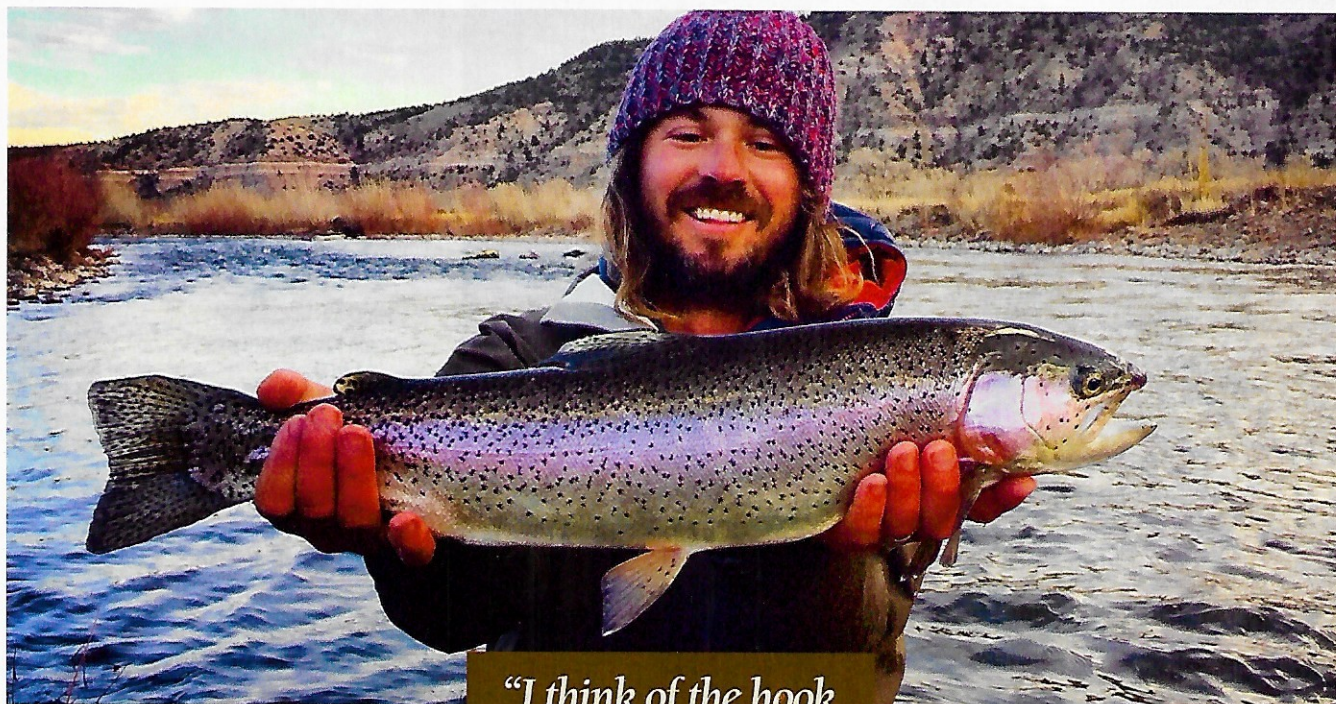


Shane Parker-Kast:

FLY TIER TURNED ARTIST TURNED FLY TIER



I became hooked on fly tying when I was in the fifth grade. Not to retell the entire story—this article isn't about me—but I remember it clearly. I always thought that was pretty cool—to begin making flies at such an early age—and then I spoke with Shane Parker-Kast; he beat me to the vise by several years.

"I started tying flies when I was about five years old," Shane said in a recent interview. "That was in my dad's basement, and I used an actual wood vise for my tying vise. We were living in Maine at the time. I wasn't making really traditional flies, but flies he could use as jigs for mackerel fishing. I've had fly tying in my blood since I was a little kid, but not just for trout."

When was the first time you went fly fishing? I wondered.

"The first time I ever went fly fishing was with my cousins on New Brunswick's Miramichi River. I was about seven

"I think of the hook as a blank canvas, and the materials are the paint. The only difference is that you end up with a fly you can take fishing."

years old, so I guess I started kind of big. I didn't know how to cast or set the hook, but there I was, fishing for Atlantic salmon. Fast-forward to today: I'm thirty-six, I'm a professional guide, and now I know how to tie a knot!"

