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THE VIRGINIA SPORTSMAN

WINTER 2025

*Dave Karczynski Walks on
Water in New Essay Collection*



Alberto Rey's Global
Travelogue and Art

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\$6.95





THE MORNING AFTER A HEAVY RAIN THAT FLOODED THE STREAMS, REY WEIGHED DOWN HIS TABLE AND PAINTING SUPPLIES WITH ROCKS TO CREATE A WATERCOLOR OF THE CALEUFU RIVER ON THE CALEUFU ESTANCIA IN ARGENTINA.

EDITOR'S NOTE

"In the best stories about fly fishing...big fish are caught or lost; people say wild and spontaneous words; event becomes memory and sometimes, in the hands of a master, bleeds into art." The words of prolific fly-fishing author Nick Lyons are appropriate for our Winter Issue, which features two sportsmen who epitomize the intersection of passion for fly fishing and creative expression in their respective crafts.

Dave Karczynski is an award-winning author, lensman and educator who has cast to fish on four continents and written for about every fly-fishing publication under the sun. His narratives warrant reverence, praise and rinse-repeat reading. The literati have taken notice; he received the Robert Traver Award in fly-fishing writing and a Zell Fellowship in creative writing.

In "Calling After Water: Dispatches from a Fishing Life" (Lyons Press, October 2024, 224 pages), his third book and first essay collection, Karczynski brings together his narratives from his time as a contributor to such iconic magazines as *Outdoor Life*, *The Drake*, *American Angler*, *The Flyfish Journal* and others.

"Words chose me," Karczynski said, and the ones he chooses resonate with the clarity and precision he applies to both his writing and his angling, as he interweaves narrative finesse with his fishing adventures. His precise attention to words and sentences patterns his fly selection, and he patiently works with both materials with the same dedication, tying them together on his keyboard and vise.

The outputs are a refreshing cocktail of entertainment, intellectual depth and an impressive trophy fish and explorations resume.

