



 Aardvark McLeod

WELCOME TO OUR AUTUMN 2013 NEWSLETTER

# Fish Tails...

This year has exceeded expectations with more anglers travelling with us to a huge variety of destinations than ever before. Our small team has put a wealth of travel experience

together to create some totally outside the box combination itineraries from the heights of Machu Picchu in Peru to hiking through the Icelandic interior.

The Icelandic season was simply outstanding with record catches reported on most rivers. Our current portfolio is the largest in Europe and we are expecting a large swing back to the rivers of Iceland. Enquiries have begun in earnest so please let us know what space you may require. The trout fishing again proved to be extremely popular and we will be running our Jardine hosted clinics again next year.

As always the team will be hosting groups next year, maintaining our direct links with those on the ground. Charlotte is returning to Alphonse Island with both triggerfish and milkfish in her sights, Steffan has just returned from British Columbia and will be heading to Kau Tapen in Argentina, Alex is returning to Los Roques and Iceland and I will be going to Christmas Island and Farquhar.

The Seychelles continues to be our most popular destination in the saltwater arena with Cuba a close second. I am, however, extremely excited about our exploratory to Christmas Island at the end of October as, despite its distance, the multispecies potential is huge. For the intrepid, we have a new operation coming online in West Africa for giant tarpon and more on that inside. It is also with great excitement that we see Cosmoledo reopen.

This Autumn will see our new website come online and should prove to be a comprehensive resource of our destinations and combined knowledge and experience. With over 200 operations to choose from in 36 different countries we know that we can select the perfect trip for you. Please put us to the test.



# Umbungo, Umbungo *we catch it in the Congo...*

**Rumours abound in this business of new spots, bigger fish, unexplored waters and they are often just that; rumours. However, every so often a new operation pops up on our radar which shows real promise of being totally unique and a product that lives up to expectations and hype.**



Normally in far flung corners of the globe, these extraordinary fishing areas have been discovered by intrepid fishermen staggered by what they have found. Prime examples of past discoveries are Cosmoledo (now reopen) in the Seychelles and Tsimane in Bolivia.

There have been tales of behemoth tarpon caught on the West coast of Africa for some time and whispers of even bigger tarpon being seen. The logistical and security issues involved in operating in this part of Africa have always meant that the rumours have remained rumours.

A new operation is about to launch in the Republic of Congo that will allow us to explore the potential of this fishery as big tarpon are not all it has on offer.

In the next few months a fully refitted mothership will be sailed over from Miami kitted out with the latest equipment and skiffs to pioneer a new tarpon fishing operation off the coast of the Republic of Congo. The team has been exploring this coastline for the last two years and in that time have landed five fish they estimated at over 200 lbs, on fly, with numerous fish over 150 lbs. The operation will accommodate only four fishermen per week fishing from the latest skiffs with experienced guides formally operating in the Seychelles. Many lessons have been learnt by this team, headed by Arno Mattee and Paul Boyers, who have fished up and down the coast of West Africa including Angola and Gabon, and this knowledge has been used to refine what could potentially become the finest tarpon fishery on earth.

The first trips are planned for early 2014, and this trip will be for those who rise to the challenge and wish to follow in the footsteps of fly fishing explorers. We are compiling waitlists so if you would be interested then please let us know.



Midfjardara 2013. Alejandro Martello



## Sight Fishing *for Salmon*

**When talking of global salmon fishing many ask me why I have such a passion for Iceland. There are greater numbers to be found on Russia's Kola Peninsula, and certainly larger salmon in northern Norway. I think the answer lies in the method. The experience is visual, the tackle used is very light and the rivers of Iceland not only offer consistency, ease of travel and huge variety, but also that it is often possible to watch as a salmon rises in the water column and hits a fly off the surface.**



I have known many salmon fishermen over the years who have found this experience to be the thrill they have been searching for. To begin with we just want to catch one. Then we want to catch a lot of them. The next challenge is to then catch a really large fish. Finally the true essence of salmon fishing emerges which is the "take". This becomes the all encompassing experience that drives us to make that pilgrimage every year. Iceland is the land of the "take".

Over the last eight years, we have grown a portfolio of over 40 Icelandic rivers that are all very different but offer the opportunity to experience that enchanting mystery. There are rivers to suit all preferences.

It may be using a single handed 7# flicking out a size 16 hitched Red Frances to a pod of silver fish on the Laxá I Kjos or using a two hander to deliver a two inch Sunray Shadow on the Laxá I Adaldal. You will find that all these rivers have something in common: as the water is so clear it is often possible to see the fish in the river, see their behaviour towards the fly, and often the moment that the fish commits to taking it.

