



## NEW ZEALAND TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE:

- THE 10+ FISH DAY, NEW ZEALAND STYLE
- GENERAL COMMENTS AND REVIEWS
- DEFINING NZ AS A “VALUE” – WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
- HOW TO DEVELOP A NZ ITINERARY – FIRST TRIP AND SECOND TRIP
- A VARIETY OF ACCOMMODATIONS
- USING NZ FOR YOUR FIRST TROUT EVER?
- THE FIJI TIE-IN WITH NZ

## THE 10+ FISH DAY, NEW ZEALAND STYLE



Supposedly, you have to pay your dues to “hit it right” and have a 10+ fish day in New Zealand. Such a day is the stuff of fly fishing dreams – crystal clear water, stalking and sight fishing to big browns and rainbows that average over four pounds, pristine natural environments....just doesn't get any better than this. Guys like Frank Jackson (at left) should not be allowed to do what he did – have a 10+ fish day each of his first two days fishing New Zealand beginning with his first day which included, all on dry flies, one rainbow and the rest browns from 4 to 6 pounds...all were sighted fish and targeted casts on a North Island river.

As if that weren't enough, Frank had a day later in his trip, in a spectacular South Island river valley, with eleven fish, all sight cast to with dry flies, from 4 to 7#. The highlight of this day was the 10<sup>th</sup> fish, which he called One Eyed Jack. Frank relates the story: “I was fishing for fish number 10 when we saw a nice fish in a difficult spot. I had a good cast to his right side and he didn't take the fly. The guide said he should have been all over that so I cast again, directly in front of him, and had the same result. So I said that perhaps I should cast to his left. The guide said no point really as he had a good look at the fly and just didn't want it. So, learning that New Zealanders can be wrong sometimes (as they are from Scottish bloodstock), I cast to the fish's left side and he took the fly! I landed the fish, almost 8 lbs, and we noticed he had no right eye.”



While Frank was fishing alone and had all the shots to himself, William Owens (left) and Michael Berard (right) posted a fabulous 10+ fish day while sharing a day on the water. William's report: “Our best day was probably the day in Fiordland that we fished the trophy waters for browns. Mike and I caught 11 browns, several in the 6lb range and the largest one tipped the scales just over 7 lbs.” William and Michael were part of a group of three couples traveling together. Michael's wife, Meredith, had her own memorable NZ fly



fishing experience related below.

**PROPER EXPECTANCIES:** Like all world class fisheries, the NZ fishery is susceptible to the whims of weather and, at times, uncooperative fish. The reports above come from clients who had days this season of really “hitting it right.” Generally, fishing in New Zealand is distinguished by the quality of the overall experience and not in terms of numbers of fish. The expectancy on many days may be one, two, or three fish released. Using

USA standards for the size of the fish, that trout is often the fish of a lifetime. On an average day, with a good guide and fishing in the right places, you will most likely stalk and sight cast to 15 fish, have 5 or 6 of them eat, and net 1 to 3 of them.....a truly intense fly fishing experience.

## GENERAL COMMENTS AND REVIEWS



At Fly Fishing Adventures, the process we enjoy the most is working with clients on constructing the perfect New Zealand itinerary to meet their objectives and budget. Our enjoyment is bolstered by the incredibly positive feedback we've received over the years from our New Zealand travelers. Some of that feedback and quips from this year's clients follow.

Three couples who toured and fished NZ together, Laura and William Owens, Sharon and Jeff Aldridge (at left), and Meredith and Mike Berard, are pictured in the photo at right in the wine cellar at Poronui Ranch.

From William, the trip coordinator: "Just wanted to give an abbreviated report of our NZ trip. First of all, I want to compliment you on putting together a fantastic package. This was truly a great NZ sampler platter. Every place we visited was different (the fishing conditions and the scenery) giving us a constant feeling of a new adventure. Every place (lodge) was truly great in some way or another.



The wives all had a great time, they hiked, took jet boat rides, coptered to Milford Sound and on top of glaciers, coptered to the Hawks Bay Wine Festival, canoed, visited the sheep farm, and etc."



From Meredith Berard: "I have been meaning to email and tell you just how much Michael and I enjoyed our New Zealand experience. You did a fabulous job planning everything out, and I came away feeling like we had gotten to see a good amount of the country and a good overview of several different areas. It was beautiful, and I would highly recommend it to anyone."



