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Subject: : Gear Talk

Topic: : Which Lines to Buy?

Re: Which Lines to Buy?

Author: : pcray1231

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URL:

Personally, it's not so much about WHERE it's made, but by whom.

It may not be entirely accurate, but I kind of see 3 tiers. It's not so much about where it's made, but the makeup of the company.

Tier 1: Company ABC has an R&D department which designs reels. The designers get paid by company ABC. The reels are then physically made in a factory owned by company ABC, with employees who sign checks from company ABC. They machine their own bars. They cut their own cork, etc. And it is branded a company ABC reel. They don't "have" a manufacturer. They ARE a manufacturer.

Tier 2: Company DEF designed the reel with their own R&D people. But they use multiple subcontractors. So, instead of machining their own aluminum, they buy an aluminum bar and send it to a machinist to machine to their specifications. They do the same with a drag system and all the sub-parts. All the parts get shipped to them, and they do final assembly.

Tier 3: Company GHI takes a mass produced generic reel, or even buys them from the above companies. Rebrands them, and sells them. i.e. they do not make reels. They sell reels. They are a middle man. They may have options, i.e. can buy the generic reel with or without a sealed drag. But they do not "make" or even "design" anything other than the label. If they bought the top of the line, machined aluminum, sealed cork drag, etc., they still didn't design that. Merely chose it from pre-existing options.

I think it is possible to get acceptable, even good, quality from any of the above. It's also possible for a tier 1 to be in China and a tier 3 to be mostly American products. But we're drawn especially to tier 1. And for the others, you do have to watch out for shady practices, such as China's propensity to illegally copy IP, which can be then sold as cheap knock-offs, skirting the law and ultimately, stealing from those who are truly advancing the industry. IP exists to reward companies for coming up with new things. Removing that makes the industry go stagnant. But so long as it's either sold to them directly by the IP owner, or if generic, then using non-protected (>20 years old tech), then I have no issue with tier 3 either. They're merely filling a niche that the tier 1's and 2's purposely don't get involved in.