After what I suspect were a couple of tough years at sea for the salmon, many Icelandic rivers experienced a record season in 2013. The Icelandic fisheries also offer the wonderful ability to mix three day slots and fish a couple of different rivers or trout fishing in one week if you wish. We suspect Iceland is going to busy next season, so why not come with us and see the "take" for yourself?



# Iceland salmon or trout... *or both*

## Focus on the Langá River

Over the last decade there is one west coast Icelandic river that has remained consistent during the peaks and troughs of runs and conditions, the Langá. The river was one of the first to be fished by the British and during that time they modified much of the course with fish ladders to make it more manageable to both salmon and fishermen. Being lake fed from Langávatn, water levels can be maintained via the dam even through the driest summer. The river exhibits all the classic characteristics of an Icelandic river with small canyons and open pools over its 36 km length, each easily accessible by vehicle. With over 90 pools to 12 rods it is perfect for hitching small flies on single handed rods and enjoying the true Icelandic fishing experience.

Before the fish ladders were built salmon had a tough time getting up river. Nature compensated by gracing them with a huge tail on a torpedo-like body to negotiate the waterfalls, thus developing one of the strongest fish pound for pound an angler will ever encounter. Matched with a comfortable lodge, excellent guides and top quality food, the Langá has remained one of our most popular rivers.



Flying to Iceland from London takes just under 3 hours; this means that for many of the rivers you can be fishing the same day that you leave the UK. Iceland salmon and brown trout fishing is generally sold in 3 & 6 day slots and can be easily combined with other rivers in the country. In one week next year why not try the ultimate surface fishing combination by targeting large wild brown trout on dry flies followed by enticing fresh salmon to take a riffing hitch?

**Encouraged by the popularity of the incredible wild brown trout fishing found on the upper sections of the Laxá I Adaldal, Laxardal and Myvatnssveit, we have searched to find Icelandic rivers that are equally as enchanting to add to our portfolio.**

These rivers can be fished as standalone trips or can be combined with any of our other Icelandic rivers to offer a truly unforgettable experience. Fremrí Asum, an exclusive section of river for just three rods, boasts good numbers of fish and the perfect setting for intact groups. Reykjadal, a small river in an extremely fertile valley, fishes up to six rods. The brown trout are not as big as the Laxardal fish but are present in larger numbers. Litlá is considered one of the best brown trout rivers in Iceland and is limited to six rods. Through the season it offers chances to catch sea trout, arctic char and salmon.

Charles Jardine



## Returning to Iceland's *Wild Trout Rivers*

*"I have never seen fly-fishing as an extreme sport necessarily".*

Exasperating, poetic, rhythmic, beautiful, beguiling, bewitching... balletic even... but never something that may rival an Olympic sport. I do now. I have made the '400 metre downhill trout-dash' my very own.

Iceland, a long held ambition. The land of fire and ice... and salmon and, wait a minute, legendary trout. The opportunity of carrying rods and generally tagging along with my seasoned fishing travelled son, Alex, was succulent as a Bibio bobbing on the surface of the big Laxá.

A group of like minded souls was formed at the Aardvark McLeod nerve centre. The bulk of whom were fathers and sons (which was the idea – and a good one as it happened; what camaraderie developed as a result: brilliant) and so the trip materialised.



Due to increasing demand it is essential to book trout fishing early. Our hosted trip will return to Laxardal in 9-12, 12-15, 15-18 July 2014. Space will be available in 3 or 6 day slots. Accommodation whilst fishing is on a single room basis and rod sharing is possible with shared accommodation.

I think, like everyone in the group, I was buoyed by the promise of rising fish and bibio mayhem. Fishing, especially fly-fishing, can be a cruel mistress. It didn't happen... well not in the way intended or imagined. Instead, we had a week of plots to unravel, river stories to read and currents and trout's moodiness to decipher. We did meet that challenge. With dry flies that would shake Halford and Marayatt from their peaceful resting places... great chunks of floating foam that brought angry brown trout from the coiling Icelandic currents to engulf the flies with slow, deliberate, latent venom. It was splendid. Addictive. I crave more.

Facts will tell their own story. So many fish lost through their sheer ferocity and strength. But legends were caught. Most were in and around 4 lbs – 5 lbs. Staggering.

This is and remains one of the very few places I have fished on the planet where the stories meet the reality. The fish are big – very big. They do rise to dry flies (with alacrity, actually). The guides ARE open and practiced, the scenery IS grand, and the fishing is, well, stunning.

Will I be going back? Don't be daft, of course I will.



# Alphonse?

It has been documented so well by writers far cleverer with their pens than I and has recently been immortalised on film with the 7 Degrees South movie. At a bit of a loss, I have opted for something straight from the heart.



