



Casting To Tails, Belize Sunset



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We are in the twenty-first year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on the great fly fishing venues, trip reports and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We’ve been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new destinations. Whatever unbiased information on timing and locations we can provide comes at the same cost to you as booking direct – i.e., NO EXTRA COST.

LIVING THE DREAM IN NEW ZEALAND – A VARIETY OF WAYS

There are a variety of ways to approach planning a New Zealand itinerary.

1. There’s the most popular approach – a “couples trip” which is mostly touring and incorporates fly fishing into the agenda.
2. There’s the obvious hard-core fly fishing approach.
3. A family trip with very limited fishing and a focus on the fun family things to do in NZ without a fly rod.

This newsletter features reports on #1 and #3 from above. Thanks to Darla and Bill Schmunk and the Winkel Family on supplying the excellent selection of photos and trip highlights utilized in their reports below.

THE “EPIC” NZ DAY – A FLY FISHING FANTASY





Darla and Bill Schmunk had several highlights touring NZ for three weeks, two of those weeks on the South Island. However, from a fishing viewpoint, Bill was fortunate to experience a classic NZ day with his fly rod. He described it like this: “This was an epic day. Felt like I was truly in the backcountry of New Zealand...river drainage with multiple braided streams and beautiful snow-capped mountains all around me. It felt we were the only people on the planet and had it all to ourselves. And we did. Fishing crystal clear water and catching

trophy trout just made this an epic experience that will last a lifetime.....magical and a dream come true.”

For my wife and I (who’ve been fortunate enough to have visited NZ annually since 2000), Bill’s description brings back many magical memories of “epic NZ days.” There are some common threads that seem to run through all those epic days. Using Bill’s photos, I’ll try to describe those common threads:



- Usually begins on a gravel road that enters a spectacular river valley surrounded by mountain peaks – like Bill’s photo at top.
- Next, there’s the small crystal clear spring creek or tributary stream.....above at left.
- Then there’s spotting the rainbows and/or browns finning and feeding in the stream.....above right.
- The stalk – getting in the right position to make the cast and get the drift.
- The eat.....sometimes you blow it and don’t get the hook-up....and sometimes you do. Makes no difference because on this day, there’s always another one just upstream. Maybe you get 4 or 6 or 8 fish in the net, and usually included is a real trophy or two (Bill at right).
- But the fish are just the frosting on a spectacular cake which leaves dreams that last a lifetime.
- One other critical ingredient – a world class NZ guide who creates the day.



How ‘bout the rest of the two weeks on the South Island for Darla and Bill? They spent time in Fiordland and did a Milford Sound tour, a stop at one of NZ’s famous eco-tour lodges, and mixed in were four guided fishing days with a top Kiwi guide in two different locations, including one of the top lodges. Bill also blended in some fishing on his own (unguided) with mixed results, including one session that was outstanding, all on dry flies.

One of the special treats of NZ is the people.....the Kiwi’s are a delightful, friendly, and outdoors oriented people. Included in the Schmunk’s loop around the South Island was a traditional farm stay. Their comments on this stay: “It was amazing. Our hosts were so fun. The lady of the house even took us on a ride around the area. Food was over the top. Really enjoyed just talking and socializing with them. We leave in 3 days. Sad time, but really has been an amazing trip for us which included Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand. Dream Trip.”

A FAMILY NZ TRIP WITH THE WINKELS

The Chris and Rob Winkel family consists of son Trent, his wife Sarah, and daughters Megan and Jaclyn. Their NZ adventure was focused entirely on 11 days in the spectacular southwest part of the South Island. This area

includes Fiordland National Park and Queenstown with the South Island Alps as the dominating geographical feature. Chris described the trip as “A trip of a life time. What great memories!”



The family pictured in the shot at left is: (l to r) – Mom Chris, Megan, Jaclyn, Trent, Sarah, and Dad Rob.

At right, the view from the eco tour lodge, one of NZ’s top properties, where they stayed near Queenstown.



