

NEWSLETTER #15 - AUGUST 2003

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This is the fifteenth edition of our monthly newsletter with updates on great fly fishing venues and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We want to help you match the right location with your fly fishing goals and objectives and properly prepare you to fully enjoy the experience. We've been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new sites. 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.

UPDATES ON SOME OF OUR TOP DESTINATIONS AND A FEW NEW ONES – Fresh Water

North Platte: Our early season space for the North Platte in Wyoming is almost full. There is still room for two fishermen April 10 – 13; and there are six spots available from March 26 – April 4. That's it for this productive early season Rockies spot.

Dean River Steelhead – Summer '04: Even though this was a tough year on the famous Dean River, virtually everyone has rebooked for next year leaving limited space at Blackwell's lower Dean Lodge. We're working on securing more prime time space. If you want to be on the “waiting list” for a spot, make sure I know of your interest.

Dean/Moose Lake Combo '04: John Blackwell only has one week each summer where he splits the week between his Dean camp (front end of the steelhead run and height of the king salmon) and the excellent dry fly trout fishing available from his sister lodge at Moose Lake. Last year this week sold out by the end of August. Only can handle six people max for this period, usually the first full week in July.

Minipi River, Labrador: This is the greatest brook trout fishery in the world and my son, Scott, and I are booked to return for our fourth trip there during the summer of '04. On our last three trips, we collectively released 61 brook trout that were weighed at 5+ pounds with a top fish of 8¹/₄#, almost all caught on the surface with dries – that's why we're going back. As of now, there is space remaining for four others to join us for this special week.

New Zealand: It's a little late to be planning New Zealand for the prime time in '04, but there are still possibilities (frequent flyer miles space has been gone for months). We're sending over 25 people on New Zealand trips in January and February, 2004, and have experience with the great variety of ways to approach a New Zealand agenda. This can vary from the hard-core fly fishing version to a couples trip with a non-fishing spouse (our specialty and one I have lots of personal experience with).

Tierra del Fuego Sea Run Browns: In checking availability for some clients last week, I found that there is still limited space available at some of the quality Rio Grande lodges during the prime giant sea run brown season....not much, but there is still some space to be had.

Chile Combo – Andes and Fiords: Similar in some ways to New Zealand (except that frequent flyer miles are still working), this can be a wonderful couples experience with a non-fishing spouse or great for those looking for a fly fishing adventure. Combining time fishing the traditional Andes rivers and lagoons with the unique fiords fishery is a good combination. We work with a quality combo eco-tour/fly fishing lodge in the Andes and the famous Puyuhuapi Hotel and Spa in the fiords.

Kamchatka Float Trips: We're working with some of the original outfitters who first explored Kamchatka in 1991 and conduct limited trips each summer to this isolated Russian peninsula. Their approach is a personal one and each trip is for a small group only. We have some of the best dry fly dates being held for us for the summer of '04.

Of course, we have our favorite American West destinations on line as usual. Eastern Idaho (Henry's Fork Lodge; and Three Rivers Ranch with their wonderful approach with couples and their “ladies week” program), Montana (Smith River Float Trip and other personally designed itineraries), Oregon and Northern California.

(Videos available for many of these fresh and salt water destinations)

UPDATES ON SOME OF OUR TOP DESTINATIONS – Salt Water (tarpon, bonefish, etc)

Belize Mothership Trips: Fishing tarpon, bonefish, snook, and permit from the comfort and convenience of the Meca or Seaduction with captains Martin McCord and Charles Westby is a great saltwater experience. Currently the Meca (parties of three or four) has one week still open in each of the following months: November, December, January, March, May, and June – i.e., February, April and July are full. There is still lots of space available from August on. The Seaduction (parties of two) has slightly more availability.

Christmas Island: We have another Leland shop week scheduled at Christmas Island. This remains one of the premier bonefish and trevally locations in the world. Space is still available for the week of March 8 – 15, '04.

Flamingo Cay: Of all the Bahamian bonefish destinations, this one remains the most special. It's "specialness" starts with it's location as the only lodge on the west side of Andros (not even roads on the west side) giving it access to productive, unpressured flats. However, it's the overall quality and uniqueness of the operation that really makes it stand alone. We are looking to put a Leland shop week together hosted by Josh or me (or possibly both of us) for April, '04. This is not a budget trip and the price matches the quality of the operation. Only five spots would be available.

Crocodile Bay: This is a top-notch Pacific Coast Costa Rica Lodge that combines eco-tourism and fishing making it a great family spot as well as offering a variety of quality fishing experiences. The variety includes offshore for sailfish and marlin, inshore for rooster fish, jacks, etc. and jungle rivers for snook and snappers. They have different skiffs available for all the different fishing venues and good guides. We have had many great reports on the overall operation and are making a personal trip in early December this year. Four spots are still open for that week if you want to join us.

Belize Villa: A great family hideaway on Ambergris Cay, this air conditioned 3000 square foot home is perfect for a tropical family get-away. It can come equipped with a cook and boat with captain for snorkeling, reef fishing, etc.

We also have our usual connections in Ascension Bay (Casa Blanca, Playa Blanca, and Boca Paila), the Los Roques bonefish lodges, and a new Bahamian Lodge with unlimited guided fishing.

TOUGH "WORLD CLASS" FISHING

"World Class" fly fishing destinations don't always provide a "world class" fly fishing experience. The fishing gods see to it that every so often, they stir the pot in a negative way just to keep things unpredictable and to remind us that we should treasure those times when everything works right and the reputation a certain destination has earned throughout the years delivers on its promise. We've had some of those examples recently. The famous summer run on the legendary Dean has been fabulous the last few years with prime weeks generating 30+ hook-ups per fisherman. That is "world class" fishing when you consider these are "fresh from the salt steelies"- the large, hot fish that have made the lower Dean famous. However, for reasons that baffle the experts, this years run was way off and, even though some great fish were taken (see Don Nelson under "Big Fish"), it did not come close to expectancies.

The Minipi River in Labrador is world famous for being the spot where five pound and larger brook trout are taken on the dry fly. Equally famous are the hatches that fill the air during the prime hatch weeks. One of our groups was there during prime time this summer and got blasted by some of the unpredictable Labrador weather and, even though almost everyone did take a five pound or larger brookie on the surface, it certainly wasn't the overall experience that fishermen come from all over the globe to capture.

BIG FISH STORIES

Don Nelson may earn the title of "Leland Big Fish Champion of '03." First, he released a nine pound rainbow in late March on the North Platte. Then, even though conditions were tough on the Dean this summer, Don managed a 37 inch, 23 pound fresh run "with the sea lice still in place" steelhead which required a few chases with the boat to secure.

Charles Stern described his recent Belize trip on the Seaduction with Josh Frazier and Eddie Howells as "a great trip, have wonderful memories and caught a great fish." The great fish was a 17 pound permit hooked with just a 25 foot cast while

wading that took over 45 minutes of struggle to subdue (Charles got his first permit on his first mothership trip in '02). Seven permit were hooked on the trip and everyone released one fish, with Charles' the largest.

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

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