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Doing the Continental

Sonik has stamped its name on Britain's beaches with its SK3 and SK4 rods – now the company offers us the longer options, the 14, 15 and 16ft Continentals designed to present delicate baits at long range. PAUL FENECH reports...



The week leading up to my taking Sonik's new range of three-piece Continental rods out for a test drive, the smoothhounds had arrived in packs on the Lincolnshire coast. A quick phone call to Sonik's operations director and fellow North East angler Tony Anderson, and the date was set to put the rods through their paces.

We both thought that catching smoothhounds from the beach would give us a great indication of how the rods would perform. But the weather gods were to turn against us as the wind swung from a gentle south-westerly to a blustery, biting north-easterly.

We poked our heads out over the promenade at Sutton-on-Sea, only to be greeted with pounding surf crashing up the beach.

"That's the smoothhounds knocked on the head," I thought, but after a reassuring smile from

Tony we stepped on to the beach to at least have a go. It felt more like mid-December than early July when I fitted together the three rods. All are in three sections. They come in 14ft, 15ft and 16ft lengths and are ringed for fixed-spool reels. My reel was loaded with 20lb braid and a tapered leader, so I decided to go for the 16-footer first.

The pleasing thing for me is Sonik's adjustable screw winch fitting. I have slightly long arms, so I was able to fix the reel in the 'up' position perfectly. After a couple of gentle swings to get the feel of the outfit, it was time to push this rod a little harder.

A big overhead thump sent my sinker way out over the waves, but it felt as if I had only given the rod a gentle flick. Now it was time for a full pendulum workout. A big out swing and huge flat arc saw me pull into the force that the 5oz sinker was creating. The rod arched and came through sweetly, and when I thumped it hard skywards, the sinker sailed away at high speed.

"With the wind behind me I could easily have doubled the distance I was hitting"

The thin braid was obviously cutting through the northerly gale, and there was no wobble at all when I watched the rod tip pointing to the slate grey sky.

With a wind behind me I could have easily doubled the distance I was hitting. Would it work in a fishing situation, though?

I attached a three-hook flapper rig loaded with small peeler baits and wound up a strong, powerful cast. Out it went with ease and dropped my baits well beyond the heavy surf.

Five minutes later the rod began to arch over, not from a fish but from the huge amount of weed that had caused the spikes on the sinker to spring out.

This was good really, because it is not often you get to test a rod in difficult conditions. As I pumped the rod against the obvious weed monster, it coped with ease. There was no creaking or complaining from it at all.

The other models

With the weather worsening, but before we called it a day, I still had time to try the 14ft and 15ft Continental versions.

These both performed equally as well as the longest rod, but I preferred the 16ft version of these three-piece outfits.

For those who like the cosmetics of rods, all these come in a well-finished, high-gloss metallic grey with a carbon weave and textured paint at each joint.

They are fitted with quality rings that are suitable for use with braided lines and positioned for use with a fixed-spool reel. These rings have a black and blue metallic finish.

A sliding lock screw winch fitting can be positioned anywhere along the Japanese shrink tube on the butt section, while the tip has high visibility for spotting bites in darkness.

Technical Information

PRICE: £179.99, £189.99 and £199.99

SECTIONS: Three

LENGTH: 14ft, 15ft and 16ft

GUIDES: Top-quality, ringed for fixed-spool

RATING: 3-5oz for 14ft and 15ft, 4-6oz for 16ft

ROD BAG: Yes

REDUCER: No

There's a choice of three rod lengths

Sliding lock screw winch fittings

All guides are lined and of high quality

Robust tip rings and a high-viz paint job

Paul's verdict

Although the weather was against me, all three rods performed well and I liked the effortless casting that saw the rod punching a sinker a long way. I reckon the butt section still had a lot of power in reserve if I really needed to get into it, but at the same time it will deliver delicate baits with no problem at all. I preferred the 16ft model, simply because I like longer rods. Overall, it was a superb performance from these lightweight three-piece outfits from Sonik.

Where to get them

For more information or to find your nearest stockist, contact Sonik Sports Ltd, Riverside Business Park, Coniston Court, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 4RP, tel: 0845 3076262. Web: www.soniksports.com

sk Continental POWER & FINESSE

NEW for September 2009, the SK Continental fixed spool rods are perfect for presenting baits when conditions demand a delicate approach. When fish are feeding at short range in the surf or way beyond the breakers, these rods have the finesse and reserves of power to put your baits where it counts.

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