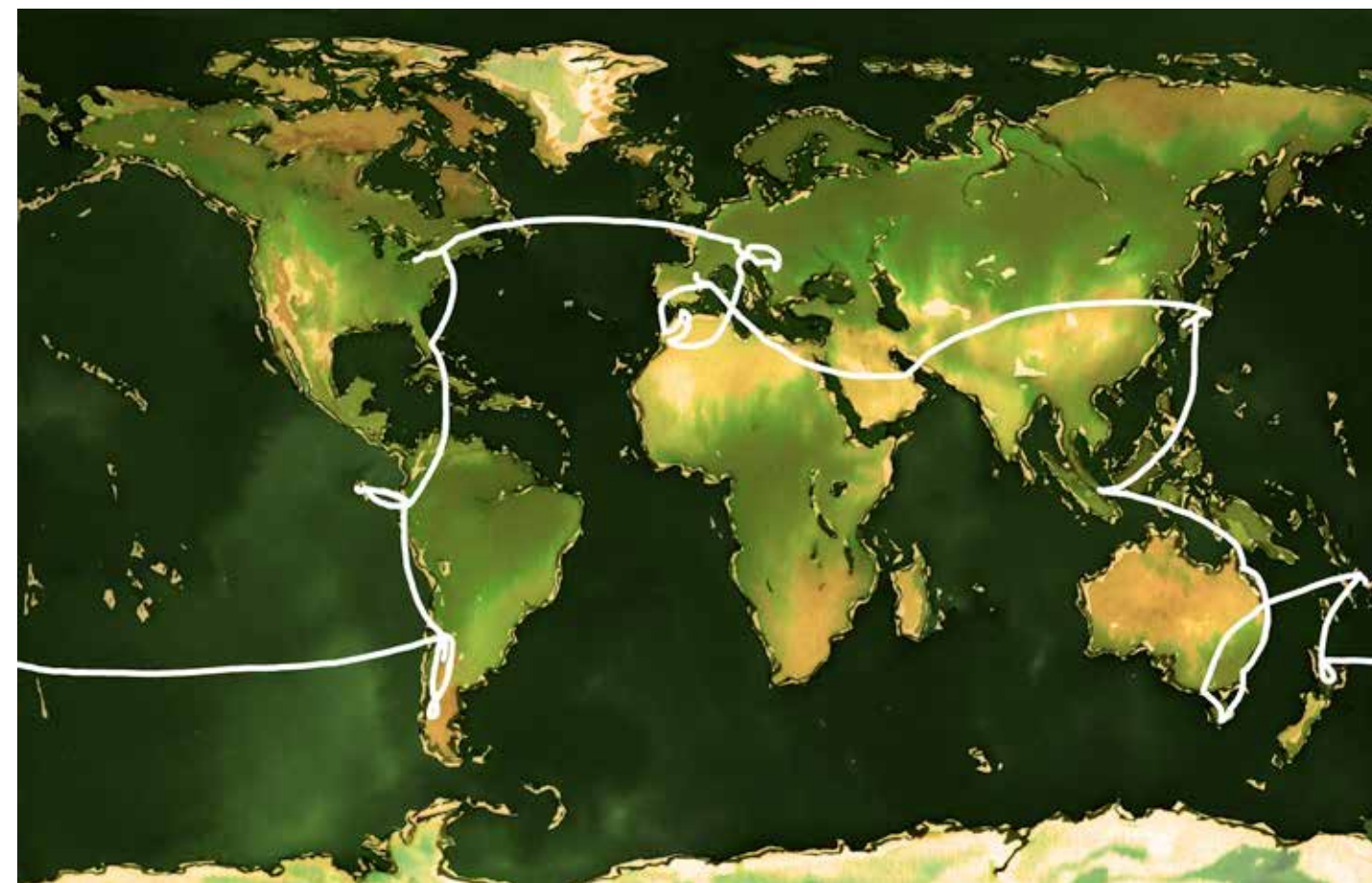
Similarly, Alberto Rey is a fly fisher, retired educator, painter, writer and filmmaker who has run a youth fly fishing program for 30 years. His multifaceted artistry offers an inspiring lens on the fly-fishing life. Rey's Cuban heritage and recent global travels enrich his work with profound cultural and environmental insights, and the man's ability to translate his experiences into visual art, ceramics and film is extraordinary.

As you'll see on these pages, Rey shares a travelogue of his journey around the world captured by his words, imagery and art. The trip involved 27 flights and 47 locations from South America and Asia to Europe and Northern Africa, where he fly fished 26 bodies of water.

This issue celebrates how the fly-fishing life transcends the stream, merging with literature, art and even self-discovery. These two creatives remind us that angling isn't just about the fish—it's about the stories, the places and the connections that shape our lives.

Happy Holidays! Thank you for helping us celebrate sporting life and culture. We appreciate you reading our journal.

Joe Shields



THE REYS TOOK A CIRCUITOUS ROUTE AROUND THE WORLD.

Around the World to Angle and Savor

STORY, PHOTOS AND ART BY ALBERTO REY

I have been home for a week. As one would expect, being away for five months would create a backlog of chores that must be addressed to bring my home and life back to order or, at least, to the condition I considered "normal" before I left. However, after visiting 14 countries on six continents, these endless tasks blur the fact that I have returned as a different person. The changes are not easily definable, but I now realize I perceive everything from a new perspective. I now understand I need to reexamine every aspect of my everyday life and question whether it can be changed to make it more interesting, valuable or enjoyable. I value life more and feel more fortunate. I am also humbled by my ignorance of the incredibly sophisticated and spiritual cultures I have experienced and the knowledge I have yet to learn. These global experiences do not remain only as memories, but as inspiration to live a more fulfilling life and to

create more ambitious and higher-quality art.

This trip started five years ago when my wife of 35 years, Janeil, and I began realistically to consider retirement. Having worked for most of our lives, we wanted to celebrate the milestone with a grand gesture. The idea of an extended trip around the world seemed an exciting possibility, and the thought of going on that adventure kept us going during our most difficult days at work. We also started accumulating viable destinations to visit. But by the time we started planning our route, we realized there were too many interesting places to explore in the time we allotted.

