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TROUT FISHER

New Zealand's dedicated trout fishing magazine



PICTURE PERFECT
BETTER THAN CHRISTMAS
"TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER!"
CHRISTCHURCH CITY RIVER FISHING

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Here

Showdown!

(Acrylic On Canvas by Brian Hester hookedflyco.com)

Cover

More than a handful

(Andrew Harding)



Leader length is crucial in presentations like this . . .

"TAKE ME TO YOUR

By Andrew Harding





LEADER!"



The tapered monofilament leader is arguably the biggest development in fly fishing. Take Me To Your Leader PT2

Rolling Your Own

By Zane Mirfin

Monofilament was a revelation after WWII. A relatively inexpensive, high-strength material, it could be extruded in multiple extended lengths and diameters. Qualities that silkworm gut could never provide for anglers.

One of the early adopters and pioneers of nylon tapered leaders was Charles Ritz (1891 – 1976) of Ritz Hotel fame, whose classic leader taper formula of 60% butt section / 20% forward taper / 20% terminal diameter and tippet is still widely used today. Ritz in *A Fly Fisher's Life* (1959) explained that a leader should "provide complete harmony with the fly line and the rod so that it faithfully transmits the caster's art through its tapers to the fly".

In aspiring to match that philosophy we can now buy complete fly fishing tapered leaders, adapt them, or create our own 'personalised' tapers as Ritz did.

WHY TIE YOUR OWN LEADERS?

Maybe I'm a tightwad with gorse in my pockets but guide wages have never been thrilling ("a passport to struggle-street" as the late Simon Dickie, Olympic gold medallist, guide, and raconteur once noted) and every time you can save a dollar is a good thing. Most of the time though tying leaders is a convenience issue, because you can construct something that will work, whenever, wherever, whatever. Over the years the number of times that well-heeled punters have turned up with the latest brand-new rods, reels, waders and other gear, but with no leaders or tippet has been puzzling. Luckily with a few spools of Maxima nylon and a can-do attitude, it's amazing what you can achieve. But most of all I like tying my own leaders because they can work better; you can solve angling problems, create whatever you require; and it all adds to the artfulness and satisfaction of fly fishing – much like fly tying does.

There are always arguments against home tied leaders (and I've heard most of them over the years): "They land heavily on the water, the knots bounce apart, they tangle easily, too many knots through the rod guides, they catch weed, I can't be bothered". On the other side of the debate, I've found home tied leaders to be robust, good knots will never let you down,

