

## 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."