Cindy and Art Hinkley (at left, stalking from his knees and holding the brown) had a fishing oriented NZ itinerary followed by a second honeymoon spot in Fiji....from Art: "As you have probably gathered, our overall NZ experience was thoroughly enjoyable. We also had a great time at Qamea in Fiji. We would go back. We went to the spa every day except two. It was fantastic. One interesting story from NZ.....right before lunch I hooked a nice fish on a dry that got off after about 3 seconds. The fish went right back to its original spot so we decided to have lunch and let him settle down. After lunch I tried another cast to it and much to our surprise the fish ate the fly again. My guide figured it must be a dumb rainbow, but it turned out to be a 7 1/2 lb. brown."

From Richard Burke (at right): "Linda and I want to thank you for your help and guidance on planning our trip. It was absolutely the trip of a lifetime for us! I would rate our experience a '15' on a scale of 1-10.....I did not have a 'least enjoyable' experience - that is an oxymoron in New Zealand. What surprised me the most?.....the importance of a good guide."



Jean/Bob McEwan and Sandy/Gary Cummings (below) traveled together, touring NZ and working in six days of guided fishing. From Bob (w/brown): "We had a fabulous time. All of your recommendations were great." Commented Gary (w/bow): ".....of the five days we focused entirely on sight fishing, every fish was over 4#."



## DEFINING NZ AS A “VALUE” – WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?



In the simplest of terms, here is an explanation of a “value couples trip.” Roughly computed, a two week tour of the South Island beginning in the northeast portion of the island in the wine country of the Marlborough region and ending in the southwest corner in Fiordland and including the elements listed below would cost approximately 17,000-18,000NZ. A year ago, the exchange rate was hovering around  $.8\text{US} = \$1\text{NZ}$  making the land cost of this trip \$13,600US. As of this writing, the rate is in the  $.58\text{-.}59\text{US} = \$1\text{NZ}$  range pricing that same itinerary at approximately \$10,000US.

All itineraries are custom designed to meet individual objectives and budgets, but one example of the two week itinerary priced above would include:

- a visit to the wine country
- a 3 or 4 night stay in NZ’s most traditional, world class fly fishing lodge
- a stop at one of the top eco-tour lodges in the South Island Alps
- time at a comfortable NZ farmstay
- a visit to Queenstown
- a stay at Fiordland’s top eco-tour lodge
- 8 days of guided fishing with some of NZ’s top guides interspersed throughout the itinerary
- all accommodations and most meals

Not included would be:

- air and rental car costs
- copter fly outs (if you choose to use them)
- miscellaneous and tips

We’ve seen the exchange rate fluctuate for the last eight years and today’s rate does make NZ travel a bargain. Does it make sense, when planning an early 2010 itinerary, to pay for the entire trip upfront to lock in today’s rate? That depends on your loose cash situation and whether you want to bet on the rate improving further; however, there are clients who are paying in full now and therefore assuring themselves of a “value NZ adventure” in 2010. At an exchange rate of  $.59\text{US}$  to  $\$1\text{NZ}$ , a NZ trip can be defined as a value.



## HOW TO DEVELOP A NZ ITINERARY – FIRST TRIP AND SECOND TRIP

**FIRST TRIP:** Identifying objectives and budgetary issues are critical in planning a NZ adventure. Finding the answers to these questions usually begins the process:

- is this a hard core fly fishing trip or a “couples tour” with fly fishing as an important element?
- how much time do you have – are we going to do both islands or just concentrate on one?
- when traveling, do you prefer the top end stays with service and ambiance to match or is the “budget first” consideration primary.....or a mix of the two?
- what percentage of the days do you want to fish – 40%, 60%, or as much as possible?
- what interests do the travelers have – if it’s just a matter of finding the finest fly fishing, that’s easy. However, usually one of the traveling parties has other interests they would like to incorporate.
- do you have any “must do” elements that need to be included. For instance, because of a recommendation from a trusted friend, is there a certain lodge or guide that you just must fish with?



Of course, understanding the options does help the process. One of our services is a get together to view a “NZ slide tour” covering the best options on both islands. This can be done in our Napa Valley fly fishing theatre or for a gathering of a small group in individual homes or offices.....or at the Fish First shop in Albany, near Berkeley in the Bay Area.

**SECOND TRIP:** Usually, this process begins with identifying what you enjoyed the most on the first trip. Most people want to repeat the elements they liked the best (in

fact, we have clients who repeat the same NZ trip each year). Next, we look at the other options available that can blend logistically with what we are repeating. Then (if there is the time available) we could examine the question of adding another South Pacific stop like Australia or Fiji (see below).

