

Gary
YAMAMOTO'S
INSIDE LINE

**Yamamoto's
Ezine**



New Owner Twistlock Light Hook Design by Gary Yamamoto

Story By Russ Bassdozer

Gary Yamamoto has developed some of the foremost soft plastic bass baits in the world. His legendary hits include the world-famous Senko, Swim Senko, Yamamoto Hula Grub, Kut Tail and single tail grubs - just to name a few of Yamamoto's world class soft lures. Gary's Yamamoto Senko in particular ranks as one the most productive, fun and easy-to-use bass baits in sportfishing history.

But Gary's tackle designs don't stop there. He has designed fishing rods, has fishing lines made to his specifications, spinnerbaits, buzzbaits, topwater poppers, scent attractant and more.

Gary Yamamoto has several advanced hook models to his credit. He's designed hooks for Gary's Swim Jig and hooks for his flipping and football jigs. Hooks he has designed for rigging his soft plastics include Gary's Sugoi offset wide bend hook for weightless, Texas or Carolina rigging, and his Splitshot hook for dropshot and wacky rigging.

Now, Gary Yamamoto's latest development is that he has worked in conjunction with Owner Hooks to produce the new Owner Twistlock Light.

"My new hook design is a modification of what Owner had already done," says Yamamoto "They had their Twistlock hook but that hook had a very wide gap to accommodate fat swimbaits that many other manufacturers had produced within recent years. And the other thing that I tried to change was Owner's ideas about the wire size on those hooks. The original Twistlock hooks that Owner makes are a very heavy wire gauge. You can go out and catch a 200 lb tuna with that and still not bend that hook!" says Gary Yamamoto jokingly.

What Gary refers to is that a few years ago when the hollow belly swimbait craze hit the market, Owner originally came out with their 5132 Twistlock hook which they rate as 3X-strong.

"Since introducing it (the Twistlock 3X), we thought we would eventually make a lighter version, but never did until Gary Yamamoto called us one day asking for a lighter, weighted version for use with

his Swim Senkos. Gary Yamamoto helped us design it, and the Twistlock Light (5167) was born," says Tony Shitanishi, Sales Manager at Owner American Corporation.



The new 5167 hooks are called Twistlock Light but you may really think of it as a standard gauge hook. They're not that light except in comparison to Owner's original 3X model.

"I wanted more of the wire gauge hook that we are more used to for our everyday bass fishing needs, and Owner did exactly what I asked them to do," indicates Gary Yamamoto. "I think these hooks whether it is the weighted style or the weightless style, they're just perfect for everyday bass fishing success."

The Twistlock Light comes with Owner's Centering-Pin Spring keeper attached. The Owner spring is screwed onto the hook eye making it rather permanent. It is not a clip-on keeper. The advantage is that fish cannot ever shake or knock the Owner spring off the hook eye. So you won't lose the spring during the fight, and your soft bait will often remain attached during the fight without being terribly torn up in the head section. So you get your spring back (and often, an undestroyed bait back) virtually every time.

It is the only screw-in keeper on the market with a straight pin through the middle of the spring. The straight pin makes rigging easier to start and easier to screw on straight. The straight pin really makes a difference in ease and perfection of rigging a bait.

"One of the things I dislike about a standard offset shank hook is, if your rigged bait hits cover, whether weeds, wood, rock or anything at all, the head of the soft bait gets pulled down off the standard offset shank hook, ruining your cast. Few fish will hit it like that. Even with a soft bait rigged and ready on a rod on your boat deck, strapped down to run between spots, inevitably the hook and bait may end up in the rod tip or caught on a guide, wrapped around the blank or whatever, and that pushes the head of a rigged soft bait down off the offset of a standard hook. So you have to fix it up again before casting, when you've got it on the boat deck, not even using it, you're going to have to fix your bait most every time you pick up the rod, and the head of the bait gets weakened by being pushed down the offset hook all the time, becoming unusable. With this new Twistlock Light, it seems that problem is eliminated," says Gary appreciatively. "With the keeper that Owner has, it is just ideal. It just screws in, and it will never come off in most instances, even in tough cover or for long periods of use - or when the bait's simply waiting to be used on the boat deck."



"Owner has done a beautiful job on this hook. I am thoroughly pleased with it. The Twistlock Lights are easier/quicker to rig than traditional offset hooks and your bait's head virtually never slides down or comes undone."

Gary's Favorite Uses

"The Swim Senko with the weighted Twistlock Light hook (available in 4/0 to 6/0) is just ideal, no matter where you go from Florida to Canada, from New York to California and internationally, I catch most of my fish with the Swim Senko on that weighted hook," says Gary with a smile.

"In Florida or anywhere there's thick grass when I use the Swim Senko, I may use the weightless Twistlock hook to buzz the surface of the grass. So you may use either (the weighted or weightless hook). There are different situations for both," explains Yamamoto.

