

Tim Paisley's

# INTERNATIONAL CARPER

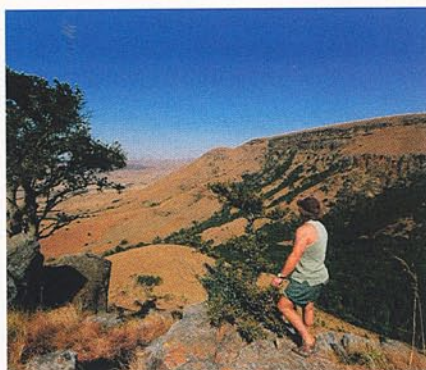
Issue 137 March 2015

## NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS AT CASSIEN

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makes decisions that  
will change his life

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check out all the big-carp catches  
from the world of carping

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tackles a German water where  
failure is not an option



JULIAN JURKEWITZ

# CHRISTMAS AT CASSIEN

The banks of the famous Lac de Saint-Cassien are quiet in winter, so Julian and his friends travel south to enjoy Christmas and New Year there. A great time is had by all – until the garde-pêche come to visit! Would this affect their trip?

The date was December 19th 2014, and in Germany it was cold and wet with grey skies, and the whole landscape looks simply miserable. As I locked the door to the Imperial Baits HQ, I took a deep breath and looked forward to the start of an adventure on the Côte d'Azur, or the French Riviera as it's also known. We had 2 weeks of fishing ahead of us, and there was enough fuel in the tank to get us well on the way, six bottles of glühwein (a spiced German wine) to enjoy when we got there, and our sunglasses. After all, where we were going it's known as the Rue de Soleil (Sun Street).

As usual, we hit the road without a master plan; the only definite was that we would stay on the Côte d'Azur and hopefully find some good fishing and great times. The weather app on my phone showed nothing but sun, and so my friend Alex and I made short work of ticking off the kilometres as

we drove towards his parents' house on the coast. This is the house he grew up in, and we were ready to use the location as the base for our adventures.

During the long drive, we had plenty of time to discuss which water we would try. Time and time again, the thought of the legendary Lac de Saint-Cassien came up. The lake has, in recent times, become much quieter. The year-round night fishing ban, as well as restrictions on camping on the banks, have had the effect of scaring most anglers away. In my mind my thoughts raced; how would the fish react to the decrease in fishing pressure? I only knew Cassien as a place where, regardless of the time of year, every decent swim was taken, with anglers fishing for weeks on end. Now there must surely be a real shortage of food in the form of boilies, tiger nuts, and everything else anglers use to tempt the fish. Perhaps the fish would go crazy for our boilies – I couldn't shut out

The first day on Cassien, near the southern arm. The last of the morning fog in the early-morning sun.





the pictures of beautiful Cassien carp in our nets. No matter how I tried, the pictures kept coming back – I was hooked!

Finally, after many long hours on the road, we arrived at Alex's house and started to sort out our tackle in order to reduce it to a minimum. Everything we didn't need for quick day-only sessions was put to one side. Luckily, Alex had a boat trailer which we could use to transport our inflatables, and it would also house our tackle. The whole setup was designed as a quick and easy way to get fishing, particularly so because the winter days, although a lot warmer than in Germany, were still a lot shorter than the long days of summer.

After our tackle was sorted, we relaxed and cooked steaks for dinner, enjoyed a good wine, and fell asleep, satisfied that our last evening in bed before tackling the lake would be restful. Of course, the planned early rise didn't happen, and it was around 9.00 a.m. before I was woken by the wet tongues of my two dogs on

my face. I opened the door to the balcony and was greeted by a brilliant sunny day. It was truly awesome to think this was the middle of winter. There wasn't a cloud in the sky and I only wanted one thing – to be on the lake of a thousand tales!

It didn't take us long to hitch up the trailer and set forth for Cassien. Upon arrival we were amazed at what we found – not a single angler to be seen. I thought I was dreaming and rubbed my eyes, but it was true, we were alone on the lake. The lake had a stillness about it, a quiet beauty that I had never seen before, and almost eerily, the last wisps of morning mist dissipated as we looked out over the mirror-flat water. It was immediately clear that the water level was quickly receding. Overnight it looked to have dropped at least 20cm, judging by the damp shoreline.

We drove from the bridge to the West Arm, and were surprised to see that the water level had dropped so much it was virtually dry; only a small stream ran along

**"I opened the door to the balcony and was greeted by a brilliant sunny day. It was truly awesome to think this was the middle of winter."**

**ABOVE LEFT** Teammate Brad Smudzinski met up with us on 26th December.

**ABOVE INSET** Baits ready to go. Cartrack Fish and Banana boilies, plus a PVA stick, IBS Cartrack Amino Complex, and Cartrack Liquid-Powder Paste. Luckily, we had enough of the ready paste with us.

**ABOVE TOP** It didn't take long for Brad to get amongst the fish, and he caught this distinctive mirror.

**ABOVE** The temperature suddenly dived on day three, to make a winter fairytale on Cassien.

the lakebed. I did what I always do, and tried to put myself into the mind of a carp. What would I do in this situation; where would I go? Clearly, I would find deeper water and safety. It was obvious from looking at the ever-lowering water level that the carp were well away from the shallow arms of the south and west and would be moving towards the areas above the road bridge and the depths of the North Arm.

That first day we tried our luck near the beginning of the South Arm, in the hope of finding a few fish moving northwards, but it wasn't to be. All my euphoria and fantasies of finding boilie-crazed carp impaling themselves on our hooks were lessening hour by hour. It's always an uncomfortable time waiting for the first fish of any vacation, and often, many mistakes are made. It could be fishing at the wrong depth, using the wrong baits, or too much/little bait, and until the first fish graces the net, few have confidence in what they are doing. Eventually the spell breaks, and with a fish in the net, confidence returns. I am sure many of you reading this can relate to what I'm saying.