We began to whittle down our list to something more manageable, although the entire itinerary was still very fluid by the time we left. The first half of the trip was organized but the second half was still up in the air. We were uncertain what day we were going to return. My priorities were to fly fish in some of the

ONE OF THE MANY BEAUTIFUL SCENES ONE EXPERIENCES WHEN TRAVELING TO THE RIVERS FROM MAGIC WATERS LODGE IN CHILE.



best water in the world, while my wife planned to explore locations she had always dreamt about. We alternated our travel to include an interesting mix of cities and remote locations.

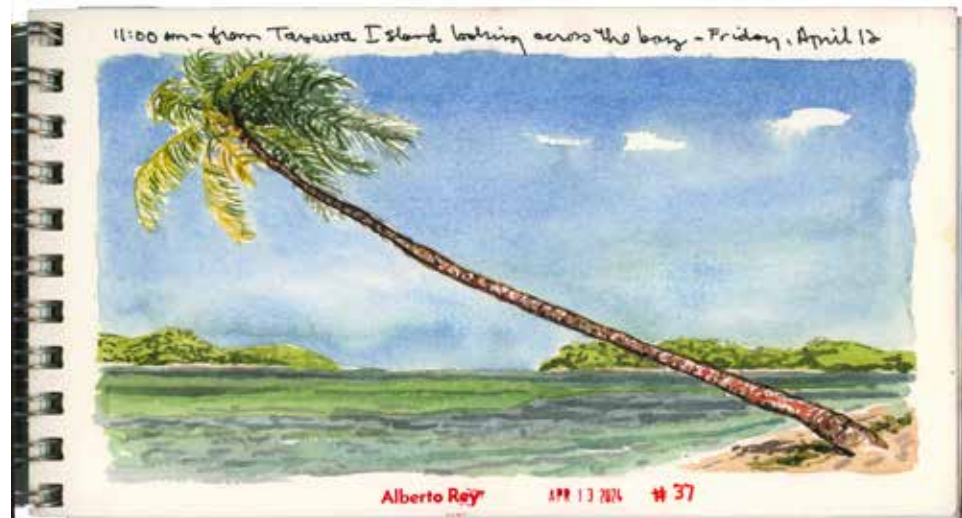
Our trip began on a cold February day when we drove to my son's college commencement at Middlebury College, which was on our way to Gloucester, where we planned to stay overnight before catching our first flight of the adventure from Boston. The morning of the flight, I felt terrible and quickly discovered I had COVID. We returned to Fredonia, New York, where I spent the next two weeks recovering and rescheduling flights.

Fully recovered, we restarted our trip by flying into the beautiful city of Quito, Ecuador. The country was in an emergency due to conflicts between the drug cartels and the government. But Quito seemed unaffected and we felt safe enough to stay a few days before continuing to the Galapagos Islands. Santa Cruz Island had more tourist traffic than I had expected, but we soon found the solitude and connections with nature that we were looking for on the more remote islands of the archipelago.

Our next leg of the trip brought us to the Patagonia region of Chile and Argentina, where we spent the next three weeks fly fishing for trout at Magic Waters, Baker Patagonia and Calefu Estancia. The lodges provided superbly prepared examples of authentic local cuisine while providing opportunities to fish and hike in awe-inspiring and diverse environments. After our time in South America, we continued west by taking a 13-hour flight to New Zealand, where we visited Auckland, Rotorua and Taupo on the North Island. While



