



Patagonian Basecamp Report

M A R C H 1 2 , 2 0 1 2

There's a simple explanation why Chile, Patagonia is so green - it rains, sometimes a lot!

I just returned from two weeks of fishing with Marcel and the crew at Patagonian Base Camp. About half of my trip was in splendid sunshine, where multiple applications of sunscreen were in order, while the other half we were bundled-up in Gore-Tex and fleece, fishing in the rain and wind. Both weeks of my trip fished equally well and rain or shine we caught our fair share of great rainbows and

browns; testament to the incredible resource Marcel has at his disposal. The variety of fisheries PBC has to access is unmatched in all Patagonia; it would literally take a solid month of fishing a different fishery everyday, to see it all - with no repeats! Now that's our type of fishing!

- Pat Pendergast



THIS PAST WEEK ended with a couple of beautiful "Indian Summer" days...but, man oh man, it started out bad. Three days of consecutive downpour completely blew out all of our rivers. But, thank God for giving us all our great lagoons and lakes! As we hardly ever fish them - this is only the second time this season - we were on almost virgin waters. And it pays off. It is never a numbers game, but fish get huge in these stillwaters...real huge. Both Bennie and Dick caught a number of very heavy, 24-inch browns, and bigger fish were hooked and lost. The high water in the rivers also gave us a good excuse to explore some new waters. Pat Pendergast and I explored a hidden spring creek which could only be reached by dragging the raft over logs and through the bushes. Fishing was nothing short of spectacular, but it took us some time to figure it out. We saw the fish, we knew they were there...but dries didn't work, and neither did streamers. Only when we started using smaller streamers and dead-dragging them, did we begin to have success. Subsequently, we landed a bunch of fish up to 23 inches, but the takes were extremely subtle. Only a small movement in the end of the fly line gave away the presence of a feeding fish. Looking closer in the water, we discovered the trout were feeding on slugs, which were plentiful in the submerged grasslands around the spring creek. Never stop exploring! Long live the rains!

As soon as the weather improved, dry fly fishing was on again, and both the waters around The TempleCamp and the Rio Palena produced

some spectacular days. Dick, fishing the Palena, even landed the longest rainbow we've seen to date on the river - a real 27-incher that fell for his shiny Sparkle Minnow. Cliff and Dick both had really fun days fishing the pools of a small tributary stream to the Palena, located only 10 minutes from the lodge. Wading the gravel banks and using deep nymphing techniques brought more than a dozen trout each to the hand.

The award for the biggest anti-climax should go to Gerard. He was fishing Lake Rosselot with Bennie and guide Nick when he hooked into a monster fish. It ran, jumped, ran again, and jumped once more, showing its powerful beauty repeatedly. They finally brought it next to the boat, but it became obvious it would never fit in the net, so Nick decided that the only way to land this fish would be to beach it. He parked his boat on the shore, where Gerard jumped out and continued the fight on foot. You won't believe it, but after a see-saw battle lasting over an hour, they finally got the fish within 10 feet. Gerard started walking backwards and the fish was getting closer and closer, ready to finally give his arm a rest. Then the monster decided on a final run. It turned around, took Gerard all the way into the backing and then, as he had it close once again... ping! ... the fly shot out of his mouth, straight in the trees above an astonished Gerard. Was it a huge resident brown trout, a salmon, a sea-run brown? We will never know, but we do know that a few anglers had some sleepless nights.

Autumn is really starting now. Days are getting shorter, and the nights colder. Browns are preparing for the spawn, rivers are at their best level of the season, all the snow melt is long gone, and the rivers are going to run clearer and clearer by the day. It is a great time of the year. And ... we started the training campaign of next year's newest guide team member. Little Elena is getting ready.

- Water conditions:**
- ▲ Water color - completely blown out in the beginning of the week, to perfect by the end
 - ▲ Water level - from outrageous high, to normal/high
 - ▲ Water temperature - between 48° and 58°
- Weather conditions:**
- ▲ Wind speed - normal for the time of the year - never a big issue
 - ▲ Air Temperature - 55° TO 75° F
 - ▲ Three outrageous rainy days, followed by some beautiful clear ones
- Fishing Conditions:**
- ▲ During the rains, the lakes were fished subsurface with streamers. When the rivers were back in shape dries were "hot" once again.
 - ▲ Fly lines - streamers on 200 grains lines and some on dry lines in the #6-#7 class
 - ▲ Biggest fish landed for the week - 27-inch rainbow by Dick, followed by a number of 24-inchers by Pat, Dick again, and Bennie.

Marcel Sijnesael

Signature Destinations are available only thru **The Fly Shop®** and our agent/fly shop network

There are still a few spots remaining at Patagonian BaseCamp, during some prime 2012 weeks. If you are interested in visiting, please let us know by giving us a call at: **(800) 669-3474** or shooting us an email and we will get right back to you.

Until the next report, tight lines and all the best fishing.

Log on to our website, or better yet call us today for information, reservations or rates.



4140 Churn Creek Road • Redding, California 96002
(530) 222-3555 • **800 669-3474** • fax: (530) 222-3572
e-mail: mercer@theflyshop.com www.theflyshop.com