

S.C.O.F  
magazine



# southern culture on the fly



one  
crazy summer



common carp lover  
legends: lefty and flip  
red: the last legal drug  
nothing good happens after 11am  
a park for the people  
spoken like a true geingo

stratergizing  
moving pictures  
benchpress  
conservation and eggs  
...and more



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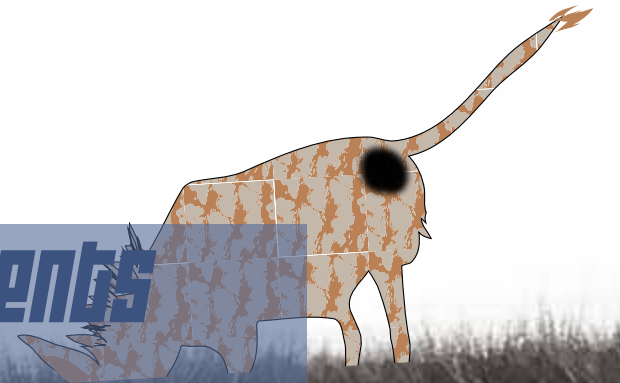
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crazy summer

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DRINK AND FIXINS'



**S.C.O.F**

**ONE CRAZY SUMMER**

**ISSUE NO. 4**

**SUMMER 2012**

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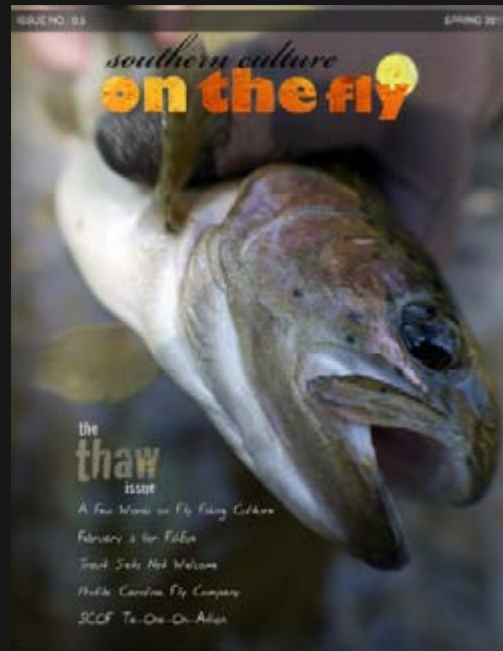
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# PAST ISSUES

just in case you missed 'em...



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**SPRING 2011**  
**PREVIEW**



**ISSUE #1**  
**FALL 2011**



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**WINTER 2012**

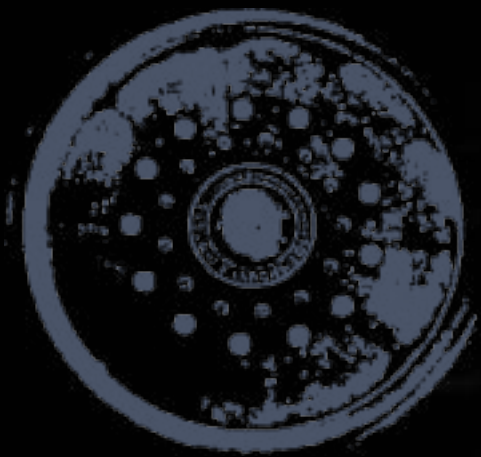


**ISSUE #3**  
**SPRING 2012**



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From the Editor's desk...  
to your bathroom

Summer 2012

Summer in the South is usually a hot, sticky affair. My buddies in the Low Country bid me farewell until the fall (full moon tide exceptions do apply here) as my delicate mountain constitution tends to wilt in 95 degrees with 195 percent humidity. Summer in the High Country isn't quite as oppressive, but if you're into the easy trout pickings of delayed harvest season, you're going to be disappointed. Stockers are but a distant memory having been put on a plate or stored in a bait-chucker's freezer long ago, so you better be hitting the real High Country or tailwaters to get your trout fix.

I hope I don't sound too fatalistic here. There is fun to be had, and most of it involves keeping your pants on. The key to summer in the South is doing what the throngs of summer

vacationers aren't. Take a hike, fish the lake for carp, find someone with a flats boat and beg borrow and steal your way onto it, because I guarantee if you pull off the road onto your favorite easy access everybody-knows-about-it fishin' hole, you're just as likely to be met by some gaper in an inner tube as you are by good fishing. Gapers in inner tubes usually mean dogs, kids throwing rocks and Grandma chucking crawlers. A steady diet of the above will send you to your basement authoring a manifesto by July 4.

Once you step outside of what everybody else is doing, the only thing left is a little more solitude. Hope you enjoy the "One Crazy Summer" Issue.

*D. Shaw*



# Haiku

with  
Kyle MC



Your golden scales shine  
on the flats you search for food  
is that a diaper?