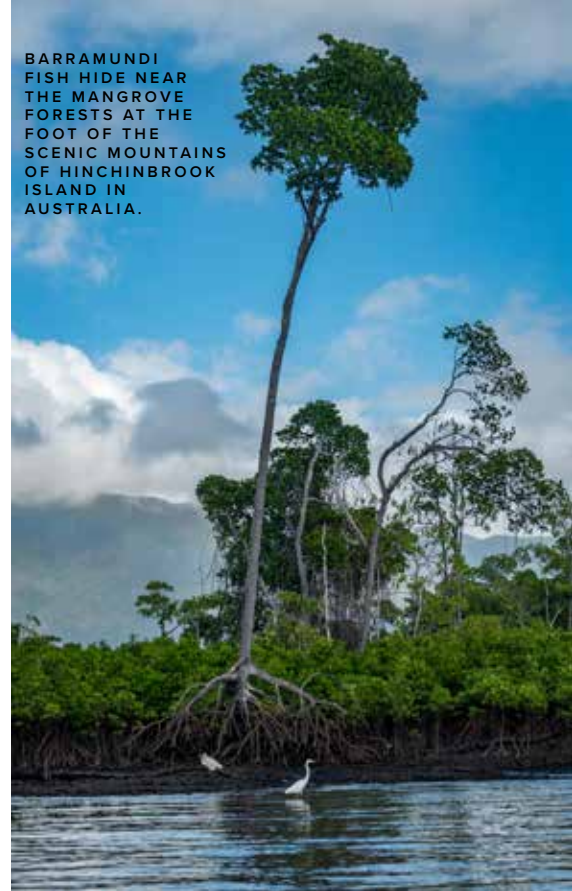
DIEGO, THE REYS' SON, CASTS TO A LARGE BROWN TROUT NESTLED NEAR A ROCK UNDER THE SHADOW OF A CLUSTER OF TREES ON THE COCHRANE RIVER NEAR BAKER PATAGONIA LODGE IN CHILE.



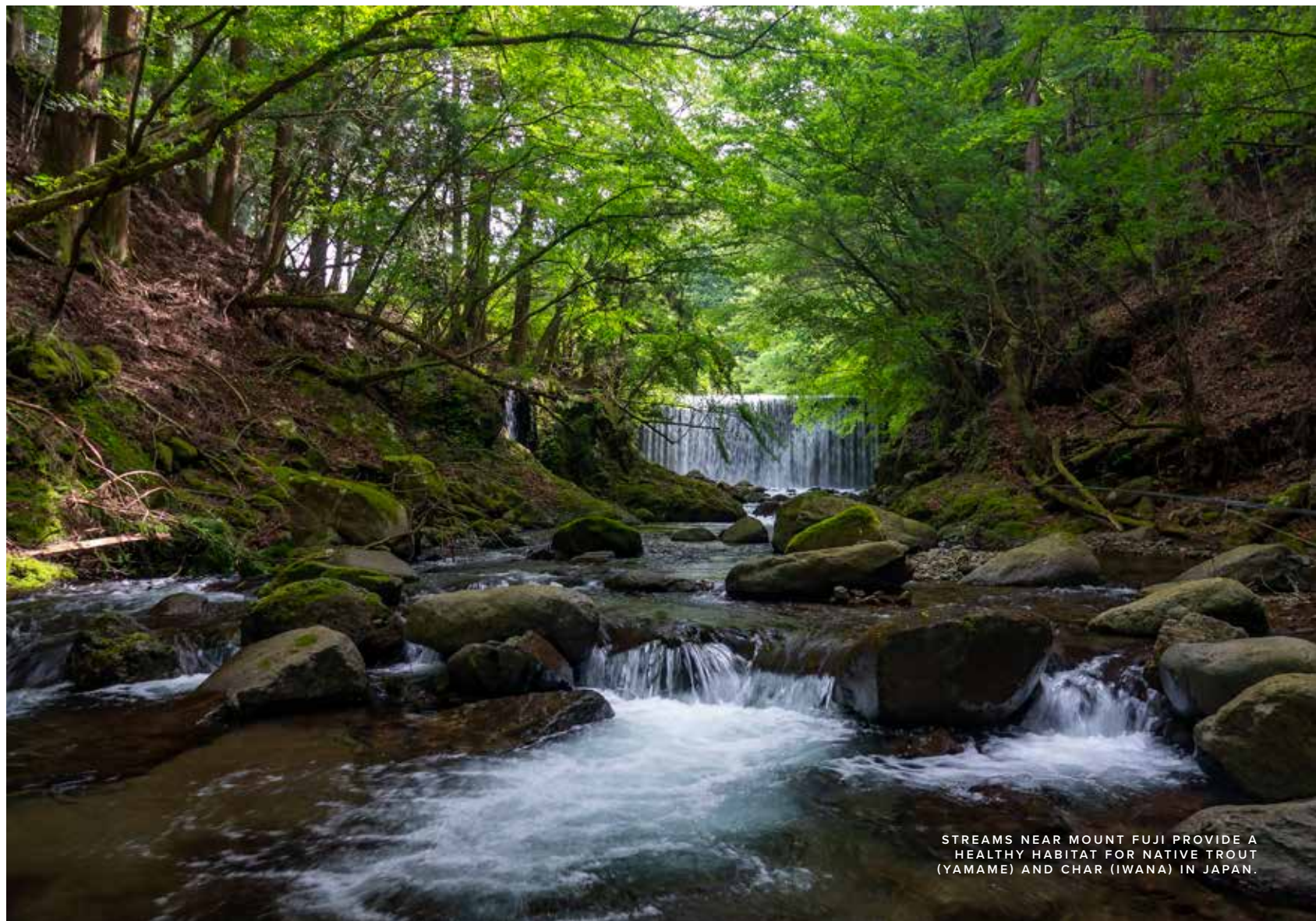
TOP LEFT: THIS BEAUTIFUL PALM TREE MARKED THE ENTRANCE TO THE REYS' HUT ON THE SHORE OF TAVEWA ISLAND IN FIJI. BOTTOM LEFT: OUTSIDE SAVUSAVU IN FIJI IS A GROVE OF COCOA TREES USED TO MAKE SMALL BATCHES OF ORGANIC DARK CHOCOLATE BARS. TOP RIGHT: PALM TREE SHADOWS FALL ON FLATS THAT PERIODICALLY HOLD VARIOUS SPECIES OF FISH THAT EAGERLY SNATCHED CHARTREUSE STREAMERS.



