

The San Juan Rodworks Gunnison 905-4 review:

On the morning of June 9, 2021, I was going through some of my favorite YouTube channels and checked out Mid Current which showcases new fly fishing gear. I am always on the lookout for new and innovative products. Scott with Mid Current was showcasing a line of fly rods, from a new company located in New Mexico, The San Juan Rodworks. Since the San Juan River tailwater flowing out of Navajo Dam is one of my favorite rivers in the whole world, it piqued my interest. I watched the entire video and then went on to the website to check out what this new company had to offer.

San Juan Rodworks offers two 4-piece 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 manufacturer's defect, there is no charge for replacement at all. So, I contacted the company via email and conversed with Gary Davis of San Juan Rodworks. I had several questions concerning fly line recommendations for two Gunnison series rods. He was very helpful and during our back and forth I ordered two rods, the 9' 5 weight and the 6'6" 2 weight. Keep in mind, I ordered the rods on the 9th of June and on the 11th of June the rods were delivered to my house.

The San Juan Rodworks Gunnison 905-4

This review is on the 9' 5 weight Gunnison rod, I will be doing another on the 2 weight very soon.

When the rods arrived, I removed them from their nicely embroidered cordura covered PVC rod tubes and gave them a thorough inspection. The rods are nicely appointed with an anodized aluminum hardware and burl wood insert reel seat, a quality cork grip, dark matte grey blank with black thread wraps and silver metallic accents. Gun metal anodized ceramic stripping guide, single foot guides, tip top and hook keeper. The line weight and length designation are inscribed on every section along with alignment dots for ease of assembly. The New Mexico Red Sun emblem is emblazoned on the handle section along with model name and length and line designation. Lots of attention to detail. In short, a very good looking rod.

Testing the rod: Casting and Accuracy

I took the rod to the casting green (a park near my house) with a bag full of reels each loaded with a different 5 weight fly line. The right fly line is very important as it determines the total potential of your fly rod. I started off with two heavy hitters, The RIO Grand and the RIO Mainstream. The Gunnison didn't really like these two lines even though you could attain serious distance with them. The cast felt heavy and accuracy went out the window. Then I went the other way and put a lighter taper line to see how

this rod would behave. A Scientific Anglers Trout taper. The cast improved immensely. It was accurate at short to medium distance but not an all around. I imagine that this line would be perfect for the Frying Pan Series rods. Then I went with Gary Davis' recommendation and put on the old reliable, the RIO Gold. Instantly everything was right with the world. The rod sang. Gentle presentation? Of course. Accuracy? Just say where. Distance? 50', 60', 70' tell me when to stop. It is such a great line and brings the best out of most any action fly rod. But I can't give it all the accolades, the Scientific Anglers Amplitude Infinity Smooth line did just a well. This rod is definitely medium fast action and it is a pleasure to cast, Great feel, light in the hand, accurate, powerful and responsive. It casts like rods costing hundreds of dollars more.

Fishing:

I arrived at the Deckers stretch of the South Platte River and tried the rod out in an all day real fishing situation. I set the rod up with a Waterworks Lamson Remix 5+ reel, lined with a SA Amplitude Infinity WF5F line. Since the flows were up, had a banner day bringing several fish to net. The Gunnison threw weighted nymph rigs both short line or long line with no issue. It cast a #8 Chubby with a bead head dropper into a breeze without blinking and it threw a #6 tungsten bead Woolly Bugger with confidence. All through the day, I had to keep reminding myself that I was fishing with a \$225.00 fly rod. Because it didn't feel or act like that kind of rod. It did everything so well, casting, mending, great 6x tippet protection, very light in the hand, and no fatigue at the end of the day. It's a lot of fun to fish with. I was very impressed.

Closing:

There are several manufactures who build rods at this \$200.00 to \$300.00 price point. I have cast and fished with a number of them. The San Juan Rodworks Gunnison is up at the top of the list for quality, attention to detail and just plain fishability. I would highly recommend this company to beginning anglers starting out with the right stuff or intermediate anglers seeking to add more rods to their quiver or improve on their existing rods. With their business model being what it is, it's really hard to see where you can go wrong purchasing a rod from San Juan Rodworks. For More information, visit www.sanjuanrodworks.com

Alan Reyes
Former Guide and Fly Fishing and Tying Instructor