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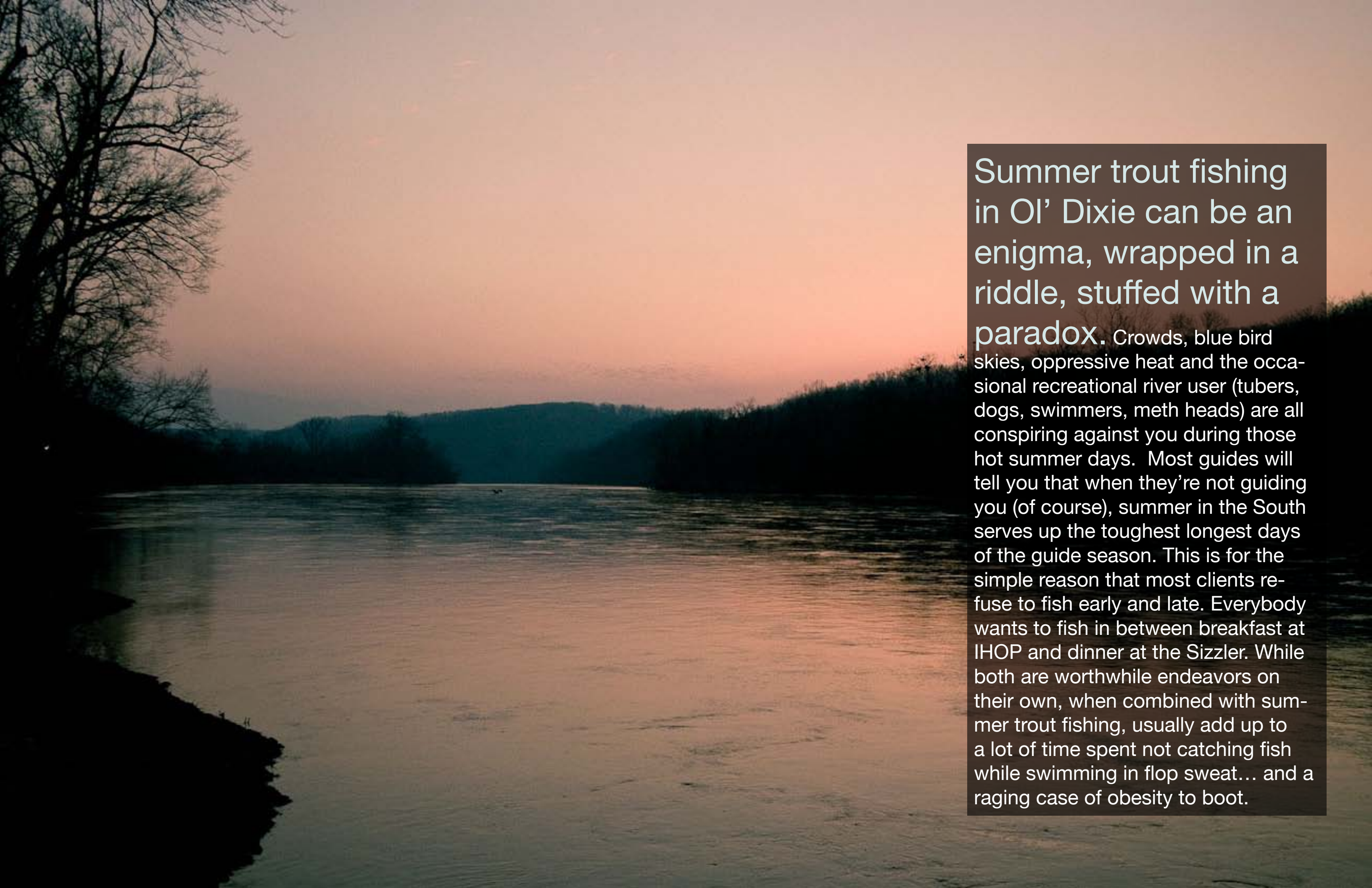


**NOTHING GOOD HAPPENS AFTER 11 AM  
...UNTIL 6 PM THAT IS**



By David Grossman  
Photos: Louis Cahill





Summer trout fishing in Ol' Dixie can be an enigma, wrapped in a riddle, stuffed with a paradox. Crowds, blue bird skies, oppressive heat and the occasional recreational river user (tubers, dogs, swimmers, meth heads) are all conspiring against you during those hot summer days. Most guides will tell you that when they're not guiding you (of course), summer in the South serves up the toughest longest days of the guide season. This is for the simple reason that most clients refuse to fish early and late. Everybody wants to fish in between breakfast at IHOP and dinner at the Sizzler. While both are worthwhile endeavors on their own, when combined with summer trout fishing, usually add up to a lot of time spent not catching fish while swimming in flop sweat... and a raging case of obesity to boot.



If you want to catch trout during the middle of summer, not fishing during the middle of the day and eating a salad makes a lot more sense in my experience. I am not saying that fishing mid-day will result in epic failure every time out because, as the old saying goes, “The sun shines on every dog’s ass one-day.” But there’s a strong case for doing something else when the sun’s at its strongest.

Trout avoid bright sun and hot water. On the other hand, assholes usually flock to the water during the hottest part of the day. I call this the Trout/Asshole Inverse Relationship. If you looked at it on a graph it would be easier to see, but I have no idea how to make a graph. Now getting up before the sun and fishing or waiting for the last few hours of daylight before you make your way to your favorite spot is a strategy that pays off in spades. No one wants to get up early to go tubing, just like most people want to eat dinner at six and put the kids to bed at eight. It also tends to be a good bit cooler when the sun isn’t directly overhead beating you down to a sweaty, sun burnt pulp. Also, there’s the biological fact that the majority of big trophy fish are nocturnal feeders and your best shots at catching them are during the beginning and end of their feeding time, which is early and late...are you seeing a reoccurring theme here yet?











Now if you live close enough to the water, you can time your sorties to coincide with the summer prime fishing times, and manage to still keep up the charade of being a normal contributing member of society. Fish before work, fish after the kids are asleep and your significant other is into her usual after-dinner half-in-the-bag buzz, but fishing and not getting yelled at is a pretty nice luxury. If you are traveling to fish trout water and insist on spending the entire day on the river (I've been there, I understand), let me suggest some other activities that can offer more fun than flogging water in the midday heat ever can. Try backyard wrestling your buddies in the riffles. There's nothing like clotheslining the dude that low-holed you in the morning session, and then going top-rope on his ass from the front of the drift boat while he flails in less than six inches of water. Luchador masks help set the mood on this one.





Another favorite daytime river activity is an intellectually stimulating game of “Would You Rather?”. There really is no better time to explore the inner workings of your fishing buddy’s degenerate mind than on a hot summer day, and no better way to do it than finding out whether he would rather poop in his pants a little every time he farted, or fart every time he gets aroused. And finally, if all else fails you can always fall back on the old standard that gets me through most of my midsummer days on the water: drinking, napping and every possible combination of the two.

When it comes to fishing for trout during the dog days of summer, just remember there are a lot better things to do in the middle of the day than actually fish. Save the fishing for where it belongs...on the fringes of your day.



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# MOVING PICTURES

Ryan Dunne



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## VIRGINIA IS FOR MUSKY LOVERS



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A silhouette of a person wearing a cap and holding a fishing rod, standing on a boat. The background is a sunset over water, with a warm orange and yellow glow. The person is on the left side of the frame, facing right.

# RED

THE LAST LEGAL DRUG

By Scott Davis

Photos: Steve Seinberg and Scott Davis

Step back and think where you'd be if fish didn't control your life. What magazines would be by your toilet? What stickers would adorn your boat's tow vehicle? Maybe you have another passion, but I doubt it. It seems to be all or nothing, and not by choice.





Watching a redfish commit murders among the crustacean community in inches of water has got to be it...it's the last legal drug...these tailers. When they tail, something dies—simple. Once you've seen it, it generally grabs you like an untreatable fever. And like a disease you'd never want to cure, you feed it thinking it will satisfy the addiction, but you've really made it much worse.







