

## PERSIAN CARPET/BICYCLE RIDE

by Fred Schneider

Back in the days of the Shah, before the crash of 1979, I was fortunate to be involved in a contract which took me and four other South Africans into the Old Testament environment of rural Iran. Legislation required us to recruit our labour locally, and, amongst our new crew, who spoke only Farsi, were two brothers, Mirsa and Reza, who regarded us as benefactors sent personally by Allah.

In due course, we were invited by the brothers to spend Jumo (being Friday, and the Moslem Sabbath) at their village. We were assured that the river flowing past provided excellent angling and, in consequence, my colleague, Stan Gibson, and I arrived at the village on the appointed day with our flyfishing gear.

The village was small, with a population of about 40, and situated on the banks of the most beautiful stretch of potential trout water an angler could wish to feast his eyes on. Having dispensed with formalities, Stan and I proceeded to the stream to dazzle the eyes of the locals with our skills. Within about ten minutes I had hooked and landed a small fish, not dissimilar from our scabies, but another half an hour of flogging the water produced nothing more, and the curious onlookers started drifting away.

A short while later, the official village angling team arrived with their gear... one bicycle, two half-metre strips of stainless steel, four baskets and about 20 metres of two-strand flex. The tackle was assembled as follows: at one end the flex was separated, one strand being cut shorter than the other. These ends were bared and attached to the metal strips. The bicycle was upturned, and the other end of the flex was connected to the bicycle dynamo.

The basket bearers, headed by Mirsa, took up their positions downstream while angler-in-chief, Reza, took position at the head of the rapids armed with the loosely coiled flex and metal strips.

Upon instruction, the young assistant manning the bicycle cranked the pedal furiously and, with the dynamo really humming, "angler" Reza tossed the stainless steel strips into the rapids. The results were quite electric, fish came tumbling out of the water, like electrocuted cats, to fall back stunned and float away downstream to Mirsa and his crew.

Three passes produced about 20 fish, better averages than you will get with a fly rod, but hell, I'd rather join the ranks of the pap-gooiers than resort to such "shocking" tactics.

PS South Africa lost the test, final score being:

SA Fly Rods..... 1  
Persian Bicycles.....20

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“ The grand mistake of all the authors I have seen on flyfishing is their supposition that the flies are alighting on the water from above, whereas, could they catch up with the idea, or be persuaded when told, that the flies arise to the surface from the bottom where they are bred, sheets of useless speculation might be saved.

*John Younger, River Angling for Salmon and Trout, 1840.*

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