I am excited. 2½ months to go before I head back to Alphonse. I just can't help it. I find myself in the evening drifting off and pondering whether I should replace my lines or stick with them. I know I need to replace the Seaguar. I am heading back to Alphonse to experience, once again, some of the best saltwater fly fishing on the planet so I'm allowed to be excited. I have a fantastic group to travel with, and hopefully the milkfish will be at the peak of their migratory run and honouring us with their presence. Last December I landed two; will I have the opportunity to try again?

I visualise my fly boxes holding a row of fluffy Milkie Dreams instead of the trashed and mutilated flies I have left after last

years' milkfish encounters. I see rows of shining Christmas Island Specials and delicate Pillow Talks for the bonefish; zip lock bags of hefty black and purple streamers and brushys for the GTs and separate boxes of crab and shrimp patterns for a bit of species bashing. I still have two Grangers Fat Boys' left but do I need more? They are brilliant flies for dredging. I need some wire for the barracuda so I don't get cut off again. What to do for the triggers? A friend in Bolton and one in South Africa are tying crab patterns

for me (with weed guards) which might do the trick. Possibly. I'm deliberately not thinking about permit. They make my knees wobble.

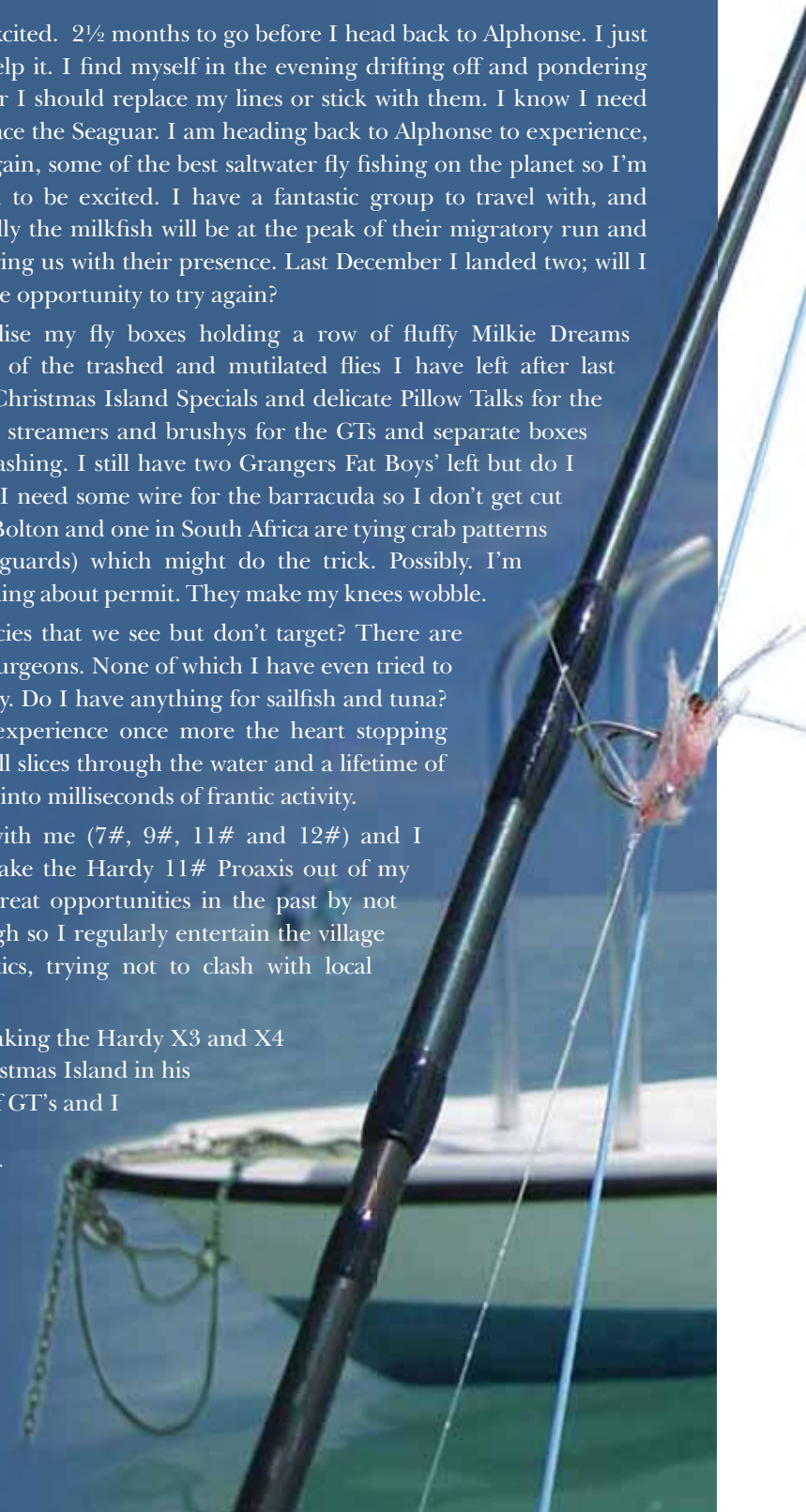
I know that I am biased when it comes to Alphonse but with good reason. The triggerfish are frustrating and rewarding in almost equal measure. Milkfish are unbelievably strong and a challenge to hook. I saw Permit last season in greater numbers than on previous visits and greater numbers = greater opportunities. There are big GTs, barracuda, sailfish, tuna and bonefish galore. There are a plethora of reef species to target including the smaller trevally species and several that you don't normally spare a glance at.