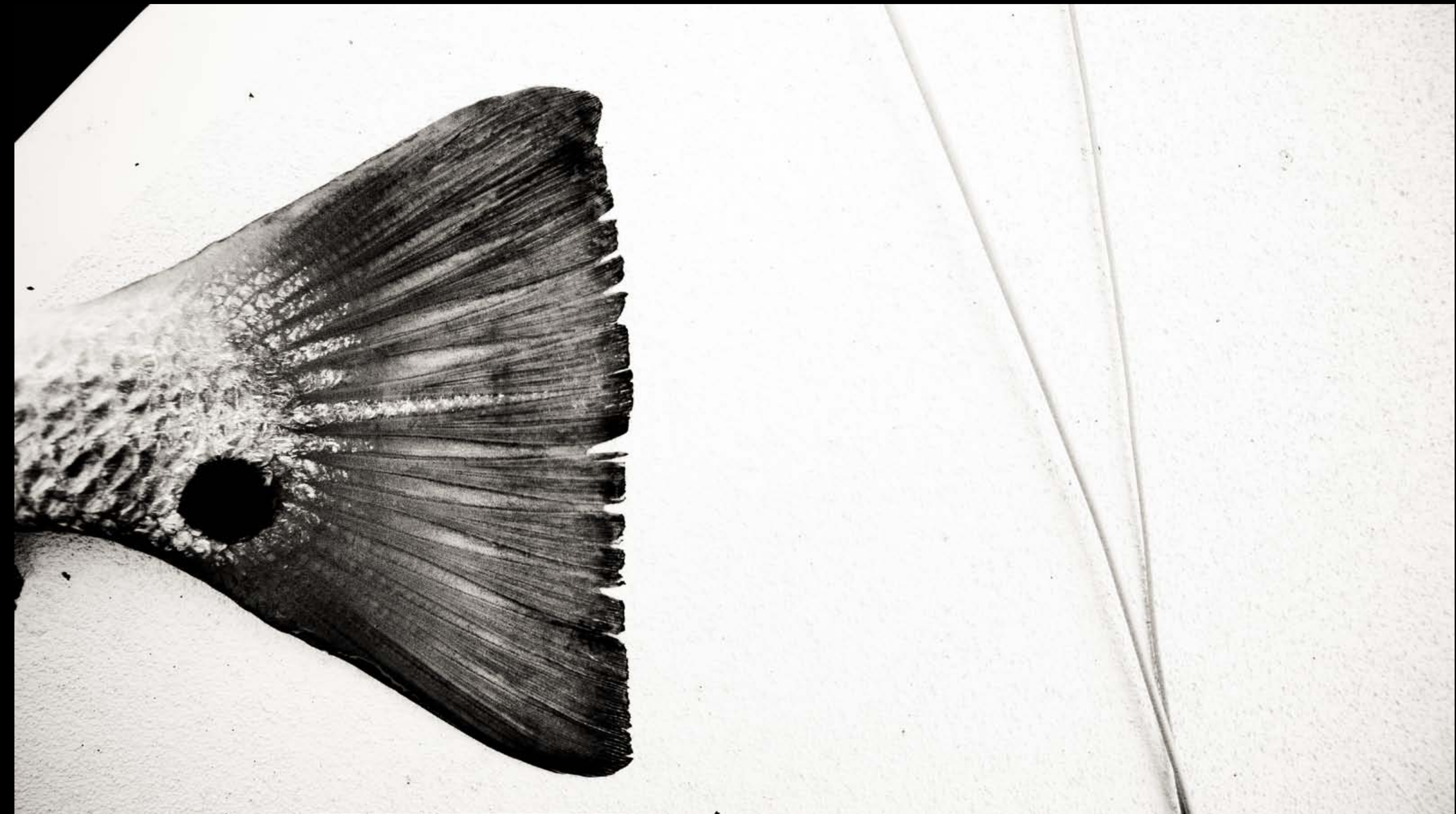




I meet very few “casual” redfish anglers. Most are sunburned, obsessive, smell funny and couldn’t give a damn about who won last night’s game. They tie flies out of necessity, stop to skin road kill, eat in the car, and forget birthdays, but can tell you the tides for the next month. If the flats aren’t going to flood, they’ll go where the fish go even if that means casting through tourists and labradoodles at the beach. The fish are always out there somewhere as are these maniacs, these wonderful misfits.

It becomes eerily cult-like, this lifestyle of fly fishing. Most people can’t tell by looking, but we spot each other clearly by the wet pant legs, the dubbing or flashabou bits in the beard, the raccoon eyes. We can feel the push pole or oar calluses in your handshake so don’t fake it, we know who you are.











It's the nature of humans I suppose, to seek out what makes us happy and pursue it relentlessly, at all costs. The simplicity of fly fishing is its greatest merit. I think it's the same with the redfish tails. They are simple. Vaguely colored, adorned with only bronze, blue and a speck of black, they lure us like mythological sirens into a life of searching—waiting and hoping for the chance at another glimpse.

*Scotty D owns a successful flyshop. Mind Boggling. Stop by and see him at Low Country Flyshop in Mt. Pleasant SC. Tell him to put some slaw on it...he'll know what you're talking about.*







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HAND MADE IN TENNESSEE







*strategizing*

By Joel Dickey

## One Guide's Tarpon Rig

As a saltwater guide, I field numerous questions over the course of a guided trip... and I do **mean numerous**. Some of these questions force me to scratch my head and wonder if my client needs to ask someone more qualified than me, like say a priest, psychiatrist, lawyer or marriage counselor. I mean, I am just a fishing guide. I do, however, answer the question and give the most honest and educated piece of wisdom I can, whether it is right, wrong or indifferent. I mean I am a fishing guide.





Comedy aside, part of my job is to teach my clients all I can about sight fishing on the flats. I take this part of my job seriously, because when my guys are off in some exotic destination with a guide who does not speak English, they need to know what, where, when, how and most importantly why.

I have been to several of these destinations around the world, and it always blows my mind at how many of these guides do not know how to properly rig a rod and reel. So here you are in Nicaragua, and a 150-pound tarpon just took off with your fly line and three quarters of your backing, not to mention your pride. What do you do? Look at your guide and ask him for help? No habla ingles, remember? Well let's start from the beginning so this scenario has less a chance of happening.

## BACKING & LINE

First off, un-spool all the Dacron backing your fly shop just sold you... it's a thing of the past. There are much better options for backing, especially when you are talking about fighting tarpon the size of Volkswagens. I suggest braided backing. It's gen-

erally smaller in diameter, so you can get more on your reel and most importantly, they generally have a wax coating. Now what purpose does this serve? Well, when you do hook a fish and go 150+ yards into your backing, the wax coating prevents the salt from soaking into the line and rotting the backing. I cannot tell you how many times I have seen a guy hook a big fish and 50 yards into the backing...snap! I look at where it broke and right away I know what happened. Try Diawa Saltiga braided boat line in 70-pound or Suffix premium braid 65-pound.

After you have spooled your backing on, you must attach it to your fly line. Do not use a nail knot. Yes, I have actually seen this on tarpon set-ups. Nail knots will peel the coating right off the fly line when the Greyhound bus on the end of your line starts rolling. You will want to use a loop-to-loop connection for backing to fly line. For the backing, you should use a double Bimini twist. Single Bimini twist will not work because the braided backing we just used is much thinner than Dacron, and will dig into the fly line coating and eventually will cut through, ending your battle much too early. So please use a double Bimini.







