



# Where To Fish This Weekend

ON TOUR



▶ **RON** battles with a Gîtes de Peche Deux-Sevres carp as Simon Tee holds the net.

**Ron** with his 12 lb surface-caught carp.



## French lessons in carp fishing

This week: **Ron Cousins**

Ron meets a British couple running a lake in France.

**I**F Simon Tee and his wife Julie hadn't made a last minute decision to join an elephant trek, I wouldn't have been spending a few days with them at their Gîtes de Peche Deux-Sevres fishery and holiday accommodation in South West France.

It was Boxing Day 2004 and the couple, from Worthing, in Sussex, were on holiday at Phuket, in Thailand. Shortly after they had travelled inland, the Tsunami struck the coast, swamping the beach huts where they were staying and leaving 250 people dead in the popular resort.

When they finally got back to Britain the couple decided to re-evaluate their lives, gave up

high-flying careers and toured Europe in a motor home for a long time before buying the fishery and settling down among the apple orchards that give the feel of Herefordshire to this part of rural France.

The two lakes were originally constructed for irrigation, and now the 1.5-acre lake is a mixed fishery with carp running to 10 lb, while in the three-acre one there are carp to 30 lb as well as big pike and zander.

I chose the smaller lake for my first day and settled down on the neatly groomed bank just a short stroll away from the gite where Caroline and I were staying, allowing her the luxury of lazing in the sun until I had

managed to build up some camera-worthy action.

With 10 m of pole out there was 2 ft 6 in. of water and I approached it with a float carrying a pair of No.8 shot at the half way point and a No.10 six inches from the hook. The line was 5 lb straight through, the hook was a size 14 and after potting in some fishmeal-based groundbait laced with 4 mm feed pellets and corn I started fishing with one grain as bait.

The first bite came after a few minutes and was from a 6 oz roach, and more to 12 oz followed. I was topping up regularly with the same mixture of groundbait and freebies, and soon bream came on the scene with fish to 2 lb coming to the net, so it was time to call for the camera.

A switch to two grains on the hook brought the elastic shooting out as a 6 lb carp joined the party, followed by tench to 2 lb, even bigger roach and a few 3-5 lb carp.

Towards the end of the session, keen carp angler Simon strolled along and cleverly flicked a float and pellets under nearby bushes to net a number of carp to 6 lb or 7 lb, and it was as well that he was there because I needed a

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hand to get the nets out at the end of a brilliant day's fishing.

The next day it was the bigger lake, but this time Simon was going to show me how to catch large carp off the surface and had fixed me up with real carp tackle – powerful rod, 15 lb line, Baitrunner reel – the sort of thing you won't find in my match fishing kit.

After feeding several areas under overhanging trees with floating dog biscuits Simon went into action. Although the gulping mouths breaking the surface seemed to have an uncanny knowledge about which piece of floating temptation would have been attracted to a magnet, he finally hooked one and after a real battle there was a good double-figure fish in the net.

Now it was my turn. I dropped the dog biscuit on the water and waited as others around were sucked under. Then mine was gone, the rod was bending and Simon was shouting "Don't let it go too far left or right, as there are snags."

The carp must have heard him

because the fish, which to me felt at least 30 lb, started making headlong runs in either direction and I was swinging the rod from left to right as if I were semaphoring.

In the end an out-of-condition Welshman got the better of a French carp in its prime and Simon netted it. I couldn't believe so much power could come from a fish that went 12 lb on the scales.

What a great couple of days fishing and what a beautiful part of France. Secondigny is located on the Heights of Gatine in the centre of the Deux-Sevres region and close to the ancient fortified town of Parthenay, with its steep cobbled streets and 13 Century chateau on a rocky promontory.

If you're in the area, pay a visit on a day ticket. If you're planning a holiday, the accommodation is first class and Simon and Julie Tee make great hosts. The peaceful seven acres of land is home to a wide variety of birds, and as an added bonus Simon makes a wonderful wine from the peaches he grows. C'est la vie.



Julie Tee can catch carp, too.



Bream to 2 lb came to Ron's net.



Ron tackles the smaller lake.

FACT FILE

## GITES DE PECHE DEUX-SEVRES,

LA GERMONDIERE, 79130 SECONDIGNY, DEUX-SEVRES, FRANCE .

**DIRECTIONS:** Parthenay is 31 miles west of Poitiers (the nearest airport) and 25 miles north of Niort. Secondigny is nine miles west of Parthenay. Take the Bressuire road out of Secondigny. Just out of town pass a green building Pomme2Sevres on left hand corner. Take the next left after this to the fishery.

**TICKETS:** €5. Fishing dawn to dusk. Phone in advance to check availability.

**CONTACT:** Simon and Julie Tee 0033 (0) 5 49 63 57 44. Email them on info@francefishinggites.com and website is www.francefishinggites.com



Ron nets a bottle of Simon's peach wine.