Space on Alphonse is tighter than it has been in the past six years but there are gaps both before and after Christmas so it is not too late to take a spot and start your own debate about what to pack and what to leave behind.

And what about species that we see but don't target? There are parrotfish. Batfish. Surgeons. None of which I have even tried to fool into taking my fly. Do I have anything for sailfish and tuna? Not yet. I want to experience once more the heart stopping moment when the bill slices through the water and a lifetime of action is compressed into milliseconds of frantic activity.

Rods? I take four with me (7#, 9#, 11# and 12#) and I must remember to take the Hardy 11# Proaxis out of my car. I have missed great opportunities in the past by not being accurate enough so I regularly entertain the village with my casting antics, trying not to clash with local football practice.

Reels? Peter will be taking the Hardy X3 and X4 Fortuna reels to Christmas Island in his continuing pursuit of GT's and I have already worked out delivery times for replacements if his bags go missing (or he won't hand them over).



## Strip Strip Pause... Strip Stop... Set the Hook *A Los Roques bonefish tail*

**There is not much in fishing that is more exciting than sightfishing for bonefish. On a trip to Los Roques in Venezuela earlier this year I was able to experience one of the most diverse bonefish fisheries around.**

For those who have yet to experience their first bonefishing trip it is hard to describe the thrill of the stalk, chase and explosion of activity that follows. Imagine chalkstream-like crystal clear waters flowing over white sand and lapping over coral and turtle grass flats. A myriad of blues make up this landscape from sky to sea.



Los Roques is an unspoiled atoll located approximately 100 miles from the Venezuelan coast. It is a diverse flats destination with a focus on wading for bonefish. Tarpon are frequently landed and the elusive permit grow large on the archipelago. If you would like to join Alex Jardine he will be hosting a return trip to Los Roques, 21 – 28 June 2014.

Fish move effortlessly through the water here, but do not be fooled, they are highly alert and must be approached with stealth and cunning. Scanning the water you look for the tell tail signs that the fish are present.

A glint catches your eye. Your focus sharpens. Sure enough, several tails can be seen breaking the surface, waving as a feeding frenzy takes place below the surface. Your senses home in on your quarry.

The cast needs to be accurate and delicate, almost as if placing a dry fly on the nose of a wily chalkstream brown trout. A slight plop indicates the position of your fly, now the wait. The tails descend and they move closer. Five feet away, four, three... they stop, distracted. A single bead of sweat forms as you will the fish on. They inch closer... you give the fly a short pull. Stop. There is a flurry of activity. You inch the fly once more. A flash of silver. A hard strip strike. Tension in the line, is it coral? The pause feels almost eternal. Suddenly the tip of the rod bucks. Before you know it line is disappearing off your reel which screams in protest as a bonefish tears into the backing.

The guide chuckles. The sun beams down. This is bonefishing. The location is Los Roques.



Argentina is a wonderful country if you're looking for that diplomatic approach; world class fishing along with plenty of options to keep the non-angling members of the family happy. The best of these exist in the beautiful central Patagonian region, near the towns of Esquel, Bariloche and San Martin. An area that is sparsely populated, yet easily accessible and rich in opportunities.



Tres Valles, Huechahue, Collon Cura Springs and Tipiluke lodges, to name but a few, all provide horse riding among other non-sporting alternatives to entertain the whole family. Best of all, you don't need to visit them for a whole week with most offering flexible arrival/departure days and length of stay and you don't have to fish every day, unless you want to. We also operate in Mendoza, for the wine lovers, which is easily combined with the local fishing opportunities or those found further south or north in Argentina along with horse riding in the local mountains or through the vineyards.

Argentina has your trip covered no matter what you're looking for and we have got Argentina covered better than anyone so let us know your plans and we'll suggest an itinerary.