## LEADER

Now you have connection set up, except the one connecting you to your fish... the leader. You should connect your fly line to your leader with another loop-to-loop connection. Once again, a nail knot will not suffice. Most fly lines come with a loop already in the end, so use that. I always use a double surgeon's loop on the butt section of my leader.

Now onto the part of the article where I wrinkle the floppy hats worn by some of the more "traditionalists" as they call themselves. My tarpon leader is very, very simple. I use eight feet of 60-pound hard mono as the butt section, and four to six feet of 50 to 60-pound fluorocarbon for the terminal end. Attached together by a six-turn blood knot. That's right; no Biminis or Huffnagles with 20-pound or less "class tippet" as the traditionalists like to think you have to use. Oh I can hear the polyester crinkling now, not to mention the statements like, "that's not sporting." To me, what's not "sporting" is fighting a 150-pound fish for hours on end just to say you caught it on 16 or 20-pound test, only to release the tarpon, which dies of exhaustion minutes later as you make your way to the next spot; or gets eaten by a shark because it doesn't have the strength to get away (sharks have a tendency to pick up on this).





## IT WORKS

To some, out of sight, out of mind makes it more “sporting.” Not to me. Using the leader I have explained allows the fish to be brought in much more quickly and, even more importantly, released in good health. Not to mention it takes seconds to build. To finish it off, use your favorite loop knot to tie the fly on. I prefer a double figure eight for this. Please keep in mind this is my preferred tarpon rig. I have used it for years down here in the Keys with great success. It may not be the rig for everyone, especially the “traditionalists” who often use IGFA legal class leaders with the hopes of hooking up with that elusive 203+ pound world record. To each his own, I suppose. I personally think it’s rewarding enough to hook and land one, and I am perfectly happy with that ending. Using this system once a good hook-up occurs, I rarely lose a fish. This results in the most important thing of all, a lot of happy clients and a released fish that is healthy and strong enough to keep on swimming while you are motoring to your next spot.



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# Common Carp Lover

By Ryan Dunne  
Photos: Steve Seinberg and Ryan Dunne





When I bring up fly fishing and carp in the same conversation I usually get some **funny looks**. I hear comments like, “You actually touch those things?” or “My cousin’s brother-in-law’s nephew caught a big one on a bread ball down at the carp pond.”

While chasing carp with a fly rod has become quite the norm in certain parts of the country, here in the South they remain somewhat overlooked. Some people seem to think carp are dumb and not worth the time of day. Then there are those who are secretly interested in fly fishing for carp, but try not to show their interest in front of their friends (kind of like that case of warts down there you haven’t told anyone about).









I didn't set out to become a carp addict by any means; things kind of snowballed after I caught my first carp on a fly. Carp are sophisticated fish with bi-polar tendencies (much like that aunt who just ain't quite right). They always leave you guessing and wanting more pudding. Most of the time they are going to refuse you. They sense you way before you see them. Very few people are fishing for them, so chances are you will be sharing the mud flats with birds, turtles and other fish, instead of every Touron (tourist + moron) in town. Not to mention carp are measured in pounds instead of inches. If you hook a carp, your backing will actually see the sunlight. If you survive a nuclear attack, you will still be able to go carp fishing.





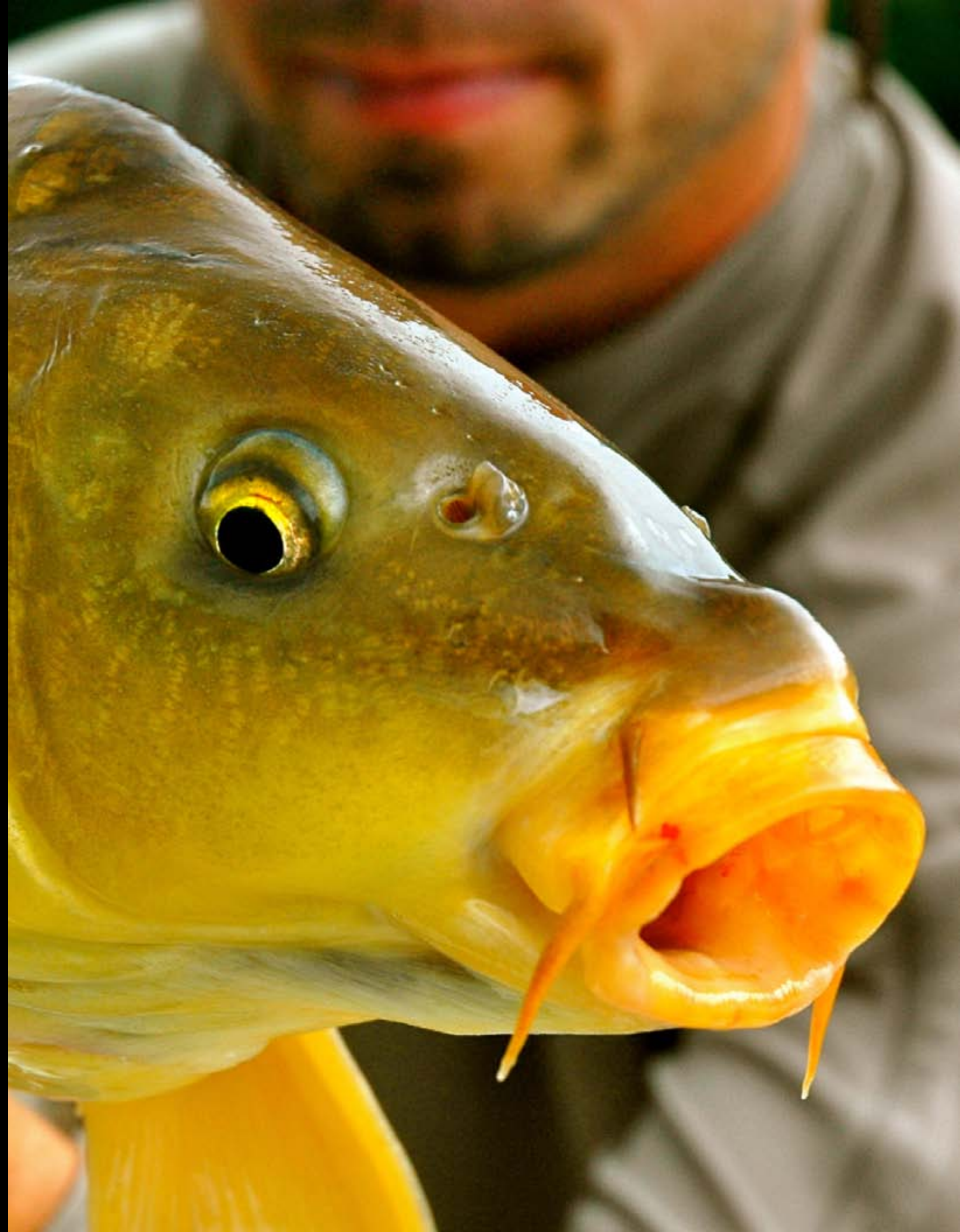








Nothing beats the early morning boat rides across the lake. The anticipation felt while stalking carp is just like the anticipation felt while hunting the rut during deer season. You never know what to expect. Sight fishing to carp is in many ways like hunting, because a bad cast or sudden movement will blow your cover. This is where things can get intense as you slowly and deliberately scan the flats for the slightest movement. You hope that when the time does come that your performance is up to par. If you blow it, there's always that chance you will go home with a giant goose egg. Carp fishing isn't a numbers game—it's about the culminating of your skills to fool a wary fish and get him to eat your fly. When it all goes as planned you feel that sense of accomplishment. I'm a carp lover, just keep it on the DL if you don't mind.





