

Stephen Dugmore on the Biggs' RAB

**Per email to Ed Herbst 16/12/2010**

I'll send the pics of the RAB's. Some of them Tony tied specifically for thin water and they are sparse and delicate. One even includes human hair.

I can't quite put my finger on what makes his flies so special - they really do just work so well. I think it has a lot to do with the choice of stiffness of the hackle. The hackle has stiff enough points that it stands well out of the water but not too stiff that it becomes rigid. My problem with coq de leon for RAB's, which is great in most other respects, is that it is just a little too soft. The first drift is often fine but on the next the hackle tends to buckle a little and the fly sags a bit onto the water. I firmly believe it then becomes that little bit less enticing. Ideally you want a RAB to sit so lightly on the water that it can easily skate and dance over the surface. Tony's do just that

I think the other thing about Tony's RAB's is that he manages to balance them perfectly - the placement of the hackle and the quantity and length of the tail is spot on. A test for me of a good RAB is when you drop it from a height, it should drift down and land upright. Tony's almost invariably do. So often a not-so-good RAB lands hook-eye down.

Just some thoughts.