

▶ New & Notable

Aspen Reels

The Aspen RE-1057 (\$180) is a new American-made reel manufactured by the Barrel Service Company in San Marcos, California. Two things set the reel apart: First, the single-piece frame and foot are machined together from 4-inch 6061 aluminum bar stock. Unlike most reels where the foot is machined separately and screwed to the reel frame, the frame and foot are all one continuous piece. This machining process is more time-consuming, but it results in a stronger, better-looking reel with fewer parts.

The reel hub and drag are built around a hollow center shaft made of a new (for the fly-fishing world) aluminum manufactured by Kaiser Aluminum in Foothills Ranch, California. The 7068 alloy, marketed as “ordnance-grade” aluminum by the manufacturer, is—according a report by the Army Research Laboratory at Aberdeen, Maryland—“the strongest aluminum commercially produced” and has 220 percent more tensile strength than the 6061 alloy used in the frame and spool of the same reel, and by all other reel manufacturers we’re aware of. Why do you need a center shaft that strong in a trout reel? You don’t, but it’s nice to know the thing is literally bombproof. The bearing-supported spool spins smoothly against Teflon pads through a low range of tension perfect for light tippets and dry-fly fishing.

The 3-inch-diameter reel is supposed to be for 5- to 7-weight lines, but it’s probably better for 4- or 5-weight trout lines and about 125 yards of 30-pound-test Dacron backing. For more information see aspenreels.com.