## A VARIETY OF ACCOMMODATIONS



“Each place we stayed was wonderful in its own way.” The quote sums up the variety of options for accommodations while touring New Zealand with your fly rod. Those options can include:

- world class fly fishing lodges geared to providing activities for a non-fishing spouse.
- hospitable, comfortable farm stays with tasty home cooked meals and seeing the “real” New Zealand
- luxury country inns
- fine eco-tour lodges with outstanding cuisine
- B & B’s and motels

Jim Henry, on his second NZ fly rod tour, captured the spread in different sorts of accommodation options with these comments: “We loved both Wilderness Lodge, Lake Moerarki, which is superbly managed by terrific folks, and we similarly were enthralled with Nokemi as a classic sheep station with its 92,000 acres and 35,000 sheep and wonderful hospitality. Both places were a great and unique experience—a must to fulfill the touristic side of anyone's trip.”



## USING NZ FOR YOUR FIRST TROUT EVER?



There are at least a zillion places on the planet that would be easier for a fly fishing newcomer to take their first trout than New Zealand. However, there is no place better than NZ if you value the rewards of overcoming challenges and taking a true trophy trout as your first trout while sight casting in a spectacular environment.....and can endure the frustrations of the learning process, Meredith Berard joined hubby, Michael, for three days on the streams and rivers during their '09 trip. She took and released her first trout, the wonderful trophy brown pictured at left, on her last fishing day while wading one of the many stunning streams in Fiordland. What a smile! Meredith reflected, “I am a total novice to fly fishing, but I have to say, my fishing days (three of them spaced throughout the trip) were some of my favorite days of the trip.” Comparing the picturesque fishing environments to one of the famous scenic

day-tours they took, Meredith had these comments, “.....because I fished a few days, I felt like I had already seen scenery which was just as, if not more, beautiful than what we saw on the cruise.”

## THE FIJI TIE-IN WITH NZ

The organizations that rate the world’s great resorts have finally discovered Fiji’s Qamea Resort and Spa. They are a little slow – we discovered this little gem six years ago. What attracted us was the isolation, quality Bures, cuisine and service, and the “world class” reef for snorkeling and diving literally right in front of our Bure – no boat trip necessary. We actually enjoyed our stays here BEFORE I found a way to catch the Giant Trevally pictured below last year (one of two we took on fly rod poppers). – prior to that fly rod success, our previous three trips had produced little in the way of meaningful fly fishing results at Qamea.

Photos below, left to right: Bures near the beach settled into the palm trees, the front of our secluded Super Bure with plunge pool (20 yards from the waters edge), and Qamea beach with the coral reef just offshore.



Referencing recognition, Qamea was the only Fijian resort to earn recognition as *MOST EXCELLENT RESORT* by Conde Nast in their 2008 Awards For Excellence. Meaningfully, Conde Nast says Qamea is one of those rare properties that rates “Five Stars, but with a Four Star price.” The Robb Report named Qamea Resort and Spa one of the World’s Top Ten Luxury Exclusive Hideaways.

Located less than a four hour flight from the glacier capped peaks of New Zealand, this tropical paradise is a wonderful complement to a visit to Kiwi-land. The last two years, Qamea has had a special for the months of November through March, the best months to tie in with a NZ trip - paying for five nights earns you two free nights!

This past year, they concluded the building of their Jungle Spa (first three photos below) – literally built into the base of the tropical rain forest covered mountain at the back of the property. This has been a significant addition and one we used daily during our stay.



Qamea is not the place to go if you are looking for golf, shopping, etc. This is seclusion – no roads on this island and it’s only accessed by a short boat ride from the nearby island of Taveuni which has an airport. A great spot for rest and relaxation with a second honeymoon environment.

### ADDITIONAL INFO

At the bottom of the New Zealand page on our website, [www.flyfishingadventures.org](http://www.flyfishingadventures.org), are many recaps and descriptions of the overall New Zealand experience. Many are in the form of client reports, people who have provided meaningful and, in some cases, detailed feedback on their trips.

PHOTO CREDITS – top to bottom: banner photo – William Owens; brown #1 – Frank Jackson; next 3 browns and group shot – William Owens, Jeff Aldridge, and Michael Berard; “on his knees” and brown – Art Hinkley; brown – Richard Burke; last 3 photos on General Comments page – Bob McEwen and Gary Cummings; wine bottle – Gordon Stanley; 1<sup>st</sup> trout – Meredith Berard.

Either phone or drop us an e-mail if you have questions or would like more information about any of our destinations.

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,  
Don Muelrath  
Fly Fishing Adventures  
[www.flyfishingadventures.org](http://www.flyfishingadventures.org)

888-347-4896  
[flyfish@napanet.net](mailto:flyfish@napanet.net)

If you want to be removed from our e-mail newsletter list, just hit “reply” and let us know – you’ll be removed immediately.