



FLY FISHING ADVENTURES TRAVEL NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2008

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We are in the sixth 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.

PREPARING TO FLY FISH THE SALT WATER FLATS FOR THE FIRST TIME



Casa Blanca Lodge

John Gans is becoming a globe-hopping fly fisher, but until recently his angling pursuits have been limited to fresh water. He was ready to give the challenges of the salt water flats a try; however, he was limited in some of the casting skills that would be necessary to succeed. To catch your first bonefish on a fly, there is a large list of destinations to choose from. After evaluating the considerations, we decided on Casa Blanca Lodge, arguably the finest Caribbean salt water flats lodge, located on the Yucatan’s Ascension Bay. John had a very successful trip, releasing over 50 bonefish including four over five pounds with a large fish of seven pounds. Outstanding results for a first timer on the flats!

To me (a guy who spends many waking hours trying to prepare fly fishers for their first salt water trip) the real story is how John prepared. He did exactly what someone should do to be ready to tackle the challenges of the flats. He started by taking casting lessons to learn to double haul, the key technique in overcoming obstacles like wind and distance.

Then he practiced.....in the wind. Yes, he is “my hero” for providing such a great example of how to get ready to attack the excitement of the salt water flats. Bottom line for John is he is now a much more effective fly fisher and his new skills will open many fly fishing opportunities around the world.

Some comments:

- As a New Yorker, John took his lessons and did his practicing in Central Park – re. onlookers: “I got a lot of funny looks from roller skaters, bikers, joggers, and Mom’s with strollers....”
- “...the solitary experience of finding, stalking, and casting to the fish....was an incredibly exciting experience.”
- “The most important pre-trip preparation was practicing my casting in windy



conditions before the trip.”

- The most challenging issue? “Trying to tune out an aggressive guide who told you that your cast is too short and scared the fish – ‘More further.....noooo, more left.....noooo, you scare the feesh!’ ”

RIVER X – WE NEED MORE LIKE THIS!



We do enjoy promoting our outfitters in Fernie, BC (Elk River watershed) for all the reasons you’ve seen detailed in past newsletters. One of those reasons is these local boys keep digging up new opportunities, even though their regular options are very good and largely unpressured (unlike most of our waters in the lower 48). The following is reprinted in part from their spring newsletter:

“We have gained access to possibly the best trophy rainbow trout stream I have ever seen in BC. We are the only guide service offering this water and I can’t even mention the name of the water for very selfish reasons. We are simply referring to it as River X. My first day here I was with Spencer and the smallest fish I caught was about 17 inches. The day was filled with many between 20 and 25. We also saw

and missed several that were close to 30 inches long. Yes, 10-pound rainbows on hoppers are possible. This small stream is easy to walk and wade. The banks are flat and the water is fun to fish and easy to read. We have private access to this water and the farmer we did business with is a great guy, very laid back and not interested in fishing. One client who fished it, a good angler, had a banner day landing about 10 trout, losing 10 more and a couple were between 8 and 10 pounds. Some on streamers and some on hoppers. The reason these fish get so big is that they are eating 5-7 inch long minnows. At this point I have no idea how the minnows got in this stream but it is paying off huge for us. We will be combining this water with the Waterton River, known for big browns, and the Oldman River, both below and above the dam. If you have not yet had a late night on the Oldman, you are missing out on some really fun caddis fishing. Often you can stand in ankle deep water casting a caddis and watching hundreds of trout rise all over.”



Naturally, a stream like River X is going to have to be protected from overfishing. I’m not sure at this point just how often they will allow it to be fished, but it does add one more exciting option to this fishery.

5th ANNUAL “BELIZE CUP” INVITATIONAL FLY FISHING TOURNAMENT



For several years, William Owens, Jeff Aldridge, Billy Lane, Mike Berard, and group have been chartering both the Meca and Seaduction and anchoring them together as their floating lodge in the inshore waters in Belize. To add some extra excitement to their trips, they have designed a tournament based on different point values for the multiple species available on the shallow water flats of Belize. For the last five years, they have awarded a rotating trophy to the highest point earner as that year’s winner of the annual “Belize Cup Fly Fishing Tournament.” This year turned out to be a tie with William Owens (right, with the cup) and Mike Berard (left with cup...and with permit and winning guide, Noel) ending up with exactly the same point totals. It

seems that William can’t get a “clean singular championship” as his other victory has an *** attached to it due to a scoring controversy.....according to Billy Lane ☺. These guys do know how to have fun!!!

Following are some excerpts from William’s report on this year’s trip: “The



consensus is that this was probably our best trip yet.....We did include the guides in our little fishing tournament and they were hilarious. I think Noel (eventual winner with 3 permit) knew the rules better than we did.....Looks like we will be keeping the same week with both boats again next year. All in all, a very good crew - we are looking forward to 2009.”



A few firsts on this year's trip: In 2007, Ray Styons caught a bonefish, tarpon, and permit, all on spinning gear - this year he caught his first bonefish on a fly. John Britt caught his first tarpon, about a 40 pounder. William Owens has been trying to catch a permit sight casting for years (caught one blind casting - not quite the same) and finally scored with two permit this trip which helped him earn the shared championship.

FLY FISHING IN LAS VEGAS? GRANDPA STUFF

On a recent trip to Las Vegas to visit our son, Scott, and his family, we decided to take some fly rods along. We were going to be staying in one of the resort hotels at Lake Las Vegas, about 20 minutes drive from the strip. When staying at the hotels on Lake Las Vegas, you have the "rights" to fish this private lake. Our four year old grandson, Nico, had yet to catch his first fish so we decided that Lake Las Vegas would provide the opportunity to give him some exposure to fishing. And, so it did. We hired a local guide to make sure we could reduce the learning curve for finding fish and had a fun three hour session.

Nico has a closed faced reel on a Spider Man rod, a great set up for a youngster. Casting assistance was provided when necessary, but Nico did have the opportunity to help us catch and release carp (a strong fish on a fly rod) and black bass on poppers. The real trophy was a 27 inch carp which was fooled by a Cheeto fly (looked a lot like popcorn). A surprising visual experience!

In next months newsletter, I'll have more details about this fly fishing opportunity as well as a fly fishing learning experience for corporate or family groups who want an outdoor experience in Vegas, away from the strip.



AIR LINE BAGGAGE ISSUES – OVER 50 POUNDS

With the cost of fuel squeezing airline margins, they are beginning to tack on extra charges for checked baggage to help compensate. Most everyone is familiar with most airlines now charging extra if you check a second bag. However, on my recent trip to Belize, I got bushwhacked an extra \$50 because my bag weighed over 50 pounds (American Airlines). So you have a choice – check a second bag and pay for the second bag.....or put it all in one bag and pay for that. My experience with American was that it would have been cheaper to pay for the second bag rather than be over 50#.

COMMENT ON THE FISH THAT WON ARTICLE

Last month's newsletter carried a story about a wary NZ brown trout that stumped this angler/author. In response to the whupping that brown put on me, Chris Rich forwarded this quote from John Steinbeck: "It has always been my private conviction that any man who pits his intelligence against a fish and loses has it coming." My only comment – I wonder if Steinbeck ever cast dry flies in New Zealand?

PHOTO CREDITS (top to bottom): bonefish photo – John Gans; River X – Jeff Mironuck; Belize tourney – William Owens

Notes on photos: we like to think our newsletter is a good gathering spot for photos of memorable fly fishing experiences. Certainly taking a 10# late spring rainbow in Colorado is memorable. Nice photo Patrick Gilbert.....and great fish!! If you have a photo that you think could fit in this space, submit it – never can have too many great fly fishing photos.

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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