**RENCH PRESS**

*Thomas Harvey*

**GOLDEN TICKET**



## ***Materials List:***

Hook: Owner Flyliner (Size 4 – 6)  
Eyes: Dumbbell or Beadchain  
Flash: Gold Krystal Flash  
Legs: Metallic Gold Sili Legs  
Body: Gold Sparkle Braid  
Wing: Fox Squirrel Tail  
Head : Thread and Clear Cure Goo Hydro



## ***GOLDEN TICKET***



**1. Seat an Owner Flyliner hook in your vise.**



**2. Start your thread behind the hook eye and attach your dumbbell eyes directly above the point of the hook. Secure the eyes with superglue.**



**3. Reposition your hook to expose the bend. Tie in a short piece of Gold Sparkle Braid.**



**4. Tie in your flash on the “flat” part of the hook shank so that it stays in line with the eye of the hook.**





5. Touching turns, wrap the Sparkle Braid up the body making sure not to bind down any flash. Tie off the braid behind the eyes.



6. Tie in three Metallic Gold Sili Legs on either side of the hook shank.



7. Cut and clean out a small bunch of Fox Squirrel Tail. Apply the bunch in front of the dumbbell eyes like you would on a Clouser Minnow. Whip finish and apply Clear Cure Goo Hydro to the thread wraps. Lastly, trim the flash and legs to length.



You look hesitantly at the Ziploc bag: six rings, three bracelets and a necklace with a broken clasp. You’ve collected them over the past month. Slowly, in stages as to not get caught, pillaging your better half’s treasure chest. You convince yourself that she would never notice. Besides, she has a case full of newer, sparkly jewelry. Cash 4 Gold. You’ve had to have seen it. It’s all the rage. In today’s economic climate, many are quick to pawn off priceless family heirlooms for a quick buck. Temptation is everywhere. Companies blasting you from all media outlets. Torn and tempted, you hit the river to clear your mind. As you pull onto the highway, you turn the dial on your radio and hear it, “Need cash? Trade with confidence from the world’s number one consumer gold buyer.” Yeah, better stick with the iPod. You remember your gas light has been on for the past week, so you pull off an exit early to fill up. “Cash Customers Must Pre-Pay.” You walk in and hand the teller two crumpled twenties. You can’t help notice his shiny gold ring as he hands you the receipt. Really? You finally pull into the gravel parking lot and take a walk down to the river’s edge. Carp. Tails up, mouth down, Hoovering the muddy creek bottom. The six-weight should do it. You open your fly box, scanning your neatly arranged inventory. It hits you again, that shiny golden glow. You pluck it from the box and tie it on—The Golden Ticket.

Five fish, four beers, and three hours later, you are back at home satisfied, covered in that scent only carp anglers can appreciate. Before hitting the shower, you slip the Ziploc bag from your pocket and dump the jewelry back in the chest. Crisis averted.





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# SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE GRINGO ...

By Thomas Harvey





**You see them packing their lawn equipment as you make the left-hand turn into the parking lot.** You recognize their faces. It's the same work crew you see every Tuesday at this time. The caretakers of your honey hole. They are covered in earth and drenched to the bone in sweat. You feel for them and their backbreaking work. Man's work. It almost makes you feel bad about your nine-to-five desk job... almost.

"Adios," you mutter as you walk by. Three years of college level Spanish and it's the only word you can recall. Spoken like a true gringo. No, you aren't exactly bilingual. As they pull away, the smell of two-stroke engines lingers in the air. Pollen fills your nose and your eyes begin to itch as you approach the water. It's all part of the game. Fishing the "grass hatch" is like nothing you have ever done before. A man-made phenomenon triggered not by weather conditions or temperature, but scheduled by the overbearing anal nature of the neighborhood homeowners' association.





Like clockwork, every week, turf maintenance turns to angling opportunity. Grass clippings clutter the water's edge. Perfect. It doesn't take long until you spot a pod of vegan torpedoes hovering slightly below the surface at your 10 o'clock. Their tails wave like Chinese fans propelling them gracefully along the bank's edge. Almost on cue the fish begin to rise. Rhythmically. A slow, methodical rise forms unique and unrushed.

As they pass in front of you, two fish change course and the pod of fish dwindles to a mere single. It's better that way. Less opportunity to screw everything up. You only get one chance with these fish.

A single false cast lands your fly six feet in front of the feeding fish. Your olive deer hair fly suddenly becomes the next selection in the veggie-only buffet. You realize you are holding your breath, a nervous habit. Patience, it's part of the game. Six feet turns into three and then one. The broad silhouette of the fish approaches the end of your leader. True to form the fish rises, gulping both fescue and fly. You quickly jump to your feet and clear the line.



