

FFF Fly of the Month

PT BRASSIE



By Bob Bates and Britt Phillips

Like many of the demonstration tiers at the 2002 FFF Show and Conclave in Livingston, MT, Britt Phillips showed some interesting techniques. One was his spin-touch-push method of putting dubbing on a fly. He uses this technique on many of his flies, including the P.T. Brassie. The picture above was taken from his web site, <holeinthewallflyshop.com>. It is built on the style of the Pheasant Tail Nymph developed by Frank Saywer. As Britt says: "We owe Mr. Saywer a lot for his work on sight fishing with a nymph in his loved chalkstreams of England and the simplicity of materials he used. Wire and Pheasant Tail, so simple, so pure."

Britt lets us in on how the P.T. Brassie was developed. "I got the idea after tying an assortment of flies for my boxes, you know the ones that take 9 steps and 7 materials. For an initial cleansing I decided on some Brassies, always needed and lost to the rocks. Easy, quick, simple. After a couple of dozen, my mind wandered, enough to see a different combo. Why not? The PT Brassie came about from the clutter on my desk that resembled a bad accident between an exploded transistor radio and the left over of a road kill pheasant. The fly has made its way into my nymph box and has worked well on fish that were feeding on PMD and BWO nymphs and interestingly enough midges."

This nymph slices through the water quickly to gain depth and has fooled many fish. Some waters fished with this nymph are eddies and riffley water under an indicator dry fly. This has been a successful lake fly as well fished as a point fly. Letting the fly sink for a while then a slow hand twist retrieve and then let it sink again seems to be a successful method. It works especially well on fish that have a lot of pressure on them and have seen all of the standards go on by.

Materials:

Hook: Standard, sizes 14-18

Thread: Fire Orange or White, Uni-thread 8/0

Body: About 0.012-inch brass or copper wire

Tail, wingcase: 5-6 Pheasant Tail fibers.

Thorax: Spiky dubbing to suit, like squirrel or hare's ear.

The tie is really simple

1. Mash the barb, put hook in vise and start thread at eye. Tie in brass wire one eye width behind the eye on your side of the hook. Hold the wire to you and wind the thread back to the bend, holding the wire as a guide. Lay the wire over the top of the hook and let it hang.

2. Tie in the Pheasant Tail (PT) in front of the "lay over" wire and wind back till the tail tips up a bit against the wire. Britt calls this "Kicking the Tail."

3. Wind thread forward keeping the PT on top of the hook, take the thread to the eye, covering the PT. The PT is now sticking straight out the front of the hook.

4. Wind the wire in touching turns to just shy of the eye, wrap back to 1/3rd shank length back from the eye and then forward to front of the hook. Grab the wire and circle it to break it off for a smooth end (do this for all wires and you will not have sharp edges to cut or damage thread). A slight build up of wire is now the thorax area.

5. Double duty the tail material by using it for the wingcase. Take the PT and pull it back on itself, in effect putting it in a bow shape. Make the bow so it will be a bit longer than the thorax when pulled back. Secure folded PT with a thread wrap right behind the eye. Pull the PT butts forward and secure with another thread wrap. This gives three layers of pheasant tail for the wingcase.

6. Go behind the PT and begin dubbing a noodle for the thorax. Put a little dubbing wax on the thread, spin the thread and touch the dubbing to it. Push up the dubbing to make it a little denser. Cover the built up wire with dubbing and leave the thread at the rear of the thorax. With a little practice you will learn how much dubbing to put on the thread and how much to push it.

7. Pull the tripled PT over the thorax and tie off at the rear of the thorax leaving the head portion clean of thread and fiber. You may change the color thread now if you like, but we like the band of Fire Orange thread. It is a "key-on" spot for the fish. Trim the butts of the PT close to the thread. Whip finish over the tie down point.

8. Strengthen the wingcase and thread with head cement. Coating the wire abdomen with cement gives it a translucent look if you are using un-varnished wire.

Only thread and three materials gives you a simple fly that works. Britt now uses his Spin/Touch/Push method of dubbing the thorax on most of his other flies.

Please Credit FFF Website or FFF Clubwire with any use of the pattern.
You can direct any questions or comments to flyofthemonth@fedflyfishers.org