"So those are some of the uses as far as the Swim Senko goes," according to Gary.

"The other thing I like is to use a 3/0 or 4/0 weightless Twistlock Light with a 4-inch (9S) or 5-inch (9-series) Senko. It seems like this is just the perfect size, whether 3/0 or 4/0. The hook is not overpowering as far as weight, and it seems like it will let a Senko do its wiggle just as well as any other hook out there. For skipping a Senko under docks or weeping willows, there's nothing better," remarks Gary.

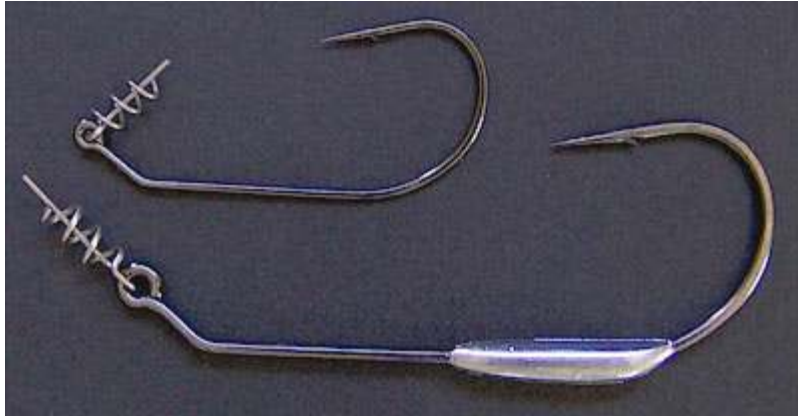
"This hook is going to make a world of difference with a lot of our baits, not just the Senko or Swim Senko. Even our big worms, our 10-inch Kut Tails and 12-inch Curly Tails, the 5/0 and 6/0 Twistlock Lights, they are pretty stout, they're not going to break or bend on big bass," explains Gary.

"Another use of these hooks is to take a small hook, like a 2/0 hook, and screw it into the Shad Shape Worm, and I am using this as a trailer bait for swimming behind a jig. It's a good idea because you can put two baits on, tie that Shad Shape Worm with that 2/0 hook on a short leader, and tie the leader to the jig hook bend. Since it's so solidly-attached with the Owner keeper, the Shad Shape Worm is never going to ball down the hook, and since it's weightless, it just flits and flashes like a little minnow flicking along behind your swimming jig," reveals Gary.

"Sometimes I may want to buzz the surface with my 4-inch (40 series) or 5-inch Super Grub (18-series) single tail, so you take that 1/0 or 2/0 Twistlock with the spring, and you can buzz that bait on the surface to no end!" laughs Gary.

"Indeed, Owner has got the full selection of weightless hooks from 1/0 through 6/0, so a person may use his or her preferred size for regular worm fishing or for swimming our baits, whether it's the Swim Senko or anything else we offer," says Gary.

"We never had a hook like this before for the Yamamoto product line, and there is a weightless Twistlock Light size (from 1/0 to 6/0) for every Yamamoto product, whatever Yamamoto bass bait you desire to use, from our smallest to the largest."



The weighted models come in sizes 4/0, 5/0, 6/0 and are so streamlined that weeds won't cling to the keel weight. The weighted version not only helps sink a rigged bait down into the strike zone quicker, but helps to increase casting distance, and acts as a self-righting keel on swimming baits like Yamamoto's Swim Senko. The weight is positioned low on the shank to provide a keel effect so that baits rigged weedless will swim naturally (as opposed to rolling, spinning or torquing sideways when nail weights are inserted inside soft baits or bullet sinkers are used on the line ahead of the bait).



Tex-Exposing the Hook Point

"Like always with soft baits, the hook point angle is designed so that it can be tex-exposed. Push the hook point all the way through the bait from bottom to top, and then tex-expose the tip of the hook on top. When I tex-expose I normally push it back under the top of the bait's skin in weedy

situations. In open water, I would just leave it lay on top of the bait. Of course, you may leave it buried inside the bait if it is extremely thick cover," recommends Gary.

"Although the wire is light, if you think you're going to break or bend this hook, you are mistaken. If you are breaking it, then you are using 65 lb test braid, and you broke or bent it on something immovable like a rock or stump. A fish will move before you'll break this hook," says Gary.

For the record, the Twistlock Light (5167) is a smaller gap hook than the Twistlock 3X (5132).

"Owner did what I asked for in that these new hooks are not as wide gap, and not as heavy a hook, so the hook shape and weight will not deter from our lures' actions. Owner has created some perfect hooks here for bass fishing situations that most of us face everyday on many waters worldwide. I must hand the fine hookmakers at Owner the perfect compliment for what they have done for me and for all users of Yamamoto baits."