In the Family Blood

Shane's entire family seems bitten by the fly fishing bug. His father, Noah, runs

Land of Enchantment Guides, based in Velarde, New Mexico. Even Shane's grandfather was an avid fly fisherman.

"My grandfather lived in Ireland, and we went there when he died. He was a big fly fisherman, and we brought his tackle back to Maine. It contained old English-style flies. I used his gear to catch little brown trout on our local rivers."

Shane's family moved to New Mexico about 18 years ago, and his passion for fly fishing and tying grew.

"I went to college in California to study art and got a degree in glass casting. Everywhere I went, however, I took fly tying materials with me. I discovered steelhead while living in California; I fished for them on the Trinity and other rivers. I got obsessed with catching steelhead."

Shane the Artist-Fly Tier

Even though he spends a great deal of



Bug Nugget

Hook: Firehole 516 jig hook, size 6.

Eyes: Small lead dumbbell.

Thread: Orange 6/0 (140 denier).

Abdomen: Peacock herl.

Thorax: Ice Dub, UV black.

Legs: Rubber legs.

Wing: Krystal Flash, orange; MFC Winder
Wing coated with UV adhesive.

Hot spot: Gulf Ambulance, fluorescent
orange.



High Roller

Hook: Klinkhammer-style hook, sizes
14 to 8.

Thread: Black 8/0 (70 denier).

Abdomen: MFC Foam Mayfly.

Thorax: Olive dry fly dubbing.

Wing: Black cul de canard, Hareline
No-Fray Winging Material (gray),
and natural elk hair.

Hackle: Grizzly and tan.



Low Rider

Hook: Klinkhammer-style hook, size 8.

Thread: Black 8/0 (70 denier).

Abdomen: MFC Foam Mayfly.

Thorax: Dry fly dubbing in your choice
of color.

Wing: Black cul de canard and Hareline
No-Fray Winging Material, gray.

Post: White Antron.

Hackle: Grizzly and tan.

One-Hitter

Hook: Klinkhammer-style hook, sizes 14 to 8.

Bead: Tungsten in your choice of color.

Thread: Black 8/0 (70 denier).

Weight: Nontoxic wire.

Tail: J:Son Tails.

Abdomen: Brown peacock herl.

Back and wing case: Thin Skin in your choice of color of color.

Rib: Copper wire.

Thorax: Ice Dub, UV purple.

Legs: J:Son Nymph Legs.



Mr. Ferguson

Hook: Jig hook, sizes 10 to 6.

Thread: Black 6/0 (140 denier).

Bead: Tungsten slotted bead, size to fit the hook.

Weight: Nontoxic wire.

Body: Chenille in your choice of color.

Tail, antennae, and legs: Sexi-Floss or rubber legs in your choice of color.



Summer Slammer

Hook: Jig Hook, size 24.

Bead: Slotted tungsten bead.

Thread: Black 10/0.

Tail: Microfibbets, gray.

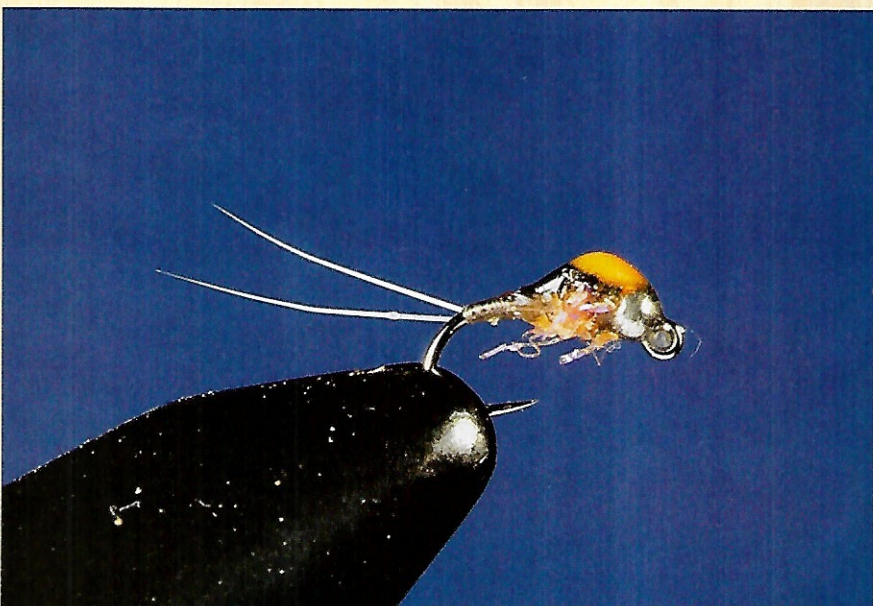
Abdomen: Size 14/0 Veevus thread, gray.