# Rod & Reins

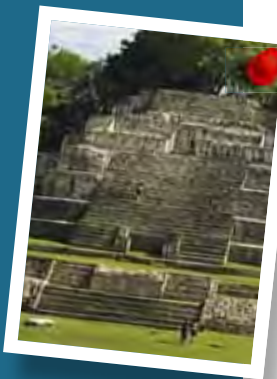


## Reef and Rainforest

Continuing the hunt for the 'Diplomatic Option', Belize is definitely one to add to the list.

Whilst it is a regular destination for anglers looking to target bonefish, permit and tarpon, there is so much more to this small but beautiful country. While some lodges offer fishing only packages, many offer you the flexibility of including a wide variety of activities for non-fishers too. For example, Belize's Blue Hole is a magnet for divers and the clear, warm waters open up a colourful new world to casual snorkelers.

On the mainland, beaches and a variety of coastal properties from Dangriga down to Punta Gorda offer a wide selection to suit a variety of tastes and requirements from small, private boutique to large, family homes. Inland, the rainforest beckons and is a wonderful setting for a wide range of activities including trekking, horse riding, bird watching, cave tubing and visiting Mayan temples. It is easy to include a stay across the border in Guatemala visiting the magnificent Mayan ruins at Tikal; something else to add to the memories of permit and manatees on the coast and the flash of a macaw's scarlet wing against the green of the forest.



## Indian Tigers

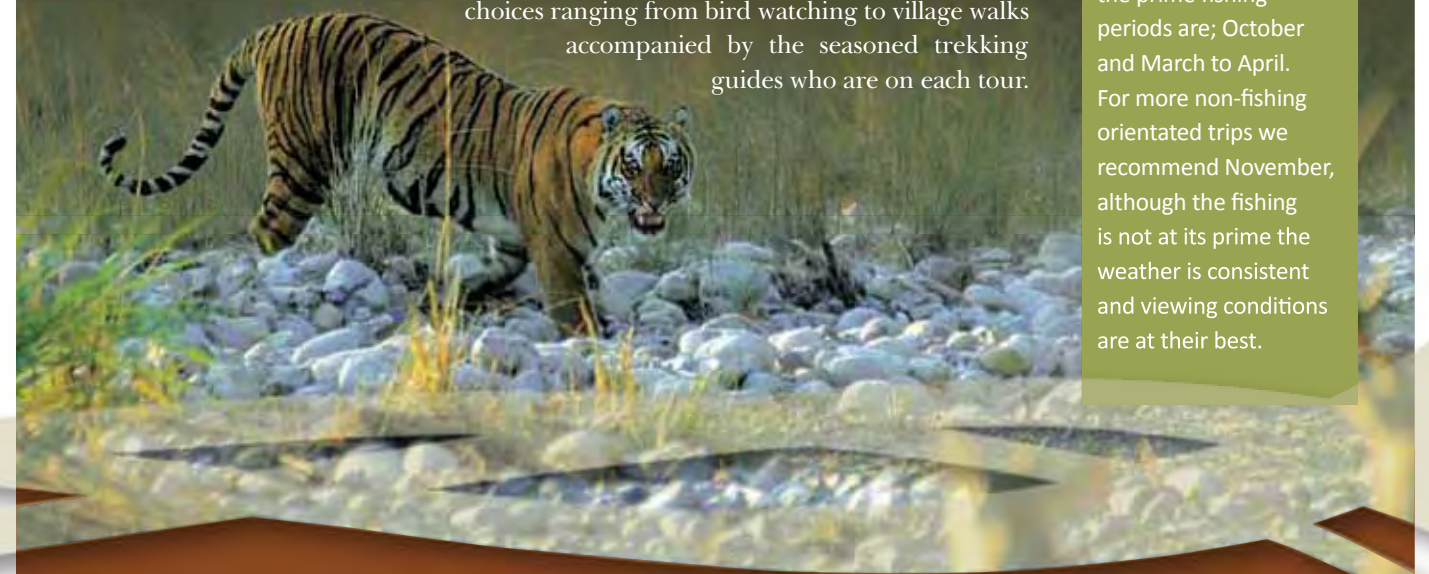
The Himalayan Outback trips take place in the beautiful Indian region of Uttarakhand in north-east India bordering Nepal. This region

is famous for its rich flora and fauna and is home to the endangered Bengal tiger that thrives in this area thanks to the Jim Corbett National Park and is also home to the mighty golden mahseer. In the shadows of the Himalayas these trips search the waters of the Saryu and Kali rivers whilst experiencing the local culture of this relatively untouched part of India.

