

Introducing Peak Bamboo

*It is the distinct pleasure of **The Planing Form** to introduce a new resource to the split cane rod making community. Russ Gooding of Golden Witch and Arcane Components, is continuing his service to the bamboo rod makers by offering Tonkin Cane starting in 2017.

Peak Bamboo is a new direct importer of Tonkin Cane, warehousing in two locations within Lancaster County, PA, and shipping worldwide. Two loads of bamboo are being brought into port from the 2016 harvest with the first arriving this December and the second during the first quarter of 2017. Russ Gooding, founding partner of PEAK Bamboo, will personally sort and grade the first thousand culms prior to sales that will start in early 2017. Pre-orders are already being taken through the Golden Witch website with no upfront cost or obligation. Once the bamboo arrives and the pre-orders are filled, additional bamboo will be made available as a regular catalog item on the Golden Witch website.

Close friends Russ Gooding and Matt West, along with other investors founded Peak in early 2016. Russ will initially handle sales of high-graded culms, bamboo sample packs, and sealed bales through Golden Witch. Russ is looking forward to selling bamboo again after a several year hiatus. Russ's previous foray into selling bamboo occurred following his introduction to Andy Royer by Darryl L. Whitehead. Russ partnered with Andy's firm, The Bamboo Broker, to offer low volume, high-graded culms to Golden Witch clients. Now, importing directly, he'll be adding high volume sales as well. Matt West, the long-time rodmaker behind *West Bamboo*, and the graphic artist who operates *Groove180*, has taken the reins as Director of Marketing for Peak. Matt, who has worked with Russ on Golden Witch and Arcane Component Works since 2003, designed the Peak Bamboo logo. You'll soon see the Peak logo on coffee mugs and T-shirts, as well as the stickers in this issue of **The Planing Form**. Matt, was a good friend of Andy Royer's and the two spent time backpacking and travelling to football games together. Matt's most notable design project with Andy was the *Trout Grass* documentary.

Of the two East Coast Peak Bamboo warehouses, the one you'll want to visit when in the area is called Sycamore Mill in Ephrata, PA. It's an old millhouse, originally built in 1772, and rebuilt in the late 1800's after a fire. Meticulously maintained, and backed by a 7.5 acre field, bordered by a small, stocked trout stream, Sycamore Mill is the ideal location for a bamboo importer. With space galore, Russ has spent months refinishing several vintage benches, all with cast-iron legs, that will be used to split, saw, and package the high-graded culms. He has also been busy refurbishing nearly a dozen industrial age stools and chairs that will be available for visiting rodmakers. Once Sycamore Mill opens, Russ will host "Cane and Conversations" one Saturday morning each month. The coffee will be on...and the Peak Bamboo coffee mugs waiting.

As rod makers, we are always concerned with the quality of the cane we work with. So, the question that I am sure you are thinking about is "What can I expect in terms of bamboo quality from Peak Bamboo?" While Russ admits that nothing is certain until the bamboo arrives and he digs into the first hundred bales, the expectation is high. He says, "The Peak team in China will be grading the culms three times before they earn a place within the containers headed for America. One of Russ' goals with this project has been to largely, if not completely, eliminate the B and A- culms. He would prefer to import material that will be graded as A and A+ Tonkin and when bamboo is such a small portion of the expense of making a fine bamboo rod, why use anything but the best available? From an environmental perspective, Russ does not want to burn the fuel, or assume all the other expenses associated with importing cane, unless it's top notch. The material may be more expensive, but Peak's goal is that "every culm will be worthy of a rodmaker's efforts."

Three words define Peak Bamboo: Powerful; Resilient; Sustainable. Rodmakers already know that bamboo is powerful, resilient, and durable. In addition, bamboo is a renewable resource and is the only truly sustainable material from which fishing rods are currently, and regularly, crafted. As the fellows at Peak Bamboo note, "Environmentally conscious anglers should fish bamboo; fish would!"