Thorax: Ice Dub, UV tan.

Wing case: Magic Gulff, black.

Hot spot: Gulff Ambulance, hot fluorescent pink.

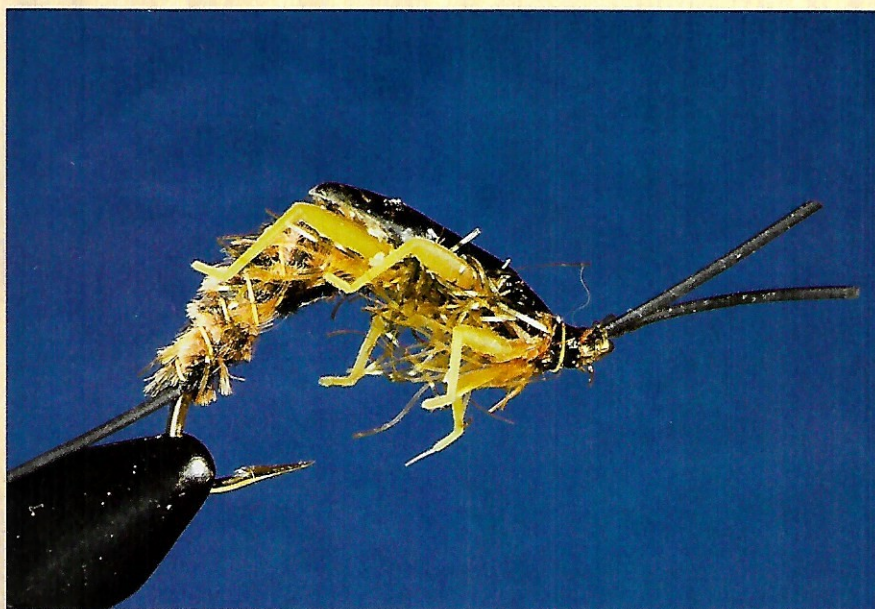
Note: Coat the entire body with a clear UV resin.





Killa Cadi

Hook: Regular wet fly hook, sizes 14 to 8.
 Bead: Tungsten bead.
 Weight: Nontoxic wire.
 Thread: Size 8/0 (70 denier).
 Tail: Antron or Z-Lon.
 Abdomen: The butt ends of the tail fibers, split with wrapped dubbing to create a segmented body.
 Thorax: Ice Dub UV.
 Collar: Cul de canard wrapped as a hackle.
 Wing: Krystal Flash.
 Note: Tie the Killa Cadi in your choice of colors.



Super Size Stone

Hook: Mustad 37160-BR, sizes 10 to 4.
 Thread: Black 6/0 (140 denier).
 Weight: Nontoxic wire.
 Tail: Rubber legs.
 Abdomen: Chenille.
 Rib: Wire.
 Thorax: Polar Chenille.
 Legs: J:Son Stonefly Legs.
 Wing case: Thin Skin coated with UV adhesive.
 Note: Dress this pattern in your choice of colors that imitate a real stonefly nymph.



Ichabod

Hook: Umpqua U555 Jig, size 8.
 Bead: MFC Tungsten Lucent Jig Bead, rainbow.
 Additional weight: Nontoxic wire.
 Thread: Cream 8/0 (70 denier).
 Tail: Z-Lon, tan.
 Abdomen: Kiley's Nymph Skin, natural.
 Coat the abdomen with thin UV adhesive.
 Thorax: MFC UV Frog's Hair, tan.
 Wing: Small rubber legs, natural cul de canard, and pearl Krystal Flash.

time on the water—and is a father to eight-month-old twin daughters—Shane continues thinking of himself as an artist. The difference, he says, is that his creativity has taken a more utilitarian bent.

