



NEW ZEALAND TOPICS IN THIS ISSUE:

- THE UNIQUENESS OF THE NEW ZEALAND EXPERIENCE CAPTURED
- THE NZ VERSION OF STALKING AND SIGHT FISHING
- LADIES GALLERY
- ITINERARY OPTIONS: FROM ECONOMY TO TOP DRAWER
- DIFFERING APPROACHES FOR REPEAT AND ANNUAL NZ TRAVELERS
- USING NZ FOR A FAMILY ADVENTURE
- CONTRASTING ENVIRONMENTS: THE FIJI – NZ CONNECTION

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE NEW ZEALAND EXPERIENCE CAPTURED



This year's New Zealand "cute couple photo" recognition goes to Terry and Gary Butts for the one at left (they also contributed the spectacular banner photo above). Terry and Gary are a well traveled, adventuresome, fly fishing duo that have toured and fished many places on the globe. The early part of this year was spent in New Zealand with a week in Fiji on the way home. Their NZ itinerary included covering the South Island almost from tip to tip with a few stops on the North Island as a warm up. In addition to spending time in two of the famous wine producing areas, they fished with some of the renowned independent guides and stayed at some of the top lodges. Gary's concise report on their overall experience captured the unique combination of elements that make New Zealand

such an outstanding fly fishing travel experience:

"My wife and I returned from our first trip to New Zealand on March 12. I can't get the trip out of my mind. I keep wondering if there is any other place on the planet where you can stalk and sight cast to 6+ pound trout - trout that rise to huge dry flies. Any other place where the fishing is supported by great accommodations and good food - all enhanced by a friendly, English speaking populace. It will probably haunt me until we return to New Zealand."

THE NZ VERSION OF STALKING AND SIGHT FISHING



Gary Martin, a long time New Zealand veteran and outstanding angler, included his results in a report on his experiences this year: "I averaged 7-11 fish per day between 5 and 9 pounds, all on dry flies.....good Cicada hatches so it was all sight fishing with dries." Obviously, Gary "hit it right" with super weather in the area of NZ where he spent all his time, the southwest portion of the South Island. (Note: good weather was in short supply this summer in many areas of the two islands – Gary was fortunate)

Several photos were taken that relay the essence of the sight fishing thrills of stalking NZ's trophy rainbows and browns in their crystalline streams and rivers. Maybe the best of these photos is the one at left by Mike McGuire. He even inserted the arrow to help identify the subject of the stalk, a big brown tucked in close to the rock wall. Mike created a photo essay of

his NZ trip that is posted on the website of his fly fishing club. That photo essay can be accessed through this link: http://peninsulaflyfishers.org/Fishing_Tales/newzealand2010/newzealand2010.html

L to R below: 1. two young anglers discuss strategy with their guide on how to approach the big brown feeding quietly in the pool above them; 2. don't move (or even blink) or that brown is gone; 3. stealth is needed to get a good presentation to this guy; 4. on the knees stalk of big fish in small stream, doesn't get much better than this.



LADIES GALLERY

For a “couples trip” with outstanding fly fishing, it’s hard to beat NZ. Many traveling couples have just one fly fisher in the family, while others have two or more. This year, some outstanding fish were taken by our ladies. Jim Henry, in a well written and humorous report on their third NZ trip, offered a bit of a chauvinistic defense of why his wife, Susan, took the biggest fish of their trip. Excerpted from his report: “.....If I had a concern about this particular guide, it is the same concern that I had about the others. I gave them one job description – see that Susan catches fish. They inexplicitly took me seriously.....Susan hooked into a four pounder that ran out 100 yards of line and backing before they caught up with him. It was a kick.” And later in the report, regarding a different guide: “.....of course, he pointed out an eight pounder to Susan instead of me. I must say that watching the two of them chasing that brown down the river was just great. It was a real adventure for Susan.”

L to R below: 1. Barbara Renfrew with a big bow; 2. Terry Butts and a trophy brown; 3. the masked one – is that Gary Martin trying to sneak into the ladies column? 4. Susan Henry with a brown too large for Jim to handle; 5. Christie Walsh with this years top trophy, a weighed 12# brown.



ITINERARY OPTIONS: FROM ECONOMY TO “TOP DRAWER”



In planning a NZ itinerary, one of the first questions to be answered is, “how do you want to approach the trip – are you limited by a tight budget or is your measure for success finding the best experiences, regardless of the cost.” With most clients, the answer falls somewhere in between those two extremes.

New Zealand offers up the opportunity to use virtually any financial approach you choose. Some of the finest properties my wife and I have ever enjoyed in our world wide travels are to be found in NZ. Outstanding and unique accommodations with cuisine fit for a king are scattered all over both islands. Also, truly “world class” fly fishing lodges are available. On the other end of the scale, there are unique and comfortable “budget accommodations” such as welcoming farm stays with locals who love hosting visitors from the USA and B & B’s, some of them offering the opportunity to prepare your own meals if you’re squeezing the max out of every travel dollar.

On the low end of the scale, it’s possible to put together a two week itinerary for two for \$6,000US to \$7,000US (land costs only) which includes 6 - 7 days of guided fishing with top notch guides. Or you can take that same two weeks and spend well over \$20,000US – it all depends on how you want to approach it.



