



The  
**ANGLING REPORT**  
*serving the angler who travels*

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

August 2016 Vol. 29, No. 8

---

**DATE LINE: SOUTH AMERICA**

**Honor Roll Report  
Patagonia One Program  
Gets a Big Thumbs-Up**

Editor Note: We've been looking hard for a report on the new Patagonia One Program in South America. It involves fishing in both Argentina and Chile. The good news is subscriber Cort Frohlich has stepped up to the plate with an almost rapturous report. We are putting him on our Subscriber Honor Roll for taking the time and making the effort to share what he experienced. His Roll Fishing Cap is already in the mail.

**M**y wife and I were fortunate enough to be among the first anglers to experience Patagonia Base Camp's Patagonia One program, now in just its first full year of being available. Our trip was arranged for us by The Fly Shop in Redding, California, and it's the third time we have used them. As before, working with Pat Pendergast and his team at the Fly shop was a true pleasure, and he was spot-on letting us know what to expect and, importantly, providing us with flies that worked exceptionally well in all the various waters we fished. And what a variety of waters they were! The Patagonia One program is a 10-night, nine-day collaboration between Las Pampas Lodge in Argentina and The Base Camp in Chile. It provides what I believe is an unrivaled combination of small-water, walk-and-wade fishing in Argentina with float fishing the big mountain rivers of Patagonian Chile. We flew overnight from Atlanta on Delta, arriving in Buenos Aires at approximately 9 AM. We were then taken through the city to the regional airport, where we boarded a two-and-a-half-hour flight to Esquel. From there, we were driven another two and a half hours to Las Pampas Lodge, which would be our home for the next four nights, with three days of fishing, before crossing the border for six days of fishing in Chile. The lodge, managed and partially owned by Augustine (Augie) Fox is lovely, having accommodations for only eight anglers, with very comfortable rooms and beds and private bathrooms. Morning and evening meals, and they were excellent, were taken communally in the main lodge. Breakfasts always included fresh juice and eggs and bacon if you so desired. Lunch was served in the field and always included a fine Argentinian Malbec, which we really enjoyed. At dinner, which is usually served about 8:30 PM, everyone eats together, guides and guests alike, which makes for

some interesting and sometimes highly amusing conversation. The bar is always open and well stocked. Unlimited fine Argentinian varieties are provided with dinner. The fireplace was usually roaring in the morning and again later at night, adding to the ambience. Views over the mountains were spectacular. We saw five massive Andean Condors circling overhead one morning. As for the fishing, it was as good as advertised, if not better. On our first day, we fished Terremoto (earthquake) a spring creek, with Pancho and his American assistant, Kevin, who were to be our guides for the entire three days. They were fantastic. Terremoto was quite an introduction to the wonders of the waters available at Las Pampas. My first fish here, in slow-moving, crystal-clear spring creek water was a 20-inch rainbow. I took it on a size 19 Purple Haze. I then took four 18- to 20-inch bows on a size 10 yellow-bellied hopper. The takes were incredibly slow and visual, and the fish, when hooked, went ballistic. I ended the morning sightcasting to a 21-inch brown that took a size 16 tan Elk Hair Caddis. I landed it after a great fight that included several jumps. My wife, meanwhile, took several nice rainbows and missed a brown that Pancho estimated at 24 to 25 inches. What a start! The lodge has a number of scenic, fish-filled lakes available, and the next day we fished Lago #5. Unfortunately, as occurs in Patagonia, it was quite windy, and fishing the reed beds and rock walls of the lake produced only a fish or two. When the lakes are on, however, I was told, they can be spectacular for some really big browns and rainbows. We switched to the Rio Pico in the afternoon and caught several respectable rainbows. On our third and final day at Las Pampas, we experienced a very special day of fishing in a maze of spring creek channels of the Rio Pico that is locally known as "Africa." The channels occur on a stunning, 7,000-acre ranch, surrounded by snow-capped peaks. My wife and I both agreed it was one of the most visually stunning places we had ever seen, much less fished. Every one of those spring creek channels was loaded with big, healthy browns and rainbows that were feeding on caddis. We had constant action all day fishing to huge, free-rising trout. This was classic spring creek fishing. It was a day never to be forgotten, capped off when two huge condors landed in a meadow right behind me as I was landing yet another 20-inch rainbow, and then spread their wings. Even Pancho was impressed!

The following day it was time to leave Las Pampas and cross the border into Chile. The "road" into Chile has to be seen to be believed. To put it mildly, it is just a wee bit bumpy, and the bridges you cross have certainly never seen an OSHA inspector. All part of the fun! The crossing was seamless and took only about an hour and a half. It was clear that not many people cross at this remote location, as the three soldiers manning the crossing on the Chilean side were obviously excited to have something to do, squabbling over who would have the honor of stamping our passports. We had been told that a gun and carbine belonging to Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, who lived in that very area before moving to Bolivia, where they were killed, were at the border crossing but could only be seen with the commandant's permission. With Pancho translating, we asked politely and were allowed into another room, where we saw and photographed the weapons. Pretty cool.

