

NEWSLETTER #55 - DECEMBER 2006

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Fly Fishing Adventures Travel Newsletter, December, 2006

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We are in the fifth year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on great fly fishing venues, trip reports 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. One of our services is to compare and contrast different lodges/outfitters. 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.

GIFT IDEAS –“LONG WEEKEND” FLY FISHING EXPERIENCES IN THE WEST

Several ideas come to mind that make a four to five night trip a great fly fishing experience...and without flying halfway around the globe.

EASTERN SIERRA WILDERNESS TRIP – Forty-plus years ago, my Dad took my brother and I on a trip into the John Muir Wilderness area of the Eastern Sierras. We crossed Mono Pass at 12,000 feet altitude on horseback and dropped down into the Pioneer Basin and the six lakes and streams located there. There was great fishing for brook and golden trout and some of the most spectacular scenery on earth.....it was a wilderness adventure we still talk about. The fish weren't the trophies that are discussed most often in this newsletter, but they were plentiful and fun. I did a little research and found out the outfitter we used in the 60's is still in business and is now operated by the original owners son. With the advent of and promotion of exotic fly fishing travel, traffic into the Sierra wilderness areas has actually declined over the last 30 years. The decline in customers seeking high country getaways resulted in many Sierra outfitters/packers going out of business. The result has been that our outfitters of the 60's have expanded the areas they can pack into to include Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Park, Yosemite National Park and the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wildernesses. While you can explore these areas with a pack on your back, the "less rugged" approach is to have a wrangler with a string of pack animals tote your equipment and food allowing you to set up a comfortable camping environment. They can access the best native Golden Trout areas on earth as well as a multitude of great fly fishing waters, far away from the crowds. We actually did this trip three consecutive years in the 60's, the last of which was with my new bride, Marte, as our first vacation. Fortunately, I didn't scare her away. We've added this adventure to our list of destinations. Have maps and info – let me know if you'd like to know more.

SPRINGTIME IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES WHITE RIVER VALLEY – March through mid-April is a great time to be in this country (plus July and early Aug and Sept/early Oct). Our outfitters here have private access to several miles of the White River, one of the west's finest fisheries. Four nights and three days fishing fits perfectly here.

ELK RIVER, FERNIE, B.C.– Early July through Sept is the prime time for the Elk and it's tributaries. Fernie is a great family, couples, or just hard core fishing destination. In the winter, it's a jet setter skier's paradise – in the summer, it's just beautiful without the crowds of most western US waters. The main

attractions are possibly the finest Bull Trout fishery remaining (due to the protection the B.C. government has provided) and lots of eager West Slope Cutthroat. Good for new fly fishers and well as the vets. Can be a four or five night experience.

BLACKWATER RIVER FLOAT TRIP – if you want to rough it a little more, the wild rainbows of the Blackwater River in B.C. can provide numerous targets to liven up a float trip down the Blackwater. If you're timing is right on this river, you can have 50 fish days, all on dry flies. Great family outdoor experience.

OVERNIGHT FLOAT TRIP THROUGH THE SOUTH FORK OF THE SNAKE RIVER CANYON – a neat three or four night experience in eastern Idaho with the centerpiece being an overnight float trip through the South Fork of the Snake River Canyon. For the overnight in the canyon, our outfitters have a comfortable, permanent tent camp – not really very rough and great food. Lots of approaches to filling another day or two in the area.

THREE FORKS RANCH, COLORADO – the “cat’s meow” of private water fly fishing operations in the lower 48. Only drawbacks are it’s pricey and hard to find space. Booked full for next summer except for openings for two rods Aug. 3 – 7.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA: CLEARWATER LODGE – California’s finest fly fishing operation, Clearwater Lodge on the Pit River in Northern California, has several different programs for newcomers to fly fishing as well as veterans.....and an airplane isn’t necessary.

FISH FIRST SHOP IN ALBANY – DEC. 14 FOR GIFT IDEAS AND BOOK SIGNING

I’ll be in the Fish First shop in Albany (near Berkeley) from 11:30 through the afternoon of Dec 14 to personalize gift copies of *THE HUNT*. Also, we’ll have all our slide presentations with us and are available to view and discuss most destinations, especially the type of trips that may fit into a Christmas stocking. See the Fish First website for directions - www.fishfirst.com

BELIZE – THREE “LAST DAY” GRAND SLAMS

In a very unusual set of coincidences, the last two November trips on the mothership Meca in Belize produced some exciting “last days” of the trips. First, Chris Coyle and Doug Pruett had a productive week pursuing primarily bonefish (over 40 fish released) with two days moving south for the finicky permit (no fish released). On the morning of their departure, they had moved their liveaboard near Belize City and were going to get one more morning on the water before getting to the airport. With 15 minutes to go before they had to absolutely head for the airport to catch their flights home, both of them had two legs of an IGFA Grand Slam and needed just a bonefish to finish it. In one of those rare moments when the fishing gods cooperate fully, they found a flat nearby that was full of willing bones and they both finished off their grand slams, literally on the way to the airport!

