



Watching trout swim and feed in their natural environment has always held a fascination for me. More so, watching them approach and eat your fly is even a greater thrill. And for me, the greatest thrill of all is to capture the sequence of those activities with a camera. We had several of those opportunities on the Chimuín River in a stretch of seven miles of protected water as it meanders across the Tipiliuke Estancia.



On our recent Argentina trip, before we moved on to do battle with Golden Dorado, Josh Luft-Glidden and my wife, Marte, and I visited Argentine Patagonia and its classic trout waters. Josh's itinerary included waters from near Esquel in the south to San Martín in the north. Due to some late hassles with plane schedules, Marte and I could only access the San Martín area and spent our time at the world famous lodge of Tipiliuke. Tipiliuke was recently honored with the Sporting Classics Award Of Excellence as the world's top fishing lodge of 2011, and from our personal experiences there, certainly is deserving of such an honor.

TIPILIUKE

The charm of Tipiliuke as a world class fly fishing lodge begins with the Chimuín River. Guests visiting the lodge can fish the waters in the surrounding area, but most never wander off the estancia to fish.



The Chimuín is a classic trout river with a good population of fish and a solid average fish size with the possibility of a trophy-sized fish (at left below, healthy brown rests in the shade).....both browns and rainbows.



The Chimiwin has lots of variety with smaller braids, willow covered sections, boulder strewn areas, brush piles, overgrown banks – even its own spring creek (above, right). It is protected in that only drift boats can access the water and they must keep moving to clear the property by nightfall – this allows the best parts of the river to remain safe from overfishing as they can't be effectively accessed from driftboats. This is “wade fishing” and trout stalking at its best.



Below, the trout's view of a take:
 “That looks like it might be tasty. Let's take a closer look.....I want it.....something feels strange.....!!!”



“OOPS”

View from the other side

Let's do that again sometime.



A world class trout lodge would have a service oriented, quality staff that works hard to please every guest.....and, beginning with the owner/managers, Kevin and Mary Jo Tiemersma, at the top and extending through every staff member, you couldn't ask for more in terms of service. The cuisine is outstanding with meals a trip highlight. Lunch is often served outside on the covered patio (below, right) and a traditional asado (below, left-center) is always part of the treat. Pre-dinner drinks and hors d'oeuvres (left) are a good way begin a late dinner following the evening rise.

A variety of activities makes Tipiliuke more than just a fishing lodge. It would be more accurate to term it an “eco-tour lodge” with a great fly fishing program. From bird watching to horseback riding, there is an array of guided non-fishing activities that make this a very attractive stay for a non-fishing spouse.



From the outdoor sportsman's point of view, there are a variety of hunting experiences in addition to the fishing. This is best represented by the Tipiliuke Grand Slam, the most unique Grand Slam we've ever seen. A plaque hangs on the lodge wall (below, left-center) recognizing those that have accomplished this feat.....truly a challenging series of sporting events. The 'Slam consists of:

- brown trout of at least 16" and rainbow of a minimum of 18"
- 5 California quail
- 1 snipe
- a wild boar of at least 100#
- a Red Stag with a minimum of ten points



The 109 year old estancia is a working ranch. With 48,000 acres and over 4,000 head of cattle, many gauchos are needed to keep things moving in the right direction. At right above, next to a fat late evening brown, Josh gives a gaucho a few tips on the finer points of casting.

SOUTH TO ESQUEL

The corridor from just north of San Martin south to Esquel and on to the Chilean border crossing at Paso Futaleufu is Argentina's trout heartland. This 800 km stretch of land that borders the eastern slope of the Andes is home to such famous Argentine rivers, in addition to the Chimuín, as the Malleo and Colon Cura (below, left-center). After his stay at Tipiliuke, Josh Luft-Glidden (below, right) fished in the greater Esquel area with independent guides and enjoyed productive fishing.....and good guides. Many photos from his time there follow.

Many of the "famous" Argentine trout rivers, such as the Malleo and Traful, went through a "down time" recently. This was caused by too much fishing pressure and overharvesting of fish by the locals. As it happens so often in this world of ours, when fishing became dismal, people began to pay attention and place restrictions on the water to protect the resource. The Malleo has made a significant comeback and the big brown at left below was taken there this season.



The town of Bariloche (left, below) is situated on the shore of Nahuel Huapi Lake and is surrounded by Nahuel Huapi National Park which includes some dramatic Andes Peaks. Bariloche is approximately 250 kilometers south of San Martin and 300 kilometers north of Esquel.





PHOTO CREDITS: Josh Luft-Glidden, last two photos in the Tipiliuke section and most of the photos in the “South To Esquel” section

Either phone or drop us an e-mail if you have questions or would like more information about any of our destinations.

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