As we entered Chile we were met by Courtney and Fabian from Patagonia Base Camp. After quickly clearing Chilean customs, we were on the water by 10:30, so you don't really lose any fishing time at all. We started out with a float trip on the Rio Figueroa to Temple Camp, where we would spend two nights before continuing on to BaseCamp. Courtney explained that the first day would be a whitewater day, and he gave us a very detailed safety orientation. He explained we would be traversing two class-3 to class-4 rapids on the way in to Temple Camp. As we began the float, we caught several nice rainbows, and then El Diablo, the first—and appropriately named—rapid was upon us. Negotiating these rapids is nothing like most whitewater trips in the United States, where you are on a raft with several other tourists and there's always another raft coming along behind you. This was the real deal, just the three of us in an incredibly remote and inaccessible canyon. Courtney had to work hard negotiating El Diablo, as it is lengthy and full of drops, whirlpools, and boulders. He did a beautiful job. Once we had cleared the rapid and reentered calmer water, he said we would soon understand why the camp is called Temple Camp. Indeed, I do not have the words to describe just how beautiful that canyon on the Figueroa is. The rocks have been carved by the water over the eons at 90-degree angles, and the entire canyon looks like nothing so much as a Mayan temple. Having just experienced the magic of "Africa" the day before, my wife and I felt that on two consecutive days we had experienced two places as unique and as beautiful as any on Earth. There were deep green, slow-moving pools in the canyon, just inviting a swim, and, as it was a bright, sunny day, it was an invitation I gladly accepted. The rapids were not done with us, however, when we made it through Diablo. We still had to traverse "Pinball" before reaching Temple Camp. If anything, this rapid was even more challenging than Diablo, as the water had dropped and Courtney was required to adapt, on the fly, to a

rapid that was very different from the previous one. This was an attention-getting rapid, but very exhilarating. If you are up for combining some great fishing with incredible whitewater this is as good as it gets. Temple Camp has to be one of the coolest out-camps anywhere. Set just above a small rapid that lulls you to sleep each night, there are two domos (igloo-shaped structures) for a maximum of four anglers. They are permanent, with wood floors, area rugs, very comfortable beds, and private outdoor attached flush toilet and outdoor shower. We loved it! We met our two fellow guests, Peter from Brooklyn, New York, and Steve from Washington, D.C., and proceeded to have a dinner of grilled lamb with plenty of good wine and Cuban cigars our new friends had brought along. Peter had an iPod full of tunes and Steve and my wife, Tammy, even cut a rug a little bit. What a great way to end a very special day. The following day, we floated below the camp with guide Dave Neal from Montana. We had a fine day, with probably 20 nice fish brought to the net. We then returned to Temple Camp for our second night and had the place to ourselves. Courtney and Dave grilled up two fresh hams direct from Base Camp that could have fed 20 people.

The following day, after a good night's sleep, we departed for four nights at Base Camp. Our forward progress first involved a short drive to Lago Rosselot, where we met Hayden, our guide for a day of lake fishing from a jet boat. This was all sight fishing to cruising rainbows, very similar to bonefishing and great fun. We would spot a fish, usually in a scum line, and cast some four or five feet in front of the fish, which would invariably result in a slow approach and even slower take. In addition, we hunted the rock walls lining the lake, where we saw fish in the shadows that seemed to glow. We were able to sight-cast to them as well. There are several spectacular waterfalls feeding the lake, and we thoroughly enjoyed the day. That evening we finally reached Base Camp, owned and managed by Marcel and Carolina Sijnesael. Marcel first arrived in Chile in 1997, he told us, with just a backpack, a tent, and a fly rod. He immediately fell in love with the area and purchased a piece of property on the banks of the Palena River. By 2001, he had constructed Base Camp and opened it to his first guests. The lodge is gorgeous, constructed of native hardwoods with a capacity for ten anglers. Marcel, Carolina, and their two precious daughters, Elena and Isabel, live right next door. We were met with a pitcher of pisco sours and a sumptuous meal, supervised by Kelly, who arrived four years ago from Holland to be a nanny for the girls. She now does a great job making everyone feel as if they are honored guests in a private home. There is a wood-fired hot tub here and a sauna overlooking the river, both of which we took full advantage of.

Over the next two days, we had the privilege of fishing with guide Greg Bricker, who has been at Base Camp going on ten years. He is as good as they come. Our first float was from upstream back to the lodge, and we had one of those days you never forget. Using large black Fat Alberts with a sprinkling of Gypsy Kings and Chubby Chernobyls thrown in, we must have moved 40 fish, bringing about 25 to the net, including a 25.-inch broad-shouldered brown, 21- and 18-inch browns, a 22-inch rainbow, and numerous 18- to 20-inch rainbows. The action was constant, and we doubled up more than once. Some of the fishing was to promising-looking eddies and structure, and some was sight fishing to individual fish. What a day! The following day we fished with Greg downstream from the lodge and once again caught many impressive big rainbows, all on big dries. We celebrated with a riverside sauna and some of Marcel's outstanding selection of Chilean varietals. On our ninth, and, sadly, final day, we fished once again with Dave Neal, our old friend from the TempleCamp, this time floating the Rio Rosselot. This involved one final class-4 rapid. We were into fish from beginning to end, sticking the first fish within 50 yards of putting in and the last, a 20- inch rainbow, 50 yards from taking out. At lunchtime, Dave maneuvered through a small technical rapid to a side channel where we wet-waded while Dave was arranging the food. Here, my wife quickly caught three nice rainbows and I chipped in with two. That night we enjoyed a traditional Chilean asado, a young lamb roasted all day over a wood fire, again with plenty of fine wine. All the guides and Marcel joined us, and it was an evening filled with stories, laughter, and the camaraderie of folks that by now seemed like old friends.

To sum it all up, the PatagoniaOne Program allows you to experience the very best fishing of two wonderful countries. Throw in gorgeous scenery, exciting whitewater, delicious food and wine, and wonderfully warm people and you have what is truly a dream trip. My advice: book this one as soon as you can. Enjoy!—Cort Frohlich .

More information on: [www.patagonian-basecamp.com](http://www.patagonian-basecamp.com)