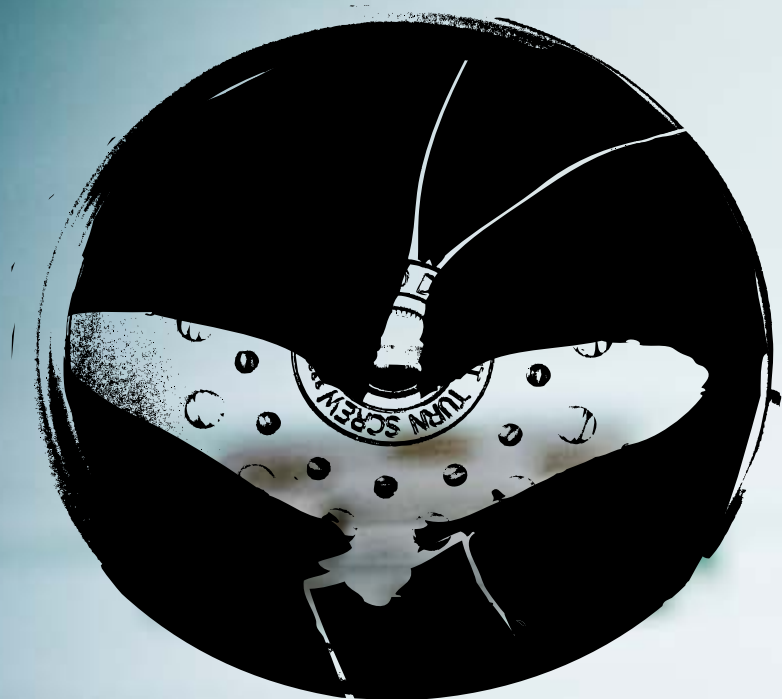




With one tail thrash, the fish is out of sight and testing the limits of your size-10 wet fly hook and 2x tip-pet. Down and dirty, you drop the rod to your side and hold on, palming the reel. The initial run is thrilling and you are still amazed at the power of the fish. You turn the drag knob as the fight wears on, limiting the fish's ability to run. When the time is right, you kneel down and grab your leader as the fish gently glides towards the bank. The fly falls from the fish's rubbery mouth. "Adios," you mutter. *Spoken like a true gringo.*







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# Conservation and Eggs

David Grossman with Damon Hearne



“Old guys in Tilley hats”, is a term that comes to mind when describing what’s becoming a pretty common perception of TU in some circles. While this may hold true for your meetings at the Outback off the highway, the folks that actually make TU a voice on the national level tend to be a much younger crowd. Damon Hearne is the Southeast Conservation Coordinator for TU, and is based right down the street from SCOF headquarters. So in the spirit of breaking stereotypes I bought Damon breakfast so we could all get to know him better...and maybe even learn something. Be sure to check out the sidebar if you want to get involved in defending our “roadless” backcountry and help TU protect our wild places.

*Learn more about the attacks on our “roadless” backcountry that Damon refers to in his interview at [SportsmenForPublicLand.org](http://SportsmenForPublicLand.org). Sign up for updates, contact your elected official and tell them to keep it like it is. 42 million acres of our best native trout fishing, trophy elk hunting and un-tracked and un-trashed fish and game habitat depend on sportsmen and women once again stepping up to defend and conserve our public lands. Contact Damon Hearne for more info – [dhearne@tu.org](mailto:dhearne@tu.org), 828-398-0177.*



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# LEGENDS

By David Grossman  
Photos: Steve Seiberg

I have always been somewhat of a skeptic when it comes to the idea of fly fishing celebrity. I'm not sure if it really counts as celebrity when the only people you're famous amongst is a small group of what is generally accepted to be social misfits. If fly fishing shows in convention centers were the barometer for mainstream celebrity, there would be a lot of bearded gnarly dudes on the pages of US Weekly, leading to a sharp downturn in magazine sales. Saying all this, when I was invited to Pawley's Island to attend a fishing seminar by Lefty Kreh and Flip Pallot, I was as giddy as a schoolgirl with prospects of a co-ed ice cream social on the horizon.





If you haven't heard the names Lefty and Flip, you're probably not all that into fly fishing. These two longtime fishing buddies have epitomized what celebrity should mean in the fly fishing world. Both have authored books, appeared on various TV programs and done more speaking engagements and fishing clinics than any still-sane person should. I mean, can you imagine shaking hands, taking pictures or fishing with everyone in the fly fishing community (or at least that's the way it seems by the sheer number of anglers that have a Lefty or Flip connection to tell me about when I mentioned I was doing this piece)?

The sheer reach of their influence in the sport is somewhat mind boggling. Even though these two guys have more of a right than anyone in the fly fishing universe to consider themselves celebrities, you won't find a more down-to-earth, approachable pair of gentleman in the industry.

I've often seen Lefty teach casting at shows, and to this day it blows my mind when he starts playing "just the tip" (or at least that's what I like to call it). Throwing 40-foot perfect loops with just the tip of the rod is not something most folks can pull off with ease, even if they do think of themselves as better than average casters. But watching Lefty teach the cast, you realize the real magic trick is being able to turn everyone that shows up into a better caster than they were before Lefty got his hands on them... every single time.









In contrast to Lefty's big personality, Flip seems to shy away from his stature as the guy everybody watched on ESPN Outdoors. But once you get him teaching, he is every bit as knowledgeable and true teacher of the sport as I always imagined when I was glued to that TV set as a kid on weekend mornings. Not to mention, the man probably throws the prettiest loops that I have ever seen up close, which proved to be the ticket when he boated the only red fish of anybody on the water the night before the clinic (including yours truly, whose shitty casting by comparison cost me two legitimate shots).





The true highlight of my day was getting to sit down with these guys after their clinic over a cold beer (I might have been the only one drinking, schoolgirl nervousness, remember?), and just shoot the proverbial shit. They have stories and insights that had me wanting to slash their tires just to prolong my basking in their glory. But through all the exotic locales, exotic species and a life of fishing that few others compare to, what you really come away with is that for them, it's still all about fishing and the times spent with friends while doing it. The give and take between the two could have been from a million different fishing buddies with all the, "remember whens" and "I almost had to kick his ass's." That familiarity and universal aspect of why we all fish makes these guys seem not so much like my unapproachable heroes, but more like fellas who "get it" the same way the rest of us do.

The term celebrity slung around a lot, and quite often lands on people that have no business walking amongst the masses let alone being held in the spotlight. In our little fly fishing world, I hope the next generation of fly fishing "celebrities" know who these guys are, and maybe are also thinking to themselves: I want to do it like Lefty and Flip...with grace, class and an attitude of spreading the gospel of the sport to whomever wants to listen.





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# FUR AND FEATHER MATINEE

Michael Yelton



*wiggle mirror*



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# A PARK FOR THE PEOPLE

By Ian Rudder

**I hear it all the time.** “I’m not going to fish those little creeks in the Smokies where I’ll lose dozens of flies in the trees just to catch dinks. I’ll go to the tailwaters and catch real trout.”

If you’re one of those guys who says this while buffing your drift boat, I feel you. In fact, my own drift boat gets somewhere close to 100 days a year on the river, but don’t be so quick before you talk smack about little fish in what I consider to be one of the most important wild trout sanctuaries in the Eastern United States.



