

VAIL VALLEY ANGLERS

On vacation in Vail Colorado this year I decided I would like to try fly fishing. So my husband called Vail Valley Anglers and set me up for a half day with my own guide to learn. My guides name is Michael Salomone. Well, talk about hitting the jackpot with an outfit and a guide. I got the best there is. Michael got me outfitted with everything I needed and he, himself, was a virtual walking fly fishing store. He was prepared for every contingency and that gave me confidence and security.

We set out early and were the first ones on the river. The sun was coming over the high mountains in the east as a silver sliver outlining the high peaks. It reflected on the lower west mountains in a pale wash of light. One part of the river was smooth and a family of geese were floating there. If I didn't know better I would have thought it was a bunch of wood decoys placed on black glass. Where we were the river was a little more active and birds were singing waking up the morning and (truthfully) fish were literally jumping out of the water. The water was clear, smelled so clean, well you get the idea. There is a ballet and beauty that fills you even if you don't catch any fish.

Michael was an expert and patient teacher. He made it easy and fun and we had a great time just talking but respected the times of quiet too. He was constantly on the lookout for flies and what kind were there and what kind the fish were biting.. Accordingly he changed my flies as the day progressed to give me the best chance of landing a fish. Initially, I got so excited when a fish bit that my enthusiasm guaranteed I lost any hope of catching anything! However, I finally got a bite that I did as instructed (well part of it) and yanked up the fish on my line. Talk about picture perfect; the rod was arced, the fish was arced on the end and Michael was ready to net it when, plunk, there went the fish. I forgot that I needed to play it some more line. This is the dance between you, the fish, and the river, which I was flat footed. Just wait until next time.

As we were fishing, a couple of other guides came along with some other novices. Well now, that was eye opening. These guys had their clients in waders and stuff but they, themselves, had absolutely no and I mean NO other gear on themselves, not even waders, no other flies, no nets, no nothing. I thought to myself, "What a bunch of Bozos and am I glad I didn't get them." Did I tell you Michael kept me from falling into the water a couple of times? He was alert at all times for all fishing and human needs but it never felt that way. These other guide's clients were pretty much on their own with the absolute basic and minimum help or expertise or equipment. For me, the contrast was so stark and I just was so thankful we landed with the vail valley anglers.

There were times when I forgot Michael was even there. You enter into a kind of bubble of floating, quiet, timelessness, sort of like skiing well in powder, where there is nothing but the NOW and all else is suspended in the serene moment. Looking back, I'm sure Michael recognized those times when that happened to me and he said nothing, just let me experience it. His whole approach was so professional, so expert, and so geared for maximum help to the client that I would never use anyone

for fly fishing. I can't recommend his outfit enough and compared to others ---there is no comparison. Needless to say, this 68 year old lady and first timer is "hooked".

Michael,

I know this is too long. I just poured out my whole experience. But, you can edit, cut, & paste to put this on your web site as you feel fit.

Sincerely,

Carol