THE REYS WORE BLACK STINGER SUITS ON THE GREAT BARRIER REEF IN AUSTRALIA AS A PREVENTIVE MEASURE AGAINST THE DEADLY BOX JELLYFISH.



BARRAMUNDI FISH HIDE NEAR THE MANGROVE FORESTS AT THE FOOT OF THE SCENIC MOUNTAINS OF HINCHINBROOK ISLAND IN AUSTRALIA.



STREAMS NEAR MOUNT FUJI PROVIDE A HEALTHY HABITAT FOR NATIVE TROUT (YAMAME) AND CHAR (IWANA) IN JAPAN.

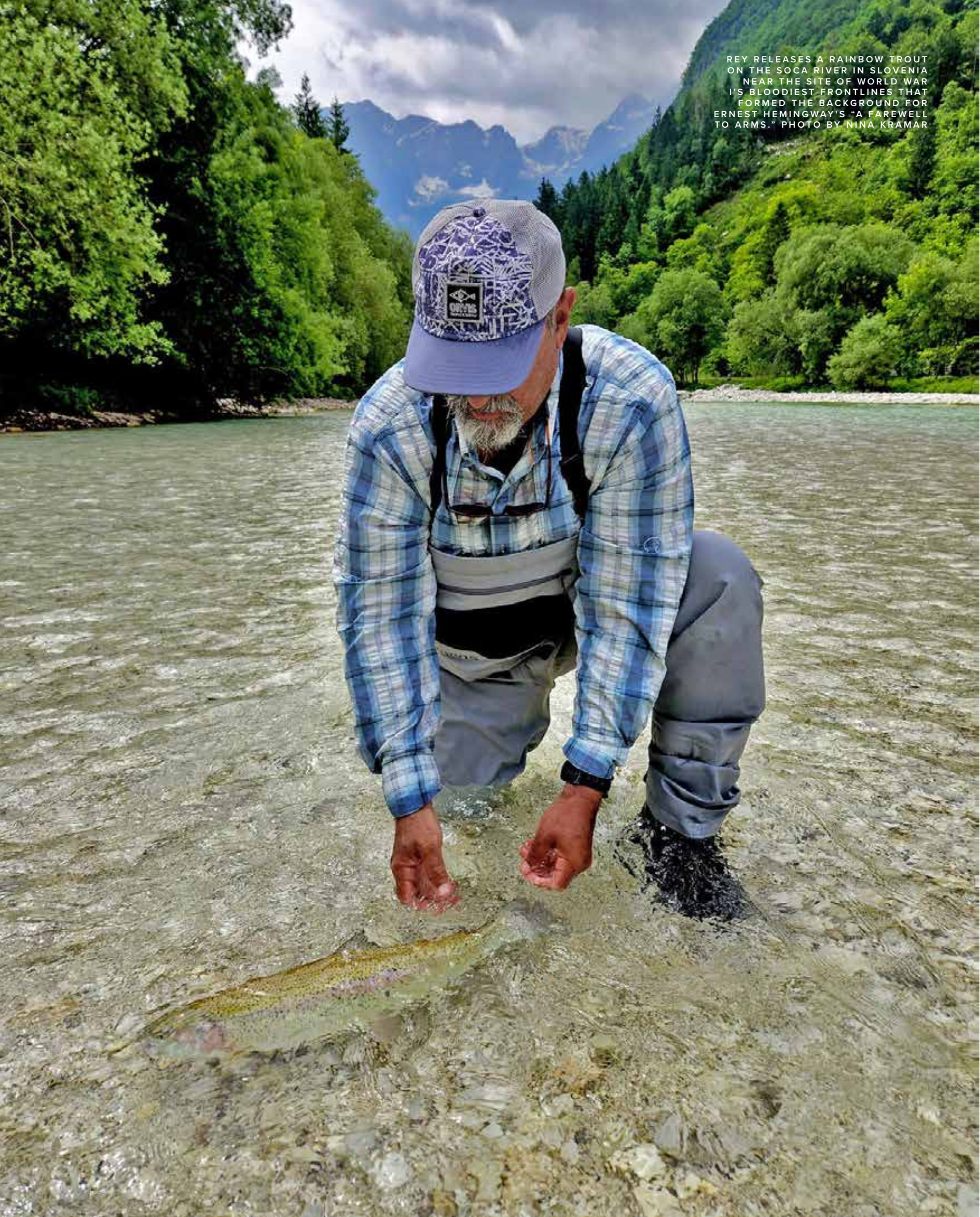
there, we enjoyed several examples of art and performances by the indigenous Māori culture. At our last stop in Taupo, I was fortunate to witness the threatened Whio duck frolicking in the current, in front of us, as we fished the Waipunga River for large rainbow trout. My guide, Ollie Jones of Chris Jolly Outdoors, the recipient of Africa's Guide of the Year, also provided valuable insights on perfecting my casting and fly presentation.

Just a short hop from New Zealand was Fiji. I had dreamt of fly fishing the flats there for years, and it finally became a reality. Fly fishing is not a regular occurrence on these islands, and there is little written about it but by sheer luck, I ran into the owners of flyfishfigi.com while walking along the beach one evening on a secluded island. The husband-and-wife team regaled us with stories of large pods of giant trevally swimming in nearby flats but, unfortunately, they were leaving the next day and would not return for a few months. While I had limited success fly fishing solo, the couple planted the seed in my mind. I plan to return and dedicate more time to exploring the exciting angling possibilities on the more

remote Yasawa Islands.

Our next destination was Australia and Tasmania. We made stops in Melbourne, Sydney and Cairns, where we snorkeled on the Great Barrier Reef and fly fished the brackish channel between Hinchinbrook Island and the mainland with our guide John Snell. Hinchinbrook Channel provided a breathtaking contrast between the mangrove-lined coastline and the rainforest-covered mountains. I missed several barramundis before finally landing a couple after casting near the dead trees that periodically lined the shoreline. In Tasmania, I secured a date with Jason Barrett of Miena Fishing Village and landed many brown trout on the Tyenna River. We were also surprised by a young bold platypus that came up to us showing off its diving prowess.

