

Chronicle Fishing



Introduction

October was upon us, and while the fair weather fisherman slowly drift off into their winter hibernation the rest of us are breaking out the thermals because these next few months can produce some of the best fishing with carp at their top weights. However before we embrace the British winter-time we had been invited to work our lake promotion magic across the English Channel to the South of France. After counting down the days and watching the weather closely (with the exception of Paul who packed mainly shorts and sun cream), Team Chronicle were more than ready to begin our next adventure, so with the minibus loaded to capacity looking more lowered than your local boy racer's pride and joy we set off to our next BC lake review of High Mill Lake.

High Mill Lake – Etang De Brigueuil, France

Nestled in the beautiful Charentais countryside you will find a lake that ticks all the right boxes when trying to choose a carp fishing holiday in France. This 22-acre lake has a long, rich history and dates back hundreds of years, but it's only been in the past nine years that Andy and Tracey have turned this beautiful and picturesque stream fed lake into what could be one of Europe's premier carp fishing destinations. The Dutch and the Ger-

mans are already taking full advantage of this superb fishery, so it shouldn't be long before the Brits wise up and follow suit. With the drive a little over six hours from Calais, the roads were a pleasure to drive on and the lake was no trouble to find.

As we pulled up outside Andy and Tracey's beautiful property, we were

awestruck by the carp oasis that was to be our home for the next five nights. I say home because that's exactly how the owners made us feel from the moment we arrived with cold beers in the fridge and pie and mash already on the go to warm us up after our journey across the channel. Handshakes exchanged, we were

Paul Wood with his stunning 45lb 7oz mirror.





Ian Schaverien holding Half Moon at 42lb 8oz.



Sam Baldwin was more than happy netting this 46lbs 14oz fish called Parrot.

invited to explore the property and shown around the impressive facilities. Much of what Andy and Tracey have done at High Mill Lake has been tailored to make the whole carp fishing holiday as fantastic as it could be.

Within the facilities is a well-stocked tackle shop just in case anything gets left behind, and a gallery of target fish over 50lbs if you weren't excited enough at this point. Next to the tackle shop was a large shower and toilet block, extremely clean with everything you need available 24 hours a day including fridge and freezers for bait storage and UK plug points to charge your electrical devices.

After choosing swims and selecting target fish from the gallery we were taken to our swims by quad bike and trailer (another plus) to begin our session. The lake was gorgeous and full of character and features includ-

ing long, tree filled margins and large beds of lily pads. It holds 600-plus carp including more than forty known 40lb-plus stunners. Its 11 ample sized swims give you a huge section of water to command while never feeling like you were encroaching on your fellow anglers. The swims were all wood chipped, most being large enough for two bivvies, and they included tables, chairs and a bbq (should you choose to cook your own meals, which would be madness after sampling Tracey's cooking).

The lake offers a food package, which is second to none with home-made piping hot meals brought to your bivvy for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I can't stress enough how good the food was; just be prepared to be well fed and loosen up those belt buckles. So after setting up with bellies full from pie and mash, Team Chronicle had four full days and five

nights to test our skills on High Mill Lake, and it's safe to say we were not disappointed! Ian roared off to a quick start in swim 8 with six fish to 44lbs in the first 24 hours, and from there the team managed to have a session to remember catching numerous named target fish including the largest, Frank's Common at a whopping 49lb 3oz. (6lbs off his usual weight due to late spawning). By the end the team had totalled 42 carp, eight being over 40lbs.

Ian Schaverien's amazing session never looked like slowing down in swim 8 with 18 of the 42 carp falling to him, with his haul alone weighing in at over 500lbs, closely followed by Sam Baldwin with 12 massive carp also from swim 8. Ricky Westpfel managed to produce eight carp from swim 11 to 45lbs while Paul Wood netted four carp to 45lb-plus out of swim 10.



Ricky Westfel with his 38lb stunner.



Ian Schaverien had a cracking session landing 18 carp including Frank's Common at 49lbs 3oz.

Lake Rules

It goes without saying we operate a NO-KILL policy and all fish must be returned to the water in the best conditions without delay.

Keep nets are prohibited, but for those anglers fishing on their own we are available throughout the day and night to take photos if you have any difficulties.

Large landing nets and large unhooking mats are obligatory. Unhooking mats must be 1300 x 900mm. These are available to rent onsite.

We encourage anglers to unhook fish in the water with the aid of a large size mat.

Maximum three rods per angler and one hook per rod.

Maximum size of hook size 4, micro-barbed or barbed only.

Minimum 0.35mm line.

No braid or lead core.

Swingers are obligatory and they must be set in such a way that they can indicate clearly a drop back.

Anti-tangle tubing is obligatory.

No fishing directly into the lilies.

Safety of the fish is of paramount importance; only rigs that reflect this will be tolerated. Our bailiff has the right to inspect rods daily and make changes where necessary.

Bait boats permitted but respect for neighbouring fishermen must be exercised at all times.

We expect all anglers to carry antiseptic, on sale in the shop for those who are without.

Anyone leaving rods unsupervised or behaving unreasonably will be asked to leave immediately with no refund.

All gates to the lake must be kept closed at all times.

Vehicles are not authorized around the lake, so all vehicles must be parked in the specified parking areas.

You must respect the environment, flora and fauna at all times.

All rubbish to be put in bags and placed in the dustbins

provided. Cigarette ends are not to be thrown on the ground or in the lake. A fine will be levied if you are found doing so.

Toilets and showers are to be left in a clean condition, as you would hope to find them.

No swimming.

Dogs are permitted on one bank with prior authorization by the proprietors.

The proprietors are not responsible for any personal accidents, theft or loss of equipment occurring on the property at any time.

While we were there the owners also made the announcement that their new bailiff will be none other than the Globetrotter Tony Davies-Patrick, a legend in the carp world and a great opportunity for anyone who books at High Mill to meet and share stories with someone who has fished all over the world. We were genuinely sad to leave, having had such an amazing five days. The owners asked us to be brutally honest in this review and to mention the bad as well as the good. But after racking our brains the best we could come up with is maybe some anti-slip mats in the showers, and that's us being picky! Truth is we couldn't find faults; the place was amazing and the fact that they wanted us to be 100% brutal is credit to the character of Andy and Tracy who truly care about all their guests and want them to get value for money. In our opinion they have achieved this to the highest standard.

We often finish a review saying Team Chronicle will be back, and without a doubt we will be returning to High Mill Lake – Etang De Brigueuil France!

For up to date information on prices and packages visit their website at www.etangdebrigueuil.com

And don't forget to go to chroniclefishing.co.uk for videos and more stunning photos of our time in France.