And to top things off, Julie and Dennis Smith and family were on the Meca for Thanksgiving week. Weather was difficult much of their week, but a similar scenario as above played out on their last morning – an IGFA Grand Slam for Dennis on their way to the airport.

In the future, maybe we should just begin all Belize trips on the last day?

TRIPS YOU PLAN FAR IN ADVANCE

The world of exotic fly fishing travel includes destinations that offer the chance at a fish of a lifetime. Usually, the opportunity to get that special fish occurs during a somewhat narrow time frame. And, to get a reservation during that time frame, you had better be planning far, far in advance – sometimes over a year out. This report will just briefly mention some of these spots and any openings we may be familiar with – more detail on these special fisheries can be found on the respective destination page on our web site www.flyfishingadventures.org

ROYAL AMAZON, BRAZIL The world has discovered this four year old Amazon operation. This is THE place to fish the Amazon from if you are a fly fisher. Lots of sight fishing in a clear water river for trophy peacock bass to 15 pounds (and larger), arrowana and a comfortable base to headquarter. However, if you want to go in '08, better have your name on the list now.

NEW ZEALAND – INDEPENDENT GUIDES There are world class fly fishing lodges in New Zealand that offer some flexibility in booking because they take in 12 – 16 anglers at a time. However, the outstanding independent guides in NZ are “one of a kind” and they have their own regular clients who come back to fish with them each year. These are special guys who have special waters and when they’re booked...that’s it - they are not available. To be able to include some of these top independent guides in a NZ itinerary, you must engage in the process usually 12 months out, especially if you have a certain time frame you want to travel in.

GIANT BROOKIES OF THE MINIPI RIVER If your list of dream fish includes a five pound or larger brook trout taken on a dry fly, there is no better place in the world for that to happen....bar none. My son and I just completed our fifth trip to this wilderness destination in Labrador. There are three lodges on the watershed and they are just completing the construction of the new lodge at our favorite location. Prime hatch times for 2007 were already full when we were up there this past July....so we reserved 16 spots over three weeks during the prime time in 2008 at the new lodge. Four of those spots are still open.

BELIZE VIA MOTHERSHIP – THE MECA AND SEADUCTION The greatest variety fishery in the world of saltwater flats fishing with bonefish, tarpon (from babies to 100+ pounders), snook, barracuda, and the finest permit flats on the globe. Living on the shallows inside the protection of the Belize barrier reef in this tropical paradise is a wonderful salt water adventure. The large number of repeat bookings also make this one difficult to get space on – need to get on the list early, very early, if you want to have a chance at a choice of dates. A few weeks still are open for '07, but the process for 2008 begins now.

PRIME TIME IN ALASKA Alaska may be the fishiest place on earth and a destination that every fly fisher needs to visit at least once. Most consider late August through September the prime time in Alaska – the silver salmon are in and the trophy rainbows are easiest to get at during this period. However, if you’re going to one of Alaska’s “A” lodges, best book 10 – 12 months out as the angling world is in touch with how special Alaska is at this time. We can book them all - our favorite “A” lodge is full for the end of summer period except for 2 open spots Sept. 8 – 15. Some openings remain for the “family week” July 28 – Aug 4; children, regardless of age, are half price this week.

“WORLD CLASS STEELHEAD” – BABINE AND DEAN RIVERS The prime summer run dates on the lower Dean are full – try getting on the list for '08 if you have interest. Some '07 prime space on the Babine for the fall run still remain....but not much.

UNIQUE WORLD CLASS FISHERIES like Argentina’s Rio Grande (giant sea run browns) and the Ponoï in Russia (Atlantic Salmon) have international followings and high client return rates at the best operations. Best try to plan for these a year or more out.

THE HUNT FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS?

If you are making up your gift giving list for Christmas and a new fly fishing book that has received the following accolades would satisfy some of your needs, see below for how to purchase a personalized copy:

- "THE HUNT is one of the great fly fishing classics of all time.....unbelievably good work."
- "...the finest collection of fly fishing photographs ever assembled...."
- "...overall, I'd be taxed to reach for a more enjoyable read...."
- "...I've never in all my years seen anything as profoundly special as THE HUNT...." An absolute masterpiece."

(see the website www.ffhunt.com for a full list of reviews and comments)

We've (written by my son, Scott, and myself) been honored by the praise and award THE HUNT has received. If you'd like to order personalized copies for gifts, fill out the "special instructions" section on the order blank on the website www.ffhunt.com. We can meet any personalization requests you have – call 888-347-4896 if you have specific questions.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Tammi and I hope that your holiday season is everything you want it to be. May the New Year present you with the opportunity to scratch some of your personal fantasy fish off your "wish list."

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,
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