

FLY FISHING LA FERME



A view of one section of La Ferme.

by Paul Cochrane

Situated in the beautiful valley of Franschhoek, only an hour's drive from Cape Town, and producing some hard fighting rainbow trout together with six other exciting freshwater gamefish species, lies La Ferme Farm. Whether you are a fly fishing enthusiast or just want some peace and quiet, La Ferme with its spectacular surrounding mountains and the barking of baboons is the perfect place to be.

You might even be welcomed by the resident springbuck as you enter the gates. It is owned by Francois and Mercedes Labuschagne. I recently had the privilege of visiting the farm to enjoy a two-day fly fishing competition, which was sponsored by Bells Whiskey. Bells, Flywaters, Cabriere Estate, La Petite Ferme and the owners of La Ferme sponsored some amazing prizes which included good tasting wines from the surrounding farms mentioned and various whiskey products from Bells, to name just a few and a voucher from La Ferme for the first prize sponsored by the owners.

After the two days I came in second overall and my friend, James Davidson, came fourth, putting us in line for some of these stunning prizes. The prize giving was on the Sunday and as the Bells representative had to leave early that day the owner had the honour of handing out all the prizes. During the briefing it was noted that this venue will be hosting numerous competitions like this one to promote the art and interest in fly fishing and those interested are urged to look on the website (see end of article) for all the details

regarding competitions.

At the time of writing this article, we had visited the farm again just after it had been stocked with some really big fish. During this visit James Davidson caught his biggest trout ever which weighed 3.8 kg and I caught one of 2.3kg.

THE DAMS

There are four lined dams on the farm which all contain rainbow trout and small tilapia. Arrangements are currently underway to stock some brown trout in all four dams with some trophy fish included. Dam no 3 (on your extreme right as you enter the gate) contains some carp and witvis as well, which the keen flyfisher can try for when simply having a break from trout fishing or wanting to go for a different species.

Dam 1 and 2 lie in line with Dam 3 with just the gravel road separating them apart. Dam 4 which lies behind 3 and more on its own has been stocked with largemouth bass together with the trout which makes the fishing good as both species are predatory and will eagerly take flies. Bear in mind that bass prefer larger presentations and are easier to catch in summer while trout prefer the cooler water of winter. There is also a natural dam on the property but on the other side of the river that flows through the area which contains rainbow trout, smallmouth bass, carp and some tilapia giving the angler seven species of fish to go for while visiting this beautiful place.



Paul Cochrane holding a rainbow trout of 2,3kg, taken on a Cat's Whiskers fly during the Bells competition.



Amanda Cochrane caught her first trout on fly using a Black Woolly Buzzer. The fish weighed in at 1kg.

THE FISH AND FISHING

Even though spinning and bait fishing is allowed in the natural dam on the other side of the river, only fly tackle may be used in the four dams on the farm. These waters are run in the true spirit of fly fishing and host the famous Bells fly fishing competitions. What makes the fishing so good is that even though trout are in the majority as far as numbers go, the owner wants to develop the farm into a bass venue as well. Arrangements are under way to stock a healthy population of largemouth bass into Dam no 4, allowing a wide spectrum of various opportunities to take place in the fishing world.

Furthermore there are plenty of anglers that like fishing for bass and trout and La Ferme have both. The price for fishing is R100 per adult and R50 for children. La Ferme also provides fishing sessions at R35 per hour with rod hire at the same rate. Flies are charged for at R10 each and fish taken (per kg) is R60 cleaned. It is preferred if trout are caught on barbless hooks as this makes them easier to release unharmed. Injured fish or fish taken will be charged for. Cottage guests do not pay for fishing, as this is one of the perks for staying in the cottages.

ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is in the form of three self catering cottages very close to the dams and fully equipped with crockery, cutlery, pots, pans, linen and towels. There's also a fridge/freezer, microwave, television,

and an air conditioner for hot and cold and a four-plate stove. No oven is provided. Satellite channels are available but please take note that cell phone reception is poor.

All the cottages have been four star rated by the Tourism Grading Council of SA. The outside areas of the cottages have decks, which are equipped with braai facilities and outside furniture. Wood can be bought on the farm but the first bundle is free. Additional wood is R25 per bundle. If you require your cottage to be serviced the daily rate would be R60 as this is not included in the price. Cottage guests can enjoy the swimming pool, jungle gym and trampoline, which are for cottage guests only and used at your own risk.



James Davidson with the biggest trout he has ever caught, a rainbow of 3,8kg. The fish took a fly made by English trout fisherman, Jim Mullen.



Dam number 3 on La Ferme.



Plum Cottage sleeps six people and is one of three five-star chalets on the farm.



Francois and Mercedes Labuschagne, the owners of La Ferme.

Because the cottages are self-catering and you might not be in the mood for braaing or making food inside, then I suggest you drive into Franschhoek to satisfy your taste for some of the finest foods in this historic town. You will find all the best wine routes begin an arms length from where you will be in places such as Paarl, Wellington, Stellenbosch and of course Franschhoek itself. All the areas mentioned here have interesting art galleries,

gifts, cheese and chocolate manufacturing and coffee shops. The famous Ferrari museum is only 10 minutes away on L'Omarins Wine Estate. The famous glass blowing at Sidelberg Wine Estate will blow you away. 4 x 4 trails are also nearby.

Golf players will have a hard time choosing from over 10 golf courses in the area, some designed by the famous Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus.

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In closing I would recommend that you visit La Ferme and take a stroll around the farm to take in its beauty either on horseback or foot and keep your eyes open for all the varied birdlife especially the Egyptian and Canadian geese. To get your mind off your busy lifestyle, especially in today's world, a walk amongst the vineyards and next to the dams should do you the world of good.

To book your stay please call Mercedes on (021) 8670120 or on 082 555 2043.
Email Mercedes @laferme.co.za for rates etc.
Website www.laferme.co.za

Anyone wishing to contact the writer of this article for further information on dams or fishing questions can do so on the following numbers:

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