We headed to Asia next with stops in Singapore and Osaka, Kyoto, Naoshima Island and Tokyo in Japan. The natural beauty of both countries was matched by the wonderful cuisine, historically significant architecture and the spirituality of their culture. I carved out some time in our schedule to fish near

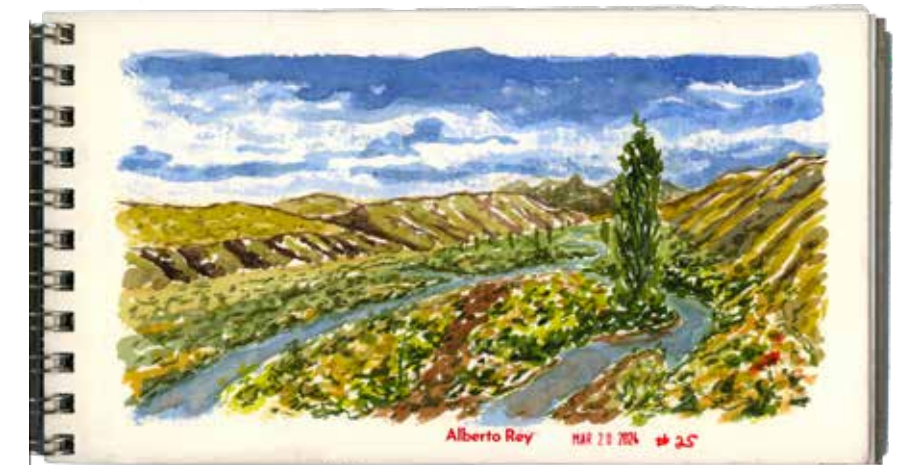


REY RELEASES A RAINBOW TROUT ON THE SOCA RIVER IN SLOVENIA NEAR THE SITE OF WORLD WAR I'S BLOODIEST FRONTLINES THAT FORMED THE BACKGROUND FOR ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S "A FAREWELL TO ARMS." PHOTO BY NINA KRAMAR

Mount Fuji for Yamame and Iwana, which are native trout and char. My guide was Motohiro Ebisudani, an expert in using the tenkara rod, an ancient, fixed-line method of fly fishing. He advised and instructed me on using this simplified and spiritual form of fly fishing.

Barcelona, Spain, was our next stop, and it took 30 hours of traveling before we found ourselves resting in our hotel beds. After spending a few days enjoying the food, art, flamenco dancing and the architecture of Gaudí, we headed to the Pyrenees to find zebra trout, a distinctive native species. With the help of the guides at Salvenius Outfitters, we landed several of these elusive fish and an exceptionally large brown trout. We were also treated to delicious gourmet meals with an excellent selection of local wines in a small, local restaurant in a beautifully preserved ancient mountain village.

Our adventure turned south, and we spent a week exploring Casablanca, Tangier, Chechaouene, Fez and Marrakech in Morocco. The exotic beauty of each city's culture, food, history, art and landscape was



REY'S WATERCOLOR OF THE CALEUFU RIVER ON THE CALEUFU ESTANCIA IN ARGENTINA.

unlike any we experienced on the trip.

Our next destination, Florence, Italy, was a stark contrast to Morocco. Florence is my wife's favorite city because of its artistic history, architecture and cuisine. After a week of long daily walks exploring the city, we continued north to Trieste and then to the lush mountain vegetation of Slovenia. The heavily forested Krka River region provides an ideal habitat for the trout that inhabit the countless streams that flow in the steep

valleys. Large brown, Hucho hucho (taimen) and rainbow trout are found throughout the Krka River, and the incredibly beautiful Soca River is home to the unique marble trout. The Krka Lodge was our home during our stay, and I could easily walk out to the stream and have a rainbow on my line within minutes of wetting my waders.

The last portion of the trip included a week in Venice for the always fascinating Art Biennale, a biannual international arts