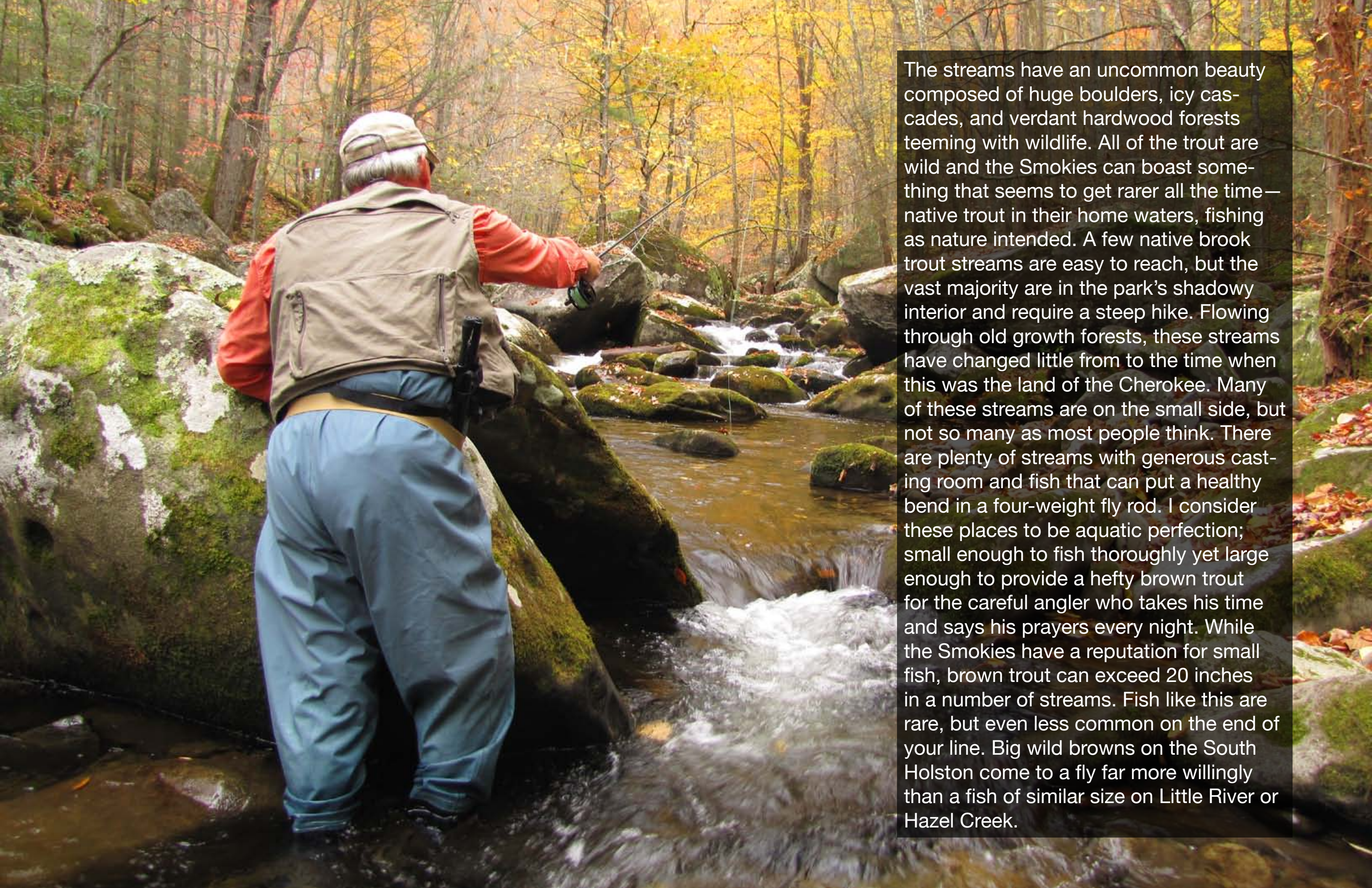
First of all, I admit that I like all kinds of rivers and streams. Doesn't matter if it's a smallmouth blasting a popper, tailwater trout sipping midges, browns whacking streamers, or brookies cartwheeling over Wulffs. It's all cool and I'm sure I'm grinning while I'm reeling in a 16-inch dough belly rainbow trout on the delayed harvest section of the Tuckaseegee. I also know I'd trade a thousand of those for one measured 11-inch native brookie up in the Smokies. That ratio might even be on the generous side of real-life since I've caught less than a handful of natives that big, but I often make the comparison of fishing wild mountain trout vs. fishing stockers to hunting elk vs. shooting cows in a pasture. One takes skill, some hard-won local knowledge, and the patience of a saint, while the other... not so much.

Back in the early 90's, when I started guiding in Great Smoky Mountains National Park around Townsend, Tenn., a number of people told me I'd have to move to the Rockies to have a career as a fly fishing guide. A fishery with small trout like the Smokies just wouldn't pull enough fly fishers in. Fortunately, that's not the mindset of all fly fishers, and seventeen years later my guide calendar is busier than ever.

The fishery is best thought of as challenging for even the most seasoned fly anglers yet forgiving enough for rank beginners to land a fish in their first few hours casting a fly. The brushy canopy surrounding the streams creates a virtual laboratory for creative fly-casting and the wild, stream-bred trout who inhabit these crystalline waters are notoriously skittish. At the same time, swift, tumbling waters don't give hungry trout much chance to inspect a fly so they tend to eat first and ask questions later. That's assuming your fly made it to the water without snagging on a limb and you managed to get a good drift in a lattice of conflicting currents.

