

NEW ZEALAND HONEYMOON TRIP REPORT OCTOBER HONEYMOON LORELLA & TREVOR PRICHETT

Kawaha Point - a great starting point for the trip. The lodge was beautiful, Brian and Margaret and the rest of the crew were lovely (Andre has a great sense of humor!), and the food may have been the best we had in NZ. In hindsight I wished we had fished a day in that area as we only fished one river on the South Island that had rainbows, and according to most reports I got the fish aren't as fickle as the S. Island browns tend to be. Not an issue for me, but as a beginner Lorella preferred the easier fishing.

Maruia River Lodge - I can't say enough good things about Steve and Penny. They gave us an upgrade off the bat and took fabulous care of us. The food was quite good though not at the same level as Kawaha Point, but that's irrelevant when you consider the fabulous hospitality. On our first full day we ended up fishing with a guide named Ron. Ron is a real character and a phenomenal guide with perhaps the best eyes of anyone we fished with - the day was extremely overcast and Ron was picking out fish from 50 yards. I was sorry we didn't meet Paul but we didn't miss a beat with Ron. We fished two rivers with Ron because he wanted to show us some variety. The first was a small stream that feeds the Maruia and I can't remember the name but if you take a right out the Lodge it's about a 30 minute drive. In that stream I caught two big browns in very skinny water - a pretty impressive introduction to NZ fishing. We then went and fished the Maruia just upstream of the lodge, where Ron has some private access. I caught a couple of nice fish on dries, one of which took me for a half kilometer jog through some rapids, and then we concentrated on getting Lorella a fish. Ron did a great job with Lori on her first day of flyfishing and eventually she did get one. He also died my lines for me and gave us great pointers on where we could fish on our own. For the next three days at Maruia we hiked, white water kayaked and fished on our own. With Ron's advice I was able to catch fish consistently on some really neat water on the Maruia and Buller, and as you know I managed to nail Steve's pet fish. He'll be waiting for you in February!

Braelea - A very cute little farmstay with a three legged deer in the house! I'm serious! This area is all about fishing and Kevin and Jason did a great job. The weather had been poor so the only game in town was a river near Fairlie that Kevin and Jason had different private access points to - we didn't pay for access though. Sorry I can't remember the name of this one either. Kevin was a very patient teacher with Lorella and he put me onto a lot of fish on nymphs and dries, including some darn big fish. The next day with Jason it was the same story. Jason is a very able and enthusiastic guide and I recommend him highly for serious anglers. I never saw him stop looking for fish the entire day!

Brentleigh Homestead - Mary and Brian couldn't have done a better job of taking care of us! The sleeping quarters are quite nice, completely modernized, and are private from the main farmhouse. Meals were taken in the main house with Mary and Brian, and Mary is a fabulous cook. This place is a real working farm spanning over ten thousand acres and the grand tour in Brian's truck was a bonus. We fished one day with Selwyn Shanks and caught a good number of fish in the Maitai. They weren't huge (1-5lbs) but the numbers were impressive and it was refreshing for Lorella to be able to catch fish with some consistency. I probably caught 15 fish and Lori got 3. We didn't explore the fishing on the Brentleigh farm property, but apparently it's pretty good. We also spent a day hiking near Gore while in town.

Lakeside Motel, Te Anau - The Lakeside Motel is just what you'd expect from the name, and it served us well. Dean is another top notch guide and I really enjoyed fishing with him. The first day we fished the Eglington in some pretty foul weather, but managed to net about ten browns in the 3 to 6 pound range. Lorella took the second day off fishing and Dean and I fished the river that runs right by Te Anau. Again, the weather was miserable, but we managed to catch around 15 fish with a nice mixture of browns and rainbows.

Blanket Bay - No need to comment on the level of accommodation here! The first day we experienced torrential downpours, so I headed to mouth of the stream that runs by the lodge, and to my surprise caught

about ten nice fish in just an hour – a mixture of rainbows, browns and salmon. The fish were aggressive and ate any little streamer or muddler I threw at them – didn't even need to use the sinking line. On day two things cleared up and I was quite pleased to discover fish feeding on the surface at sunrise. After trying a few flies and sizing down my leader I got them to eat a #18 adams. I know, I wasn't supposed to be fishing at Blanket Bay but I couldn't resist! We also made full use the spa at Blanket Bay and went on a beautiful hike on day 2.

Overall Don, the trip was truly unbelievable. The fishing was probably not peak – had to do a fair amount of nymph fishing and a lot of rivers were muddy or too windy - but the early season has its advantages as the fish are hungry and probably not as gun shy as they are later in the season. We covered an astounding swath of country and were treated by phenomenal hospitality everywhere we went.

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