



The heart of the Chilean Andes.....truly one of the world's most striking vistas for a fly fishing adventure! Rob Pizzie and John Landis had visited this specific location a few years ago and returned this year with some friends and family. Joining Rob and John were Rob's wife, Annette, and daughter, Sarah, and friends Jon Stettler and Marty Mickelsons. For Annette, Sarah, and Jon, this trip would provide their first fly fishing experience and their first fish taken on a fly.



Rob captures the essence of their time spent in this isolated area of the Chilean Andes:

“For me, fishing in Patagonia is very special. It's not easy to get to, but once you are there it is a paradise. The scenery is spectacular and the fishing experience is profound. Nobody around but you, the guide and the fish. The rivers offer fast paced excitement (and a few white knuckle rapid rides!) and the sight fishing on the lakes makes the day seem to fly by. The lodge and the outlying outpost camps are the most comfortable fishing lodges I have ever stayed in. The food is superb and the wine floweth freely! The host and hostess were perfect, and all the guides I have fished with (and I have been there twice) are friendly, knowledgeable and fun to spend a day with. Can't wait to go back!”



There are many aspects to Patagonia and the Andes Mountain Range. The crest of the Andes forms the border between Argentina and Chile. From the crest, the Chilean Andes tumble westward, peak after peak, before dropping off into the Pacific Ocean. Patagonia is not related directly to the countries or boundaries of either Argentina or Chile; rather it is generally considered to be a geographical area that encompasses the southern parts of both countries and that includes the spectacular Andes Range

side.....spectacular mountain peaks, lakes, rivers, and lagoons. So much of Patagonia is no longer the isolated fly fishing environment of 20 to 30 years ago. Unfortunately, today the majority of Patagonia often resembles fishing in Montana.....a lot of other anglers present. This is not true in what we consider to be the “finest remaining area to fly fish in Patagonia”– this is where John and Rob returned to this year, an area where seeing another angler is still a rare event.

The Argentine Patagonian side of the Andes levels out very quickly into the flatlands of the pampas. Not so on the Chilean

The group collected a fabulous array of photos which capture the essence of their experience and comprise this photo essay. Below: the fishery is a combination of browns and rainbows.



The fishing: on the primary large rivers in the area, a drift boat is utilized combined with some wading.



A variety of waters is accessed using horseback, rafts, four wheel drive vehicles, and outpost camps. Below, l to r: a gaucho has the horse packed with raft and equipment. Sarah and Jon riding to the “put in” spot, about a two hour upstream ride in a beautiful river valley. The raft is inflated and then they drift/wade their way to the “take out” point. Annette enjoys a shoreside lunch. One of the outpost camps is tucked away in the Andes on a special river. Below, the club house, stationary tents, and beds provide a very comfortable experience... “roughing it” with a touch of class. Some of the group spent two nights at the outpost camp while two others did an overnight float trip through the Andes, using a similar welcoming overnight camp. Below at left, Sarah with one of her first rainbows ever. At right, second row, there are many lagoons, both large and small, in the vicinity which provide sight fishing to cruisers. Boats are staked out on some of them.



John is a well traveled, globe hopping angler.....his comments: “The rivers, lakes, and lagoons fished around the lodge are unique. You never fish the same watershed and rarely see another angler. Much of the fishing is sight fishing with dry flies.” Maybe the most important point to be made is “rarely see another angler”! And the scenery, in almost every direction, is spectacular (below).



As a first timer to the world of fly fishing, Jon had an interesting perspective: “.....the waters of Patagonian can be very intimidating at first. The crew and support staff had gone beyond far in helping, understand and explaining the entire fly fishing experience from beginning to end.....I eventually ended the trip with the ability to make consistent 50' double-haul casts. Everything was explained thoroughly.....I have never felt so welcome walking into a new situation were I was completely out of my element.....the trip is absolutely

brehtaking and hopefully a beginning to a whole new passion in my life.” Thanks to Jon for stating the experience of learning to fly fish so eloquently!

Below, l to r: Jon with a rainbow; you won't find much pavement in this rural part of Chile – it hasn't changed much in the last 50 years; when the dragon flies are hatching, the surface takes can be spectacular; a kingfisher on the prowl; Rob with a wee rainbow.



Above, l to r: Marty with a nice bow, Rob and Annette on the raft, and Annette with a brilliantly spotted brown.

Below, l to r: lodge at night, holds a maximum of twelve guests; dinner is a treat; the fire pit is a gathering place for pre-dinner drinks and hors d'oeuvre's after a day on the water; the lodge, and the entire operation, is as comfortable and welcoming as a remote fly fishing lodge can be! Attention to detail is evident in everything.



Below, l to r: a traditional Chilean asado (BBQ'd lamb on a spit) is part of the fare; rainbow in the net; the "wildlife" at the lodge is pretty tame; John with a large brown.



Below, l to r: a shot of the group – Annette, Marty, Jon, Rob, and Sarah (John is the cameraman); a shot of Santiago from the hotel room; doing some touring in Santiago can be part of the overall experience (Santiago cathedral at right). You make a plane connection in Santiago to Puerto Montt. It is not necessary to overnight in Santiago, but some like to make a stop and soak up some of the culture. In addition to touring, winery visits can be arranged.



**PHOTO CREDITS:** most of the photos were taken by John Landis and Jon Stettler.

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

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