoned on the handle section along with model name, length and line designation.

Testing the rod: Casting and Accuracy

As always, I took the rod to the casting green (a park near my house) with a bag full of reels each loaded with different 4 weight fly lines. As I have said many times, the right fly line is very important as it determines the true potential of your fly rod. Because this series of rods are designed as a moderate or medium action, I chose lines that I knew would or should be more of a compliment to that rod action. The lines I used were the Scientific Anglers Infinity and Trout taper, the Winston Energy and RIO's Perception, Technical Trout, and Gold fly lines. One thing to understand is that this is a trout rod, designed to fish trout fishing distances. So, fifteen to fifty feet is your target window for this particular rod or most 4 weights for that matter. There is always the exception but this rod is happily a trout rod. I

started out with what I would figure to be the heavy hitter line and discovered that this rod has an action that is more borderline medium fast action than a true moderate action. This is probably due to its shorter than 9' length. Anyway, the first test line was a Scientific Angler Infinity which is a half line weight heavy. The casts were smooth, accuracy was excellent. You could definitely feel the rod load. The next line was the RIO Gold. The Gold line is not quite a half line heavy but I got pretty much the same result as the Infinity. And these lines were great for shooting distance. Oops, my bad about the trout distance thing. The one issue with these two lines is that they made the rod feel a bit heavy in the hand. I switched to truer 4 weight lines. The first was the RIO Perception line which is slightly heavier than a standard 4 weight line, but has a shorter standard weight forward head. The casts were smooth and accurate with plenty of feel. The line really loaded the rod but the heavy in the hand thing went away. Then on to the RIO Technical Trout line. Casting with this line was a pleasure but due to the long front taper, actually made the line not that good for shorter casts. It was great for distance but not very good for casting a #20 Parachute Adams at a distance you could actually see the fly on the water. Then to the R. L. Winston Energy line. That was the sweet spot. The Energy line is manufactured by Scientific Anglers for the R. L. Winston Rod company to their specifications. It was nothing like any of the other lines that I casted. It was like casting air. The rod loved the line. Performance was smoother than any of the other lines. The rod felt feather light, and the line would do whatever this caster asked. Slow casting stroke or fast, the delivery was the same. Right on target at all distances tested. The Scientific Anglers Trout taper mirrored the performance of the Energy line. In closing on this part of the review, if you are into fishing alpine lakes from shore, Go with the RIO Perception or Technical Trout lines. If you are into fishing what this rod was intended for, smaller to medium size rivers and spring creeks, go with the SA Mastery or Amplitude Trout taper or Energy lines.

Fishing:

On arrival at the Platte River camp ground on the South Platte River. I Set the rod up with what this rod should be set up for, Dry Fly fishing. I set the rod up with a Ross Colorado LT 4/5 reel, lined with an Energy WF4F line and a long leader. Naturally the Frypan presented small dry flies with finesse and accuracy. But I wanted to see if the rod could be a whatever is necessary tool for wade dry fly fishing. I tied on one of my favorite searching patterns, a #10 Hippie Stomper with a #18 bead head PMD dropper. The larger rig cast just as well as it did with the smaller dry flies. The rod is smooth, responsive and accurate, mending was effortless, both on the water and in the air. At no time did I feel that I had to push this rod to do anything, it just performed. This rod is another winner from San Juan Rodworks.

Closing:

When we are talking about rods at this price point, usually there is an expectation of either good or poor materials, workmanship, and most importantly performance. This rod is way better than good on all counts. Its looks, attention to detail and its performance far surpasses the price tag. And It was a pleasure to fish. This rod would be at home on the Rio Penasco or San Miguel just as it would be on the Gallatin.

For More information, visit www.sanjuanrodworks.com