The perfect combination trip, these journeys through India can include as much or as little fishing as you wish. With daily and overnight excursions away from the fishing available throughout your stay you really can experience it all. There are a range of choices ranging from bird watching to village walks accompanied by the seasoned trekking guides who are on each tour.



The season focuses either side of the monsoon season and the prime fishing periods are; October and March to April. For more non-fishing orientated trips we recommend November, although the fishing is not at its prime the weather is consistent and viewing conditions are at their best.



## Tanzanian Tigers

From the king of the jungle to the king of the rivers. Are you good enough to take on a Tanzanian Tiger?

The waters of the Mnyera and Ruhudji rivers are prowled by this formidable quarry and are not for the faint of heart. The area is wild and remote, the target is tough and challenging but the waters of these African rivers offer the intrepid fly angler a very real opportunity to land a double digit tigerfish. Each season fish are landed that tip the scales at 20 lbs and with the opportunity to search these two different river systems, your tiger hunt should not go unquenched. September/October is considered the best time for the fishing and is also prime time for game viewing in Tanzania.

Why not combine a week on the river with the magnificence of the annual Wildebeest and Zebra migration across the plains of the Serengeti? Who can forget the footage of those monstrous crocodiles launching out of the Grumeti river at the massing herds waiting to cross the river? Not quite finished? Head to the coast to wash the safari dust off (or cast a line) in the clear, warm waters of the Indian Ocean and sip sundowners on the clean, white beaches as you reflect on what you have seen and experienced in this stunning jewel of Africa.





# Out of control...



**There are several reasons why we go fishing; beautiful and idyllic surroundings, relaxation and release from a stress fuelled lifestyle, and, for some, it is about an adrenaline kick. Sure, fishing isn't viewed as an extreme sport, but certain situations arise that certainly get your pulse racing. For me it's that feeling of being out of control when a fish hits and takes off, where you are certainly the one being fought to begin with. You are attached to an adversary commanding respect.**

Having recently returned from a trip to British Columbia I have received my fair share of adrenaline kicks, which firmly reminded me of why we seek out such 'pleasures'. From the steelhead that exhibited a blistering turn of pace to such a degree that I thought it had thrown the hook twice before it eventually did throw the hook, through to the king salmon in the 40-50 lbs bracket that was just way too much 'fish' for me. It eventually snapped the knot between the running line and backing – certainly a case of angler error over manufacturer error. However, these fish also reminded me of how such fish become etched in your memory, sometimes more so than those we actually land, especially if you were in that state of 'out of control' when it occurred, which I certainly was in both of these instances.

British Columbia is a special place and one that I would urge you to visit. It's a location that has something to offer everyone; it's a mixed fishery where you can target a myriad of different species or concentrate on one in particular, with the attraction being that you can choose from all the species on offer. This is quite rare in freshwater terms. During our week, for example, we managed to land steelhead, king, chum, coho and pink salmon, bull, cutthroat and rainbow trout, mountain whitefish and even a sculpin! It is also a place where you have the opportunity to get 'out of control' more often than most.



We have a number of operations available in British Columbia with Nicholas Dean Outfitters being among our favourites and where the aforementioned trip took place. NDO has one of the strongest guide teams on the Skeena and can tailor the trip according to what you wish to target and your experience level and do also cater for spin anglers. If variety is what you are after then it doesn't get better than Canada and Alaska. British Columbia alternatives are BC West, Kalum River Lodge and Fraser River (for white sturgeon) while in Alaska, amongst many, Bristol Bay Lodge, No See Um Lodge, Alaska West and The Lodge at Whale Pass stand out.

**Never before has there been more flexibility in Argentina and Chile than you now have through us. Variety is key and with little, or no, cost implications for shorter stays, various lodges can easily be combined for three day stays.**

## MIX & MATCH South America

**Rio Grande:** fish some 60 km+ of the Rio Grande in Chile, Tierra Del Fuego (TDF) along with multiple other rivers and lakes all from one lodge. You can fish for sea, rainbow and brown trout with a chance of steelhead, king salmon and brook char. On the Argentine side, fish prime reaches for three days or more, including fishing on the Rio Menendez.

**TDF Explorer:** stay at a beautiful lakeside lodge and explore the local rivers and lakes or just fish immediately in front of the lodge. A very relaxing place to visit, it is far from the madding crowd and idyllically set amidst the mountain ranges.

