



Jane on the watch for trout action.

(Photos: Pieter Cronjé)

JANE GOES FISHING

By PIETER CRONJÉ AND MARK MACKERETH

MANY women can appreciate a good trout dinner. What is more, some can even catch the trout themselves. A few can fill their creels in half the time that it takes even an experienced male fisherman.

Many of the fairer sex know how to distinguish between a Walker's Killer and a Connemara Black and how to decipher a strange code like DTF 6. It is therefore not surprising that a good many female enthusiasts can calculate the condition factor of a trout.

Yes, indeed, the growing number of followers in the universal trout fishing clan have seen male chauvinism in this sport peter out. Women's Lib has come to waders!

So you know some pretty capable trouters too? Meet Jane of the Smalblaar.

Jane is a vivacious blonde who knows every inch of this lovely river up in the scenic Dutoitskloof. She knows exactly when to expect the morning and the afternoon rise and where that prize two-pounder lurks. She avoids runs without trout and can cover a stretch of water in half the time that it takes even the most hardy of waders.

She has a remarkable killer's instinct for a lady, but then again you could not wish to find a more agreeable companion. She will watch patiently while you try to fish a run that will not yield a trout in five seasons. She will not say a word about your judgment for fear of hurting your feelings.



Jane criticising the tackle.

Her unselfishness clearly stands out. Many fishermen fight a losing battle against that well-known human frailty called envy. Not Jane. She will rejoice with you over even the smallest of tiddlers. You will be overwhelmed by her exaltation when you net your elusive two-pounder.

If you find it hard to follow your fly down a fast run or tend to daydream when you're fishing, you need not worry that you might miss that rise. Eagle-eyed Jane will never let it out of her sight while gracefully poised on a vantage point. If the trout takes your fly, Jane will see it first. When you hear her restrained feminine shriek, strike immediately. Your trout will be hooked.

Jane will accompany you any time you care to go trouting, even knowing full well you do not stand a chance of even a platanna rise. Though she loves a trout meal, she will never say no to duck delicately prepared in orange liqueur. If she spots one, you will have to forego the pleasure of her company, because she will be off in hot pursuit. But then, again, that is the only time that she will leave your side.

She takes a keen interest in frogs. When wading upstream, she might decide to take a short detour to look for new species. Once in a while the unfortunate lady might lose her footing and end up in a bit of stagnant water. This presents no problem. She wears only the bare essentials when going fishing, and a swim in the cool, clear water does the trick.

Jane is a receptionist at the Protea Park Hotel in Dutoitskloof. She is worth her curvaceous weight in gold to her employer, Mr. Barry Steyn. Jane is no ordinary receptionist; her sole task is to welcome bona fide trouters to the hotel and the lovely Smalblaar River.

Through a special exemption from the relevant clause in the Liquor Act, Jane is allowed in the public bar where the fishermen have their "oh-be-joyful" after a day's fishing.



"Oh-be-joyful" after a day's fishing.

Just to make you feel at ease, she will not have her usual dainty apéritif, but a hearty pint of beer instead. In the spirit of the company she will avoid a secluded table and rather join the fellows on a bar stool or display her shapely legs from the top of the counter.

On arrival at the hotel you will usually find Jane lazing in the warm sunshine nursing her gorgeous tan and enjoying the crisp, clean mountain air. But just whisper the word fishing in her dainty ear and your companion will be ready for the outing in seven seconds flat. You will need more than a brisk pace to reach the water before she does!

Before she became receptionist at the hotel, Jane spent some time on Mr. Peter Stiglingh's farm. She attempted nature conservation work and ecological studies but soon found that that was not her cup of tea. There was another problem. She loved to take the big Bouvier dogs out hunting and this invariably led to mishaps. The Bouviers had no regard for Mr. Stiglingh's proteas and, rather than spoiling their fun, Jane decided to leave.

Although Jane is the firm friend of every true sporting trout fisherman, I must tell you that Mark Mackereth is her firm favourite.

There is something else I should tell you. Jane is a connoisseur when it comes to trout, but she considers that part which we normally dispose of to be an epicurian delight.

Girls like Jane are few and far between. A better companion no trouterman could hope to find.

P.S.—I could give you her telephone number, but who ever heard of a bull terrier answering a telephone?