



Morgan's Mumbles

BLADES ARE BOOMING

Steve Morgan

This year marks the 10th anniversary of ABT-style tournaments in Australia. Although the concept has had its share of high-profile knockers, the comps are still going strong. Indeed, there's no shadow of a doubt that trends emerging from the tournament trail are seriously affecting what's on the wall of your local tackle store.

We've seen it with spinnerbaits, soft plastics, Jackalls and Mask Vibs, Berkley Gulp and even small minnows like the Ecogear SX40 and Jackall Chubbies. Lures that are used successfully at events — due to their fish-catching abilities — make it into the mainstream fishing as 'must haves'.

Well, the lure of 2008 is definitely the 'blade'.

...trends emerging from the tournament trail are seriously affecting what's on the wall of your local tackle store.

There have always been a few versions of this lure kicking around, but it's been the refinement of the VX series by the Ecogear boys that has started the current wave.

I've been lucky enough to fish with Ecogear's chief developer, Takayoshi Orimoto, over the years and have seen first-hand the attention to detail that these guys put into each of their products before release. It borders on obsessive, but no one can argue with the results.

While visiting the Marukyu (Ecogear's parent company) headquarters in Japan, we managed to wangle some pre-production samples in mid 2007 and were amazed at how well they caught fish — especially bream.

We've definitely hit a stage where in heavily pressured waters, bream are switched-on to popular artificials and techniques. Bream reacted to these metal blades like they'd never seen a lure before in their lives!

Amazingly, the best retrieve seemed to be to hop the lure off the bottom like a soft plastic with a single lift of the rod tip. Letting the lure fall quickly back, the bream would often mouth the lure as it neared the bottom, but even more frequently when it was sitting on it!

It took a little getting used to the fact that a bream would eat a shard of metal off the bottom and chew on it, but that was exactly what was happening.

The 2008 tournament season had demonstrated the fish-catching abilities of these lures time and time again.

Bass anglers haven't missed out on the fun either. The first BASS Pro event of 2008 at Lake St Clair in the Hunter Valley saw

plenty of guys slow-rolling blades through schooled fish to take their limits. When you think about it, a tiny, wobbling blade is an excellent imitation of a little smelt.

Of course, there's now a much broader selection of metal blade baits than just the Ecogears. Mayfly Tackle imports the EverGreen LittleMax blades and Brisbane's Tackle Tactics have their Switchblade. Each of these lures is different and works in a slightly different manner. More manufacturers will no doubt release their versions in due course.

So enjoy fishing them while they're relatively new to the fish. Fast forward a few years and they'll simply be another tool in a thinking angler's box!



This Tweed River bream thought that a small, black blade was worth a taste.



Vertically jigging a TT Switchblade in Wivenhoe deceived this healthy bass.