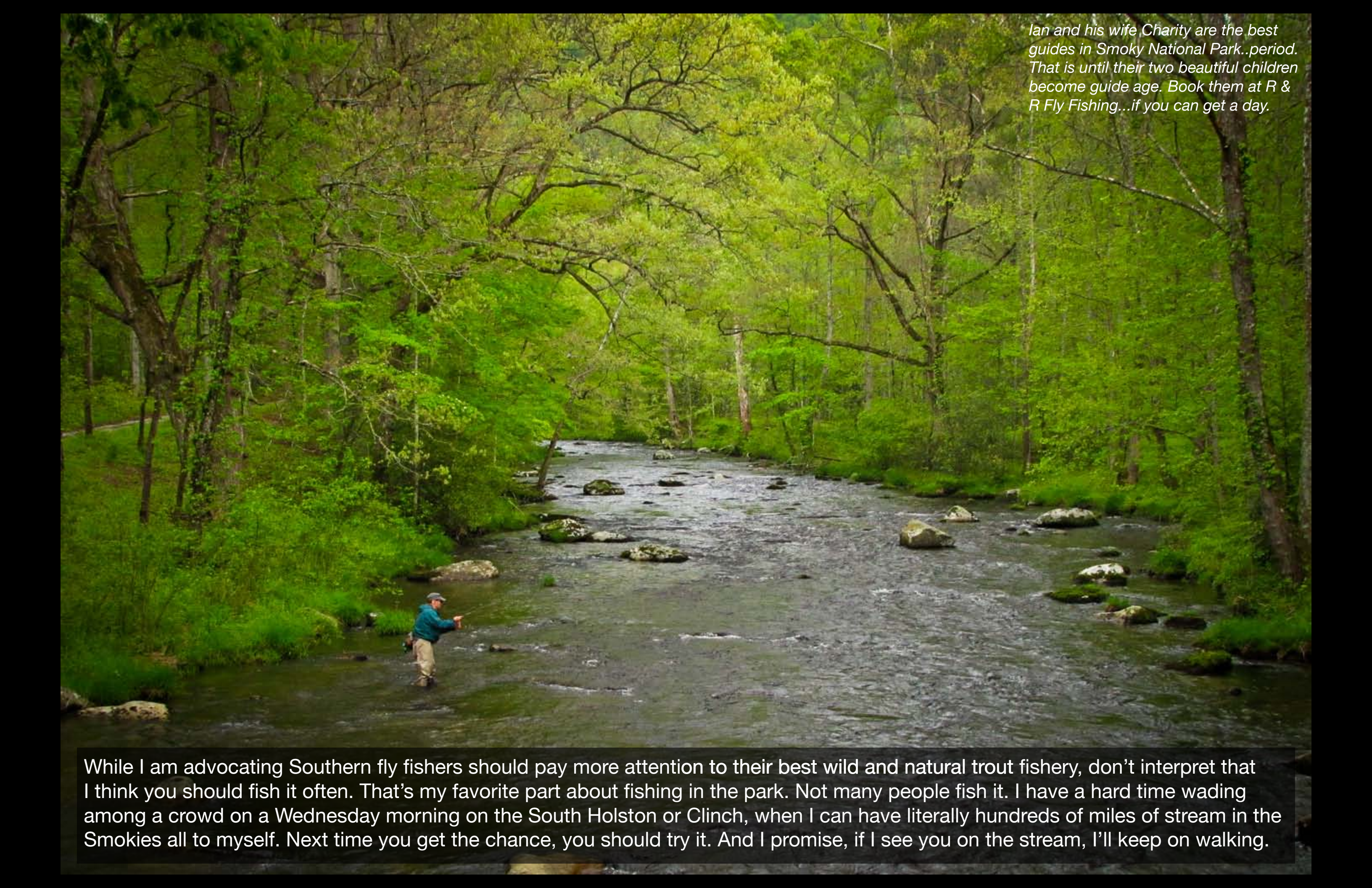






The streams have an uncommon beauty composed of huge boulders, icy cascades, and verdant hardwood forests teeming with wildlife. All of the trout are wild and the Smokies can boast something that seems to get rarer all the time—native trout in their home waters, fishing as nature intended. A few native brook trout streams are easy to reach, but the vast majority are in the park's shadowy interior and require a steep hike. Flowing through old growth forests, these streams have changed little from the time when this was the land of the Cherokee. Many of these streams are on the small side, but not so many as most people think. There are plenty of streams with generous casting room and fish that can put a healthy bend in a four-weight fly rod. I consider these places to be aquatic perfection; small enough to fish thoroughly yet large enough to provide a hefty brown trout for the careful angler who takes his time and says his prayers every night. While the Smokies have a reputation for small fish, brown trout can exceed 20 inches in a number of streams. Fish like this are rare, but even less common on the end of your line. Big wild browns on the South Holston come to a fly far more willingly than a fish of similar size on Little River or Hazel Creek.





*Ian and his wife Charity are the best guides in Smoky National Park..period. That is until their two beautiful children become guide age. Book them at R & R Fly Fishing...if you can get a day.*

While I am advocating Southern fly fishers should pay more attention to their best wild and natural trout fishery, don't interpret that I think you should fish it often. That's my favorite part about fishing in the park. Not many people fish it. I have a hard time wading among a crowd on a Wednesday morning on the South Holston or Clinch, when I can have literally hundreds of miles of stream in the Smokies all to myself. Next time you get the chance, you should try it. And I promise, if I see you on the stream, I'll keep on walking.





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# get yourself some drink and fixin's

## Sweetwater Brewery

www.sweetwaterbrew.com  
195 Ottley Drive, NE, Atlanta, GA

Finding good beer in the South is no longer an arduous proposition. The craft beer craze (hopefully sticking around as a way of life) has hit the South like a kick to our collective overweight beer drinking rear. With more regional microbreweries than any self-respecting lush could frequent, Sweetwater Brewery stands tall amongst the rest as the frontiersman of the Southern beer community. Opening their doors and taps in 1997, the fellas at Sweetwater have been bringing West Coast-style microbrew to the masses ever since. With a wide Southern distribution, you can find the 420 EPA and the Blue in bottles and on tap at most of your finer watering holes. Their seasonal and other varietals tend to stick closer to Atlanta as they are un-pasteurized and meant to be drunk fresh. Not that we often try to get past the beer, but if you dig a little deeper you'll find that Sweetwater is a company that actually cares about our fish and our waterways (check the trout in the logo). Sweetwater works closely with the River Keeper program in multiple locations, and if there is a charity involved with preserving our Southern waterways, it's a pretty safe bet that Sweetwater has kicked in to help the cause. The reason for all of this river-related kindness has a lot to do with some serious fisherman being employed over at the brewery, starting with the head honcho himself, Freddie Bench (we've got sources who tell us Freddie is a serious poon head).

My personal favorite is the 420, but I try to hit the tasting room whenever I'm down in Atlanta, because the dank tank or the catch and release edition beer usually has a special brew that is worth the trip. When you're out and about, just look for the giant rainbow trout. Y'all should be used to that by now.



## Kyle Fletcher's BBQ

4507 Wilkinson Blvd.  
Gastonia, NC



Pork ain't no joke in the Ol' North State. Whether you like it Eastern-style with a little vinegar sauce, or if you're a complete moron and prefer your BBQ Western-NC-style smothered in ketchup, when you grow up a tar heel you are sure to have an opinion one way or another. Most

really good BBQ joints in North Carolina look like they're more likely to be a low rent exotic dancing establishment than an actual eatery. If it's new, bright and shiny, don't even bother. The same thing goes if you can't smell charred flesh from at least half a mile away. Not open for dinner, and cash-only are also marks of better pork purveyors. In a small building off Highway 85 near Gastonia, Kyle Fletcher's meets all these criteria and more.

From the moment you get out of your car, the smell of swine slow-cooking permeates every sense and is generally enough to drive an otherwise sane man into a pork-induced frenzy the likes of which haven't been seen since the heady days of Porky the Pig's short-lived soft core porn career (k-k-k-keep it tasteful folks!). Being in the Piedmont, you can get both Eastern and Western-NC-style sauce on the table, but do yourself a favor and go easy on the sauce—the pork is so good plain it'd be a shame to f\*\*\* it up. To round out the whole deal, order extra hushpuppies, because a few are never enough.

I know this next statement might cause a small-scale guerilla war, but I've been saying it for years and I'll say it again: Kyle Fletcher's is the best BBQ in North Carolina. So the next time you find yourself driving through Gastonia on Highway 85, stop on by and "Get Porked At Kyle's"... you won't be disappointed.





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