“Fly fishing and tying have always gone along with my art. I think of tying as both an art and a craft. The hook is a blank canvas, and the materials are the paint. The only difference is that I end up with a fly I can take fishing.”

We turned our attention to some of Shane’s artwork: his flies. He sent a batch of patterns ranging from simple attractors to complicated imitations. His forgery of a cicada is especially interesting and unusual: it is designed to sink. I asked Shane if it really catches fish.

“That fly just crushes them! We fish the Chama River, and the surrounding area has a big cicada emergence. You can hardly catch a fish using a dry fly; the water is still running high and is off-color. I don’t remember how it happened—maybe a floating imitation simply sank and a trout grabbed it—but I went home that evening and tied some weighted cicada patterns. The next day I nymph-fished that same stretch of water and the trout hammered those flies.

“Real cicadas are heavy and they sink when they land on the water,” Shane continued. “The trout key in to the cicadas after they sink. That lasts for only about two weeks, but when it is happening, the Bug Nugget outfishes other flies by about ten to one.”

In addition to the Bug Nugget, Shane included some other realistic flies designed for real-world fishing. To create these designs, he uses ingredients offered by companies such as the Swedish outfit J:Son.

“Yes, I like J:Son materials very much, and I really like Gulff resins.”

I hadn’t heard of Gulff products until I read the pattern recipes accompanying Shane’s flies. I turned to Google to learn more about Gulff.

“Gulff resins have changed the whole game of fly tying for me,” Shane said. “A lot of resins are clear, but Gulff offers a range of colors. I look at them as paints for tying flies. That’s why I’m so stoked on them.”

Don’t be misled into thinking that Shane is just playing around with different materials and colors to come up with his flies. He puts considerable thought into his patterns, as when he selects ingredients that might imitate the exoskeleton of an insect.

“We put flashbacks on a lot of flies,” he said. “I think this mimics the luminosity of an insect’s exoskeleton. A lot of resins and materials refract light and create the appearance of an exoskeleton. I think that is very important.”

Guiding Beyond the Name-brand Rivers

Although he spends considerable time showing clients the wonders of well-known rivers such as the San Juan, Shane and the crew at Land of Enchantment Guides lead trips to a wide variety of waters in Northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. Shane has developed patterns to meet the requirements of these streams and rivers. His pattern called Summer Slammer is a good example.

“We use a lot of small flies when fishing the San Juan. I sent a size twenty-four, but we also fish with size twenty-six flies. I tie those on jig hooks because the wire seems a little stouter and doesn’t bend out as eas-



Sean and a pal hoist a great trout. We bet that young angler is hooked for life!

ily. That type of hook lets you apply a little more torque when fighting bigger fish.

“I also use those small flies for fishing high alpine streams. They work especially well as droppers. I am obsessed with tying and take as much interest in a size twenty-four midge as I do a big Intruder designed for catching steelhead.”

There’s no denying it: COVID-19 has taken a toll on guiding businesses. Today, a lot of anglers are fishing closer to home and don’t need the services of a guide, and how do you maintain proper social distancing in a drift boat? I asked Shane what it was like guiding pre-COVID.

“I normally guided between one hundred thirty and one hundred sixty days a year. In the summer here in New Mexico, I might have guided twenty days straight, but we have quality fishing throughout the year. Some rivers actually fish well during the winter, and others are better in the summer. It all has to do with elevation and sunlight; in the winter, those alpine streams might be under ten feet of snow! We go to where we think we’ll find the best fishing rather than fishing the same river every day. We do a bit more driving to get to those places, but we also catch more trout.”

How has COVID-19 affected your guiding?

“You bet things are slower than normal, and it has definitely changed our guiding protocol,” Shane admitted, “and it seems like new government health guidelines come out every month. We’re doing what we can to keep our guides and clients safe. It seems like almost all our clients are so thrilled to be out and fishing that they are happy to wear masks. Some aren’t so happy about it, but it is what it is: you try to keep everybody safe and happy.

“We actually bought eight hundred Buff face bands. We give each client a free Buff. ‘If you don’t want to wear a mask, or you forgot your mask, here’s a Buff.’ It’s just our way of showing people that we care.”

To reach out to Shane Parker-Kast at Land of Enchantment Guides, go to loefly-fishing.com. David Klausmeyer is the editor of this magazine.