

# TACKLE BAG

## CTS Affinity X 590-4 9ft 4pce

This is the second time a CTS rod/blank has featured here. This was described as a fast action blank and I didn't really get a lot more information. What arrived is a custom build using a CTS Affinity X blank, Recoil titanium alloy snakes, a very pleasing grip, finished with an attractive reel seal with a cork spacer.

The build is simple: high quality varnish work, short whippings, neatly varnished. The grip is firm and is turned from very good cork. I can't tell if this grip was turned from individual cork shives or a high quality pre-made grip has been custom turned. Either way, this falls into my hand and actually seems to make a difference, slightly more shape, and a little fatter than the grips on some rods I use.

Threaded with a familiar #5 line the CTS had me convinced very quickly – this is a top-class rod. The action is fast and refined, nothing brutish or cannon-like. This allows me real authority over the line, a sense of precision, the fly lands just ... there! Make a little roll and the D is more a V, recovery is crisp and to a stop. Look for distance overhead and I run out of steam long before the rod.

CTS have struck a fine balance; I found myself very happy casting a long line and equally comfortable casting short, an unusual combination. Casting any rod there is a delay: I move the grip, the rod bends against the inertia of line and rod, and straightens or recovers. All else being equal (and it rarely is) the stiffer the rod, the shorter that delay and that is what, if the rod is light and if the caster is comfortable with that timing, gives relatively stiff rods their sense of precision. (Stiff heavy rods tend to feel club-like and may suffer from a little tip-bounce.) This CTX blank is very much in that current wave of rods made light using modern carbon fibre composites, matched by a build philosophy which uses light wire snakes, the minimum thread and varnish, adding as little mass especially in the build as possible, especially in the tip section.

The 5-weight Affinity X can handle a #6 line, but I far prefer it with a #5. The stiffness and action are both towards the higher end of the scale for a 5-weight, not extreme by current standards but high. All aspects of this rod are very much to my taste, makes casting and fishing a real pleasure.

**Stiffness:** 135g  
**Action angle:** 72  
**Sections:** 4  
**Weight:** 76.4g (/oz)  
**Rings:** One lined butt ring, Recoil snakes  
**Handle:** Half-wells  
**Reel seat:** Metal with cork spacer  
**Fighting butt:** Yes  
**Blank:** Matt grey  
**Thread:** Claret  
**Build quality:** High  
**Price:** CTS Blank \$275. Custom build add approx. €135 or 1,000 Danish Kroner  
**From:** Ussing and Bech (Mikkel Ussing Christensen and Claus Bech-Petersen). Bavnevang 15, 1480 Sorø, Denmark – CVR: 28 17 99 79 (Email: mail@ussingbech.dk, web: www.ussingbech.dk/UK.html)

