

# ***A Day On Little Pine Lagoon***

It was the middle of November, Sydney was experiencing some extremely warm weather as I was getting ready for our annual trip to Tassie. My brain was struggling, trying to come to terms with packing winter clothing and thermals into my luggage.

The day came when club member David Wilson and I along with a couple of other fishing buddies headed off for 10 days of exciting, highly visible and challenging fishing in the Tasmanian Central Highlands.



**Great Lake**

We based ourselves in Miena, on the Great Lake, centrally located, it allows for easy access to countless fishing destinations all within a short drive. In previous years we would also spend a few days in Strahan (West Coast) fishing for sea run wild browns along the Henty River. But so much is dependent on river flows, tides, white bait runs and importantly the mouth of the river being open and not closed as we found out on too many occasions. This year we decided to stay put and explore more of the remote Western Lakes.



**Our Lodgings**

Our first day we awoke to a bitterly cold and frosty morning, now I'm glad I brought along that winter clothing. It wasn't long before it started to rain and the wind quickly picked up.



**Snow on the front porch**

Not wanting to waste an opportunity we headed for Little Pine Lagoon where we were met by a number of anglers just leaving after their unsuccessful morning targeting tailing fish. As we made our way from the dam wall to the western shore the wind intensified and now there were waves breaking on the bank as we cast into this onslaught. Standing there, watching the water for any sign of movement or fish feeding, when one of my party suddenly spooks a large Brown not far from the bank, in only centremetres of water.



**Little Pine Lagoon - On a clear day**

Not seeing any obvious movements on the surface and encouraged by recent events I selected a tiny Hare's Ear Nymph and carefully walked along the shore until I saw a fish working in the margins, but no sooner lost sight of it.

I knew my presentation had to be spot on as any carelessness would send this trout off into deeper water.

I waited for this fish to re-appear, the chop on the water was now making things even more difficult. I hated the prospect of blind flogging but felt this may be the only chance given the lack of surface activity and visibility being extremely poor. I presented my leader and fly to the water's edge several times with no success.

Then casting no further than a rod length I get a strike and I'm on. After a couple of aerial displays, it's a nice healthy brown. My excitement quickly turns to anguish when my line goes limp and I'm facing the prospect that during the last aerial trapeze this fish has thrown the hook.

In an instant as I continue to retrieve my line, it becomes tight again this time with more weight on the end, putting a big bow on my 6 weight rod. I knew then that I had foul hooked that same fish !

As the fish threw the hook I've re-hooked near it's pectoral fin. Now the fight was on. I was extremely lucky to get a 2nd chance, this fish now feels like a monster as I bring it in. A beautiful healthy Tasmanian wild brown was landed, the first of many for the trip and finally, broken my Little Pine "Hoodoo" to now graduating from the "University of Little Pine Lagoon".



As this fish was destined for that night's dinner, an examination of it's stomach contents quickly discovered it overflowing with beetles.

This discovery proved vital for all our days on Little Pine as no sooner had we changed flies to a beetle pattern (red tag was best) that David Wilson next landed another golden Little Pine brown that came from nowhere to engulf his fly.



All our group were now getting into fish, it was amazing to see your fly sitting on the surface amongst the water chop, no more than a rod length from the bank to have it aggressively taken.

Over the next 10 days many trout were caught and released up to the 3lb mark at Little Pine, mostly on red tags.

The weather didn't let up with one day a blizzard hitting. Snow flurries and freezing temperatures making casting even more difficult, with ice forming on the rod guides.



A truly special place that will keep me going back.

John Vaccaro