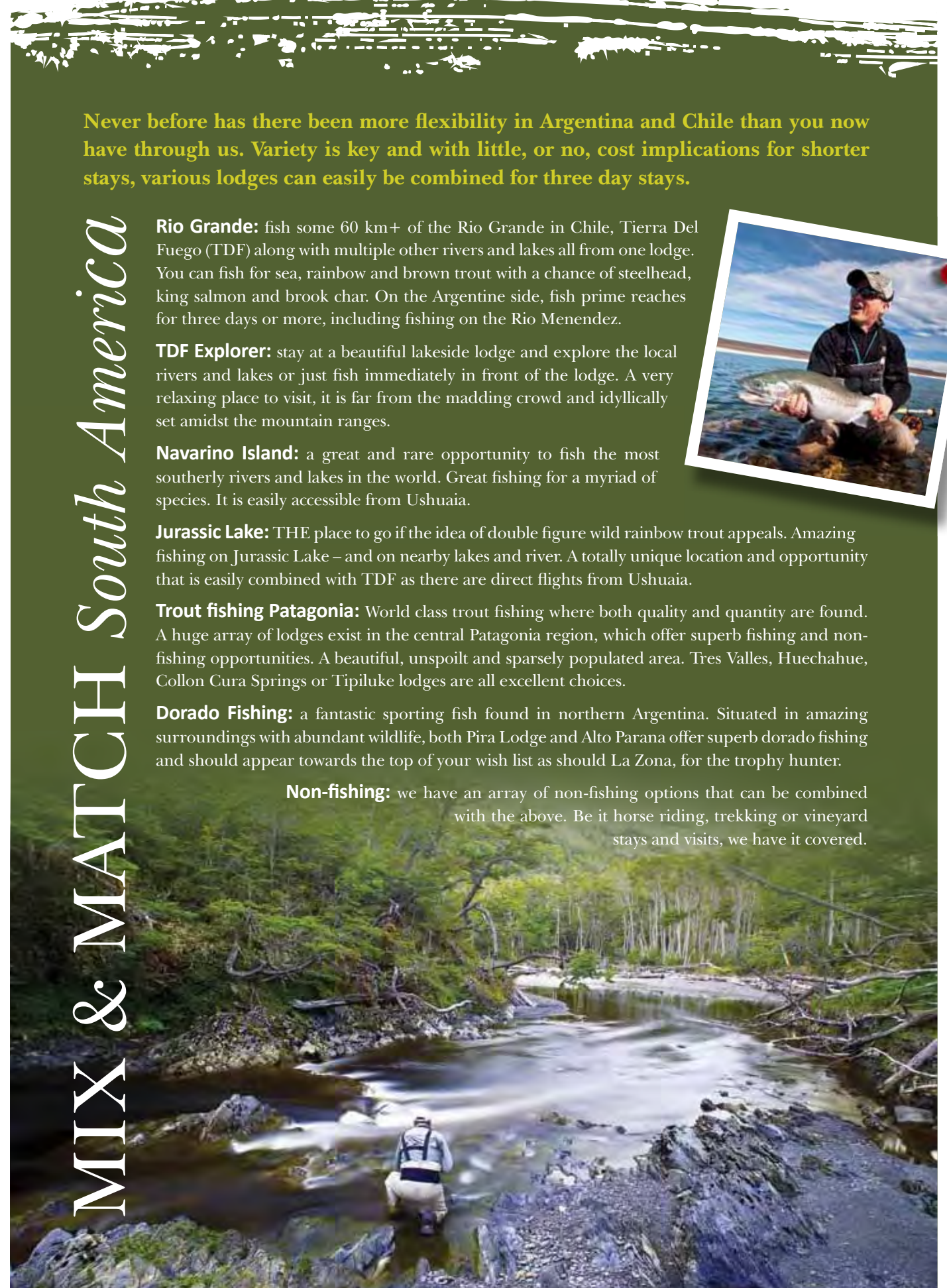
**Navarino Island:** a great and rare opportunity to fish the most southerly rivers and lakes in the world. Great fishing for a myriad of species. It is easily accessible from Ushuaia.

**Jurassic Lake:** THE place to go if the idea of double figure wild rainbow trout appeals. Amazing fishing on Jurassic Lake – and on nearby lakes and river. A totally unique location and opportunity that is easily combined with TDF as there are direct flights from Ushuaia.

**Trout fishing Patagonia:** World class trout fishing where both quality and quantity are found. A huge array of lodges exist in the central Patagonia region, which offer superb fishing and non-fishing opportunities. A beautiful, unspoilt and sparsely populated area. Tres Valles, Huechahue, Collon Cura Springs or Tipiluke lodges are all excellent choices.

**Dorado Fishing:** a fantastic sporting fish found in northern Argentina. Situated in amazing surroundings with abundant wildlife, both Pira Lodge and Alto Parana offer superb dorado fishing and should appear towards the top of your wish list as should La Zona, for the trophy hunter.

**Non-fishing:** we have an array of non-fishing options that can be combined with the above. Be it horse riding, trekking or vineyard stays and visits, we have it covered.



