

Mark's fishing blog

Our day started as you know later than most (having missed the early morning fish) in favour of having a sumptuous breakfast. At a leisurely pace we headed off to the head of Lake Wanaka to fish the mouth of two streams with Jake our guide for the day (location unknown but keenly anticipated). The trip around to the secret spot was interesting as Jake our guide was a student of Geography and much was learned for future reference.

A short trip over the lake to the aforesaid secret spot resulted in both Jo and I getting an introduction on the etiquette of how to exit the boat and stalk the side of the river to try and spot trout which without the benefit of Polaroid glasses would be absolutely impossible. It was great fun trying to discern the whether what we were seeing were trout instead of boulders or branches (they look decidedly similar). Shortly after the prelim exam it was into the gorgeous waders and a casting lesson which saw a few flies going in directions which seemed impossible. Jake showed great patience and fortitude in giving us both lessons on the art of casting trout flies and the direction and methodology for casting a fly in a particular direction or particular way. He then demonstrated with effortless grace the proper way to cast and retrieve the fly (and also many other times during the course of the afternoon) - it is and was a joy to watch a true expert cast the trout fly to just where it was intended - ah one can but dream.

Next came the lesson on how to stalk the trout and the dangers of being seen (obvious really but not very elegant to be crouched down in heavy waders trying to cast to a trout where it cannot be seen - that one got away). So on the lessons and tips flowed freely and we thought it was starting to make sense and suddenly there was a strong tug on the rod and a trout was hooked - what to do what did Jake say what is he saying it was all a blur, the rod was bent the reel was screaming the line was where - oh that's right around my feet and yes getting tangled in amongst my clumsily feet as I struggled to break free - one moment things were in control and then as the trout and as always larger than the biggest trout one has ever seen arches out of the water the line gets trapped and the trout is gone. Back to the drawing board.

Back to the casts - up and down the river we go with Jake trying to spot a likely prey and ourselves not quite up to the task - then another tug on the line, this time I am prepared I as I have even seen the fly being swallowed by the trout, rod bent my determination knows no bounds as I set about bringing the trout to the side of the river bank whereupon much smiling (read relief and photos ensued), - trout released and the adrenaline was flowing things were as they should be and I was all at one with (have I mentioned the surroundings) the world. It not a right but a sheer privilege to be able to be in(literally) and surrounded by a landscape of indescribable beauty on a cloudless day - truly unforgettable.

We kept fishing and casting and casting but the trout are a cunning fish and far harder to catch than one might think. On to another stream where it seemed impossible to imagine there are trout but they are lying still in the eddy's and crooks of the magnificent river that we have made our own for there is no one in sight a truly memorable experience. The afternoon wore on and it seemed that we were destined to catch one trout and frankly that would have been plentiful as we were enraptured by the scenery as the light began to fall - what did you say Jake oh yes the fly wasn't quite landing quite the

way it should be and here is how it is done, the lessons continued and were gratefully received. One last cast and I will be satisfied, what the another dip of the rod and another screaming reel - here we go again - up tip move slowly keep the pressure on - the trout is cavorting upstream below above the water in an attempt to rid itself of the fly it mistakenly took as prey. Eventually amongst the rapidly fading dusky light the trout was coaxed into the side bank of the river - much enjoyment was had by all as this was a decent fish and mandatory photographic evidence followed - again the trout was released and we made our way back to the boat at the river mouth of the lake where the trout whereon the rise feeding on what ever they do. A few casts and we were done left with an indelible trip and memories to take with us - a true privilege.

Thank you for arranging the trip and Jake for his undoubted patience and skills that he freely gave to us on the day.

Regards

Mark