TIMING: regardless of what your budget is, beginning the planning process early opens up the best options. The “prime time” in NZ is relatively short and the top guides, accommodations, and lodges do book up early. If you want to have as many of the best options available for your trip as possible, it’s a good idea to begin the planning process very early.

DIFFERING APPROACHES FOR REPEAT AND ANNUAL NZ TRAVELERS



Very few clients make only one trip to NZ. Almost always, that first trip is just the introduction to a wonderful experience that is repeated annually or many times over the course of several years. Examining the varying approaches of some of the repeat travelers mentioned in this newsletter, plus our own personal experiences, will provide a good example of the differing approaches that can be used.

Susan and Jim Henry were on their fourth trip this year. Generally speaking, they have preferred to explore new rivers, accommodations, areas, and guides on each trip. This year’s trip was spent entirely on the North Island and did not include any experiences they have had in past years.

Gary Martin (above) has made NZ an annual event on his angling calendar for many years. He has evolved to spending all his time at one particular lodge, preferring to not spend his time on touring or breaking new ground, but focusing on maxing out his time with rod in hand. And, he’s very comfortable with the people at this location and he finds the fishing options of this particular lodge, using their copters for fly outs, provides him with all the variety he needs.

Barbara and Charlie Renfrew (left and right) like to find a way to get 5 days fishing out of each 4 days spent in NZ. NZ has been an annual trip for them since 2006, with one year off for some body repairs. They have narrowed



their trips down to spending their time in four different locations with four different guides and basically, like to follow a similar pattern each year. This year, they encountered a lot of unusual summer weather in the areas they were, yet Barbara’s comments reflect their undaunted spirit in returning.....“really lots of rain, high water....One would think that we would at least wait until we returned to the States from New Zealand to think about a return visit, but no, there I was, midway through the trip, e-mailing Don to sign up the guides and the spots for our dates for next year. Why? Because we



knew weather can be an issue, and yet the fish we found, rainbow and brown, were big, wild and strong. The guides worked endlessly to find fish, and are wonderful people. And the scenery is spectacular. So we are signed up for 2011, hoping that it will be a good summer, but if not, it is still extraordinary, nothing like it that I know of anywhere else.” (note: there are enough regulars like Barbara who return each year and tie up their favorite guides/lodges for the “prime time” that early planning is the only way to find the best options available for the time frames you need.)

Personally, Marte and I always repeat some of our favorite guides/waters while adding in a few new stops on each trip. Next year, we’re extra excited because, after years of showing him the photos, our son (and my co-author of THE HUNT, Scott) has found the space in his busy calendar to join us for 9 days of our trip. Finding a way to maximize his short amount of time was the most challenging NZ itinerary yet.

USING NZ FOR A FAMILY ADVENTURE



This article was featured in our March newsletter so may be familiar to many of you. This was something new for us – generally, our NZ itinerary planning is for either hard core fly fishing experiences or “couples trips” which combine touring NZ while blending in some of its best fly fishing opportunities. Michael explained that the kids were outdoors oriented and, while he wanted them to have some exposure to fly fishing “New Zealand style,” they were going to need supervised activities they would enjoy while he and the family CEO, Christie, spent some time on the water stalking the famous NZ trophy browns and rainbows.

If you’d like to pursue this article further, this link will take to the photo essay report of the Walsh family experiences in New Zealand.....http://www.flyfishingadventures.org/Newsletter/TR_Walsh.pdf

CONTRASTING ENVIRONMENTS: THE FIJI – NZ CONNECTION



We have always enjoyed traveling where our visits can be split between two different environments in the same general area of the globe. When we discovered NZ in 2001, we knew we were going to begin spending time in the South Pacific each year. On our subsequent trips, we explored Tahiti and Fiji as tropical destinations that were “on the way” to NZ. For the last five years, we have settled on a wonderful out-island Fijian resort (Qamea Resort and Spa) as a tropical tie-in with the glacier capped peaks of the Kiwi’s. We even loved our time there before I learned how to have some spectacular fly rod Giant Trevally experiences.

Dual environment trips are wonderful if you have the time, the budget, and can deal with the packing hassles. The international airport in Fiji is just a 3.5 hour flight from Auckland so the physical proximity is there.

The global organizations that rate resorts have begun heaping recognition on Qamea the last few years, long after we discovered it. Qamea was the only Fijian resort to earn recognition as *MOST EXCELLENT RESORT* by Conde Nast in their 2008 Awards For Excellence. Meaningfully, Conde Nast says Qamea is one of those rare properties that rates “Five Stars, but with a Four Star price.” The Robb Report named Qamea Resort and Spa one of the World’s Top Ten Luxury Exclusive Hideaways.

Terry and Gary Butts tied in a stop at Qamea this year with their New Zealand trip. Gary even found a way to catch a GT (above). For a relaxing second honeymoon type of getaway, Qamea is an excellent choice.



ADDITIONAL INFO

At the bottom of the New Zealand page on our website, www.flyfishingadventures.org, are many recaps and descriptions of the overall New Zealand experience. Many are in the form of client reports, people who have provided meaningful and, in some cases, detailed feedback on their trips.

PHOTO CREDITS – banner photo: Gary Butts. This newsletter has multiple contributions from many people including Michael Walsh and the Walsh family, Susan and Jim Henry, Barbara and Charlie Renfrew, Terry and Gary Butts, Mike McGuire, and Gary Martin. Thanks to all our contributors.

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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