

I recently purchased and began using some Lew's reels. For me, this is a return to a brand I trusted for a long time previously. While fishing tournaments around the turn of the century, I loyally used Lew's BB1 Saltwater Series reels. They performed admirably for me in some ways, showing durability and ease of use. I could cast for a month or more without a backlash!

Of course, I eventually figured out something which necessitated a switch to other brands. Those old Lew's reels weighed far too much to functionally serve me once I began fishing four or more days a week. I needed something lighter, with similar performance abilities.

Having now used two new models sold by the company, I believe I may be on the right track in my search for lightweight, affordable, durable and high-performing reels. The first one I tried, model SSG1S, retails for about \$85 on Amazon, with a suggested retail price set at \$99.99 from the manufacturing company.

This reel weighs about 7 ounces, which is a bit heavier than what I'd optimally carry, but still light enough to allow me to comfortably function over several hard days of fishing. It fits the hand nicely, and has paddles on the handle which don't easily accept (or need) the rubber covers I'd grown accustomed to using on other reels.

The second one I tried needs no padding added to the handles either. The TS1SMB weighs a bit less, 6.7 ounces, and so far performs smoothly and efficiently. It retails for \$120-\$140. I have had little trouble casting with either of these reels, after spooling them with 20 lb. braided line.

I set them with the lightest spool tension possible, turning the mechanical breaking system as low as it will go. Casting distance is on par with all other quality reels I've used over the last decade or so.

The drags on these reels turn smoothly, and the anti-reverse function allows for a continuously "tight" feel while the handle turns and stops.

I ordered the lowest gear ratios offered in both these models (5.6:1) because I find low ratios facilitate ease of presentation with topwaters and twitch baits, which I often use. Low ratios also help me to slow down when I need to drag a worm on the bottom. People who fish with different styles (particularly those who fish primarily out of the boat) might find higher gear ratios better suited to their needs.

Only test remaining for these reels is their durability. Lack of durability forced me to give up on the previous brand I tried. Hoping the quality of performance will last a bit longer with these Lew's reels.

I'm operating from a specific mindset these days with regard to reels. I believe it's possible to cost-effectively purchase and use reels in the low/medium price range and experience performance nearly on par with the top end products out there. If so, I can't justify spending more money than what I've spent on these two reels.

I feel differently about rods, having found no medium-priced products which offer the same performance as the Laguna Custom Rods I love and use daily. That's for a different discussion, surely. As of now, let's just say my impression of these new reels is a good one!