Chris describes their overall experience: “.....the itinerary was absolutely perfect. The hotels and lodges were excellent. We especially loved the lodges in Fiordland and the one near Queenstown. Two beautiful locations with incredible

accommodations. The staff at both were so friendly, the food excellent...everything was perfect. Also, our stay in Wanaka.....the top floor apartment was huge with a hot tub overlooking the lake and mountains. Trent and Rob had a wonderful experience fishing. They very much enjoyed it.....and had a blast. The girls and I went wine tasting at the Gibbston Valley Winery...so fun!!

The Fiordland tour company excursion was great.....including the hike on the Milford Trek and a cruise on Milford Sound. It was a wonderful excursion. I would definitely do more excursions with them. Highly recommended.

We loved exploring the beautiful South Island. We hiked the Rob Roy Glacier. (What a hoot driving 20 miles of dirt road through running water fords with sheep everywhere.) We also hiked the Routeburn Trek (10miles), bungee jumped (kids only), white water rafted, and zip lined. It was incredible. I have never seen a more beautiful place.....we will definitely go back.”

Photos below, l to r: there was only one day of scheduled guided fishing. Rob and Trent opted for the classic Kiwi copter fly out experience. Trent with a nice rainbow. White water rafting. Rob and Jaclyn on Milford Sound cruise. Trent leads the family across a swing bridge while doing some hiking on the famous Milford Trek.



AUSTRALIA – NOW OPEN ALSO



Australia – a great variety of saltwater flats fish for the fly rodder. A terrific tie-in with New Zealand if you have the time. For the six years preceding both NZ and Australia closing down due to Covid, we spent two weeks in the far NW corner of Australia (the small town of Exmouth and the spectacular Ningaloo Reef) tied to our annual NZ adventure. We have several reports you can access from those trips – just ask if you have interest. We work with great guides/outfitters both in the NW corner and also the NE area of Australia.

At left is a Barramundi – one of the top Australia trophies and can be taken on the mangrove edges.

Photos below, l to r, are flats species of Australia. The Queenfish; Pacific

Permit; GT (Giant Trevally); Golden Trevally.



PLANNING A NEW ZEALAND ITINERARY – 10 STEPS IN PRELIMINARY PLANNING

We've been working with clients for over 20 years assembling NZ itineraries which meet their objectives. There are many different ways to approach the planning process. Like all the lodges, guides, and outfitters we book around the world, there is no "add on" charge for using us as your NZ travel consultants....we are compensated on the back end, just like a travel agent. If you're considering a NZ experience, planning a year ahead is a good idea to have the best options available to you. We have a planning aide titled 10 STEPS IN THE PRELIMINARY PLANNING OF A NEW ZEALAND ADVENTURE....just hit "reply" and ask for a copy.

LOOKING FOR PARTNERS: DISCOUNTED RISING TIDE MOTHERSHIP IN BELIZE

We have a group of three guys who are looking for one or two others to join them on a Rising Tide mothership trip in Belize. This is a situation where the per person price is reduced if the group has more members – i.e., a trip for four or five costs less per person than a group of three. Also, this trip is discounted. The trip dates are May 22 – 29, prime tarpon time. The group leader has done the trip before so knows the basic drill.

This trip has a 25% discount for person #4 or #5 (per person price will be \$3100 or \$3650, depending on the final number being 4 or 5 anglers).

The Rising Tide does basically two different types of trips – the Belize variety trip which pursues bonefish, tarpon, barracuda, jacks, snook, permit, etc (the great variety of species available in the shallows of Belize coastal waters) or the dedicated permit trip which heads south and is focused exclusively on permit. The trip referenced here will be a variety trip. Hit "reply" if you'd like more details.....the website is www.flyfishbelize.com

WHAT WE DO AT FLY FISHING ADVENTURES

This is a link with a description of who we are and what we do.....also, listing the destinations around the world that we can provide reliable information regarding the experience and how to prepare for your visit:

[Fly Fishing Adventures - About What We Do](#)

FEBRUARY MEMORY PHOTO



Our Memory Photo this month is truly a unique catch – a Humbolt Squid. That's Jimbo Thompson with the squid he took 200 feet down with a 400 grain sinking line. Not many of us have a Humbolt Squid on our Bucket List!!!?

PHOTO CREDITS: NZ – Bill Schmunk and the Winkel Family;
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