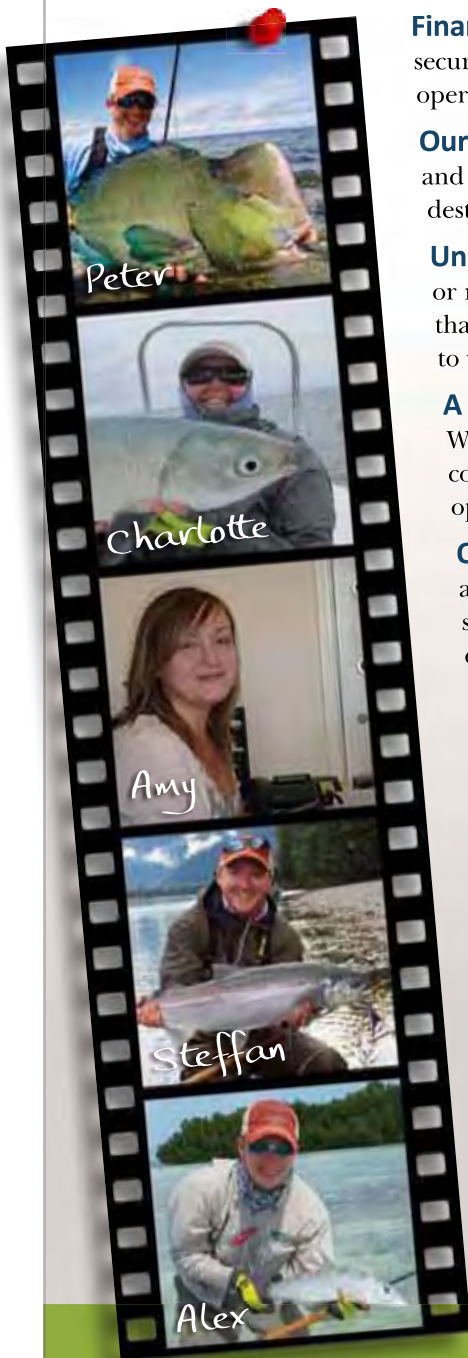
December-April is a great time to visit Argentina and Chile. Prime-time at each location can vary, but usually dovetail well to make for a fun-packed adventure, whatever combination you choose. We have been to most if not all of the properties we recommend.



# Why Book with us...



**We don't charge any more than if you were to book direct with the lodge so what are the advantages to you of booking with us?**



**Financial security...** we are fully bonded, which means that you have full financial security throughout your booking. Are you comfortable sending your money to an operation that may not be there when you arrive?

**Our knowledge and experience...** between us, we have travelled extensively and fished all over the world. Our knowledge base is extensive and varied in terms of destinations, species and tackle with each of us having our own areas of expertise.

**Unbiased advice...** we do not have large, exclusive contracts with particular lodges or rivers thus allowing us to give you totally unbiased advice rather than having to fill that last rod in a certain week. We also have the widest selection of operations open to you – and where we don't, we're working on it!

**A fair rate of exchange...** seen a like-for-like priced package with a competitor? We'll check the exchange rate you're offered when paying. You will find our rates competitive and more often than not cheaper than the competition. We pay the operators so sparing you the expense of multiple transactions.

**One call for all arrangements...** we book hotels, transfers and flights for you as needed and more often than not at the price seen online. This makes us a one stop shop for your entire trip, taking away the hassle and the time you would spend dealing with the operator and chasing arrangements and details.

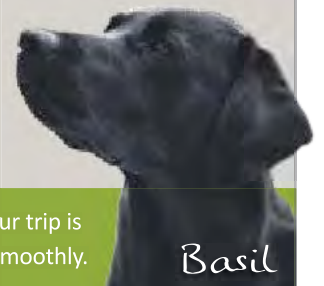
**Constant updates...** we keep track of changes, and put things right for you, even when you're on location.

**Fixing problems...** we have more power when dealing with the lodges before and after your trip, so should something go wrong we can usually put it right. We are sometimes able to get you room upgrades, request the best guides and so on, all at no extra cost to you.

**We remember...** if you have travelled with us in the past, we will remember your seating preferences, likes and dislikes and, most importantly, the fish you like to catch.

**Hosted trips don't cost more...** you don't pay any more to join a hosted trip unlike many of our competitors.

**On hand to...** help and answer any questions you may have, both before and during your trips. We can be contacted out of hours if you have a problem whilst away and if you need to be contacted in an emergency we are on hand to help.



Basil

Please give us a try, we do our absolute best to ensure that your trip is right for you in the first place and then to ensure that it runs smoothly.