



Illustration by Mike Carlon

IN CONVERSATION WITH...

Carp-Trade recently made the journey down to Dorset to catch up with Pallatrax MD Simon Pomeroy. We found out how business has been for the Pallatrax brand and also posed questions about the exciting partnership that has been formed with the US-based company Gamma.

Carp-Trade: Simon, welcome to this end-of-year issue of Carp-Trade. Can you tell us how things have been in the Pallatrax camp during 2007?

Simon Pomeroy: 2007 has been another great year for us after several years of really building up the Pallatrax brand. The past 18 months have, in fact, been very much focused on the specialist barbel and tench scene within the UK, with emphasis on pushing the brand into the carp scene in Holland. The USA is another area on which we have been concentrating, a market that has huge potential.

CT: Can you tell us more about the potential of the US market for the Pallatrax brand?

SP: The American market has vast potential for us and we have been approached to make inroads into the bass market. Bass fishing requires a sinker or weight of some description and the current legislation in the US means that the lead weights available in the shops come in blister packs with health warnings relating to lead poisoning, ill health, and birth defects. In July 2008 we will be exhibiting at the ICAST show, to be held in Las Vegas, and a great deal of my time over the past 18 months has been spent working on projects relating to the US market, which ultimately put us in the position to introduce the Gamma aspect of our business.

CT: The Stonze™ weights are one of the flagship products within the Pallatrax range. How has this side of the business been received by the carp angling fraternity?

SP: Pallatrax have gone totally against convention by offering people the alternative of using a stone as a fishing weight and this, from the start, was met with considerable cynicism and scepticism. With the recent introduction of the glass weights, together with the heightened emphasis that has been placed on underwater photography and filming, and the general increased awareness of end-tackle concealment, we feel that a lot more carp anglers are starting to see exactly where we are coming from with the use of a stone as a fishing weight. Personally, I have never used a glass weight for any of my fishing, but the manufacturers who have released these products have perhaps further paved the way for us, inasmuch as it further changes the perception of anglers – you don't necessarily have to use a lead-based product as a weight – and it further pushes us to the forefront in anglers' minds. Our factual standpoint with the Stonze™ remains constantly the same – we do not use an unnatural product as a fishing weight and our ethos as anglers is that if you have the choice of using an environmentally-friendly, natural product such as a stone as a fishing weight, why would you want to use a lead weight, when you don't have to? Yes, there has been cynicism towards using a stone as a fishing weight, but the general attitude is now changing. It has been immensely gratifying to change people's perceptions on what can be used as a fishing weight, with obvious benefits to the environment.

CT: Did your business relationship with Gamma develop purely because of your involvement within the US market with the Stonze™ system?

SP: Initially it did because we met the Gamma team at the ICAST trade show in the US. We were introduced to the Gamma products back in 2006, around the time we were first approached by a number of companies within the US about bringing the Stonze™ products across to the US market

and the logistics of doing so. We had been looking for a range of lines to add to the Pallatrax brand for a long time, and when Gamma showed us the factual philosophy behind their lines, you really couldn't argue with what they were doing. I could have gone off and sourced a line from an OEM but essentially it would have just been the same as everyone else, and this is where Gamma's line differs – it stands alone. Did it really make sense for Pallatrax to introduce just another copolymer or fluorocarbon when we could forge ahead and act as the exclusive distributor for Gamma, where the product isn't available to any other company as an OEM-sourced product? The relationship between Gamma and Pallatrax also works very well for both parties; it gives us a detailed insight into the US market but it also is reciprocated because they do not know the UK

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market. Pallatrax are doing as much as is physically possible to show Gamma what the market is all about and to stress to the UK trade how good and how superior their range of lines is. Irrespective of the angling discipline, Gamma's lines will do the job better than any other line currently available in the marketplace. As every year goes by the Pallatrax brand has grown in stature to be recognised as a tackle brand manufacturer that markets products that will catch fish within all angling disciplines. The new association with Gamma just further reinforces that we are a very serious brand with products designed to do one thing – catch fish.

CT: Simon, we've heard the massive hype about the Gamma products. What really makes the products from Gamma stand out from the rest?

SP: The lines from Gamma are a true stand-alone product. No other line manufacturer in the world has the production processes

in place that Gamma use, so they really are unique products. Gamma has been another big focus for us this year and the line (although the products are ideal for use in all angling disciplines) will cause shockwaves to go through the UK carp market during 2008.

CT: Do you think it will take time for people to accept the technological differences of the Gamma line?

SP: I think that if you take a step back from the fishing industry and look at the statistical analysis and performance of the Gamma products, it immediately shines through as a stand-alone product because of the unique production processes that are used. Essentially, Gamma are promoting a brand new product which uses technological advances to produce qualities that no other lines in the world possess. It is, however, still a fishing line and will therefore be in direct competition with every other fishing line that is currently available. There is a huge amount of education involved within angling and we will spend the next six months visiting every single shop in the UK that is interested in stocking the Gamma products. Our team will spend time with the retailers demonstrating exactly what Gamma is all about and explaining why it is as good as we say it is. More recently, the shops have been asking us to organise consumer-focused promotional days, which is useful for the shop, and excellent PR for Pallatrax. After all is said and done, the promotional and educational side of things is going to be a gradual process because anglers are often reluctant to switch products. If anglers have been using a certain product for years, why would they want to switch without knowing the facts? Hands-on evidence, linked with the scientific facts, will, over time, lead people to want to use the Gamma products.

CT: What is your short-term plan for rolling out the Gamma products to the retailers?

SP: We are doing this properly, which means that we're not simply rushing out there and throwing Gamma here, there, and everywhere. Unbeknown to everyone, we've already done a year's work behind the scenes to get the project to where we are now. One aspect of the past year's work entailed having 70 anglers of different disciplines out there using the products, so we are truly in the position to know the product inside out and we are 100% confident in how good it is. We now have to push the boundaries because Gamma's brand new innovative fishing line isn't just another fishing line and this is something we really have to push to the retail trade.

CT: Simon, many thanks for your time and good luck for 2008.

SP: Thank you and all the best for the future.

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