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We are in the ninth year of publishing our monthly newsletter with updates on the great fly fishing venues, trip reports and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We've been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new destinations. 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.

**O.K.C. TOURS AND FISHES NEW ZEALAND**



A group of Oklahoma City friends recently toured New Zealand, coupling some of the finest fly fishing into the itinerary.....accompanied by one "outsider" from San Francisco. Pictured at left is the group at one of Queenstown's finest celebrating a birthday – the birthday boy and his age not available! Beginning to the left of the smiling face in the blue shirt and moving left to right: Ruth Carey, Chip and Shannon Fudge, Chris Carey, Jerry Saltzgaber, Hayden Groendyke, Lance and Cindy Ruffel, Julie and Ron Arvine, Ronna Davis, and in the blue shirt, her husband Larry.

The group began their NZ saga in the southwestern section of the South Island and concluded at one of the finest Kiwi properties, Poronui on the North Island. They did some fishing and visited Fiordland National Park, Fiordland included a tour of glow worm caves and a trip to Milford Sound (and some guys squeezed in a little fishing). The day touring Milford included a boat ride (below, left) on the sound and a hike on some of the world famous treks in this area. Photo left/center is of Lance, Cindy, Julie, and Ron "trekking." Group shows off their OKC Thunder colors. Right, Chris took several "memory fish" to 8 pounds – at right he is holding a pretty brown.



From left, below: Chip with large brown; Larry "fish on" in spectacular small stream – this is the same stream as the banner photo where more than 15 fish ate our dry flies; aerial shot from a copter of waters to be fished; Ron with beautiful rainbow and, at right, with his real trophy, wife Julie – snow capped Alps in the background.





I will not divulge who sent the photo of the sign.



### UNIQUE FLOAT EXPERIENCE IN REMOTE WAIMAK RIVER GORGES

“Overall, it was a magnificent experience. Spectacular scenery and good fishing. A ‘must do’ while in NZ.”  
John Landis.



A year ago, on my annual New Zealand saga, the owner of Grasmere High Country Retreat and I reviewed the topo maps of the mountainous terrain in the area. I’ve never been a great fan of fishing the Waimak River, which runs adjacent to the highway through the Alps in the vicinity of Arthur’s Pass – just too much traffic. However, the lodge owner told me stories of places where he had done three day fly fishing hikes through some gorges far from the highway. His fishing experience was much different and far more exciting than my previous trials of fishing near the highway. He was interested in setting up drift boat/raft trips through these gorges and wanted me (and possibly some of our clients) to be part of the exploration process during early 2016.

I volunteered to do two days on my Feb ’16 trip, one day each of drifting on the two beats on the river. Also, John Landis was going to be in this area on his trip with his friend, Rob Pizzie. John would be on his second NZ adventure; Rob his first trip (along with his wife, Annette). They “volunteered” to be part of the exploration process.

The first step of the drift trip was a somewhat harrowing ride in a four-wheel drive vehicle through some high country pastureland to get to the ‘put-in’ point. After the ‘put-in,” the rest of the experience is described in brief terms by John in the opening line above. For fishing results, the report was 13 hook ups, 8 to the net, all 4 to 6# browns with a few pigs hooked, but lost. Photos from John and Rob:







A few downsides: First is price. This day, in addition to your guide, NZ law requires the use of a licensed river raft operator – in this case, the delightful young lady above. Second - this is a weather sensitive section of water. Two days after Rob and John had their drift, a large storm blew through the Alps and this trip would not be available for the next four or five days. For me personally, this was a major negative as I missed my scheduled two days drifting the gorges of the Waimak.

### HIGH COUNTRY FARM STREAMS



Some of my most exciting times fishing in NZ have come on high country sheep and cattle farmland like that pictured at the left. In the photo, ahead and to the left of the four-wheel drive vehicle, are two small valleys draining that mountain range. Each of those valleys has small streams that join together as they enter the flat pastureland (below, left/center). These high country farm streams can be found in many places in New Zealand, most often on the eastern side of the Alps of the South Island. Often, these streams will have one large 4 to 8 pound brown that has staked out some holding water as their private feeding area. Usually, these type of environments are protected by a series of locked gates with padlocks which keep them isolated. What is needed is a local guide with the connections to gain access through the padlocks. One of our favorite Kiwi guides is a local guy who grew up in this

area and knows every nook and corner of every stream.....plus he has long-time relationships with the ranchers and farmers in the area. In addition to his collection of farm streams and rivers, he fishes some spectacular river valleys that drain the eastern side of the Alps – some of the most dramatic fly fishing scenery anywhere (many photos in ‘Images’ article below). A great combination of waters!



### IMAGES OF NEW ZEALAND

A collection of photos that capture the essence of the joys of New Zealand. Left to right, below: on his first trip to NZ, Dan McClaskey with a trophy brown; Rob Southey (right/center) is a regular in NZ making annual trips in Nov and Feb.....his photo left/center shows one of the attractions of Nov – snow capped mountains; a wide range of accommodations available for travelers, from farm stays to small luxury hotels and inns, to some of the world’s finest fishing and eco-tour lodges.





Below, from left: Annette Pizzie is learning to be a fly fisher with hubby, Rob, providing coaching in the art of bringing fish to net. Annette with nice brown.....and then later in the week, with a 'nicer' brown. Everywhere in NZ there are treks, from 30 minute hikes to 5 day treks. Annette with a new friend.



The browns of Lake Brunner often have very distinctive golden or yellow coloring. For those who want to fish still-water, I have found it exciting to stalk 4# browns patrolling shallows like the submerged timber below.



Often, the places we fish are spectacular with scenery that could be the background for a movie.



At left, below, John Landis fights a brown and, at center, with a nice brown.





Helicopters can provide access to waters not otherwise accessible, including some special small streams. The physical aspect of hiking and wading all day sometimes requires a lunchtime nap. Fortunately, cattle on “farm streams” are not usually aggressive.



There was a time when the 10# brown appeared more frequently than they do today. The 8# fish is now considered a trophy fish. However, the ten pounders are still there....at left. Rob Pizzie with a 10.5# fish. I even found a way to get a few good fish on this years annual New Zealand trek – shaved head at right.



**PHOTO CREDITS:** banner – Larry Davis; OKC photos – the group; Images Of New Zealand - Dan McClaskey, Rob Southey; Rob Pizzie and John Landis submitted many of the ‘Images’ photos in addition to all the photos in the float trip article.

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,  
Don Muelrath  
Fly Fishing Adventures  
[www.flyfishingadventures.org](http://www.flyfishingadventures.org)  
888-347-4896