For the next session, we decided to travel further up the North Arm to an area we know as 'the sun place', which is



**ABOVE LEFT** The first Cassien fish of the vacation came from the underwater stone piles, in an area near the nature reserve.

**ABOVE RIGHT** Damien Simonelli with his 11th fish over 25kg in just one year. We must have a team photo!

**BELOW** This fish came from the opposite bank in 4m of water – 18.5kg of pure Cassien gold.

just before the area of the nature reserve (la Réserve de Fondurane). In this area and across towards the reserve, you can always count on a fish or two. I always think that to blank there is nigh on impossible, as there are thousands of carp in the reserve area and the stone barrages in the water. It is the best place to target carp as they move in and out of the area.

For once a plan came together, and it wasn't long before our first Cassien carp was in the net. It was a baby, and when I say that I mean because although this area is relatively easy fishing by Cassien standards, the fish do tend to be smaller. However, every once in a while a real chunk will be caught. An example of this is a carp named Bernadette. She was caught from this area several times in the last few years of her life, but that story is history, because as far as we were aware, most of the big named Cassien fish have not been seen for a few years. My teammate, Damien Simonelli, lives in the area around the lake and knows the water as well as anyone. He often says that the old Cassien carp spend the last days of their lives in the North Arm, and I'm sure there is some truth in that.

We caught fish between 10kg and 16kg that day, but we hadn't travelled all that way for these fish – we were greedy and wanted something really special! It was my opinion that we'd still got the location all wrong and a new plan must be made, especially since another friend, Brad Smudzinski, an American who has lived in Germany for the last 20 years, was set to join us right after Christmas. In the current swim we were fishing there was definitely no room for 12 rods. Our new location was to be the Rotkehlchenplatz (Robin's Place) on the end of the North Arm. In this area, the largest river inlet makes its way into the lake. From there, fresh, clear, cold mountain water pours into the lake,

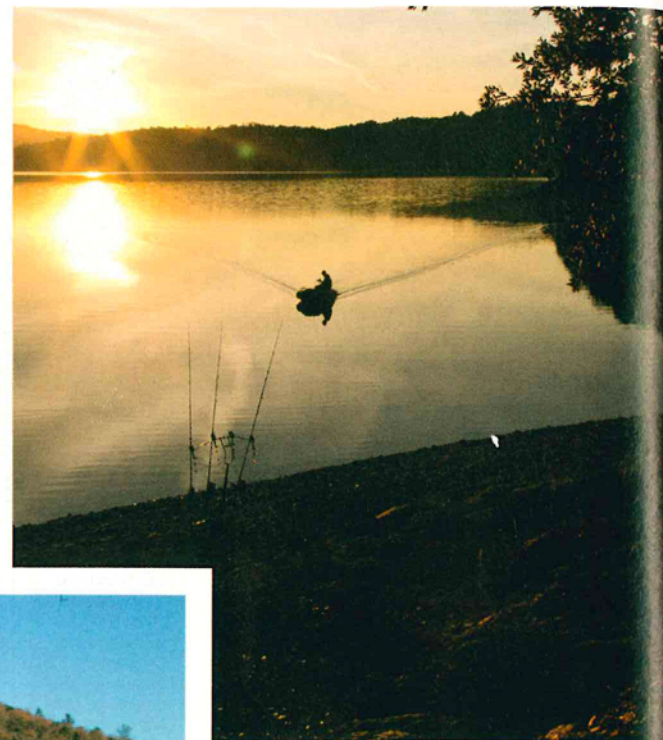


and it was apparent that this area was also very misty in the mornings. To us that meant that the water temperature was slightly higher there than the rest of the lake. I'm only talking about 1 or 2°C difference, but the fresh water and the slight difference in temperature could mean that the carp would move into the area. I always feel it's very important to take notice of such things and to correctly interpret how they will affect the fish.

The first day in our new area we did not fish; we searched out what we thought would be the hot spots, and we fed them with 24mm Imperial Baits fishmeal boilies. This took almost the entire day and there was actually little time to study the water properly. I always feel that on waters where there is a lot of angling pressure (and there can be at certain times in this area), it is extremely effective to feed baits without putting lines into the water. Often the old experienced carp will swim around the known spots to see what is there and







in ice. Of course, this was something we weren't expecting and I didn't have any gloves with me. It was so cold that after I'd got the first rod out I couldn't feel my fingers! The door handles on the cars were frozen, the line on the reels was frozen, and there was a 2cm layer of ice on the boat seats. It was certainly cold but I couldn't let the conditions deter me, and my instinct led me to place the second rod on top of a slightly deeper plateau.

On Brad's fish-finder, which was equipped with a downscan function (mine had died on the first day of the trip), I saw a fish on the lakebed in 5.5m of water. This fish was shown on the screen as clear as day, and I couldn't believe my eyes because it was so clear. The fish moved slowly and I could see it swim down, along the drop-off. I quietly set the rod up, got the bait in position, and scattered a few baits around. Only an hour later the fish took the bait and we landed 20kg of pure Cassien gold – wonderful!

Each day we were ticking off one or two fish, which, according to another angler, Damien, was a good result for the time of year. He spent a day with us and we enjoyed food and drink before he went off to fish a few hundred metres away. On his first morning, Damien caught his 11th fish over 25kg in 2014 – truly awesome angling. We all celebrated the moment and we took a great team photo too. We all thought this would be the biggest fish of our trip, but we still had several days to go, so maybe, just maybe...!

Damien invited us to his New Year's

Eve party – French-style! There was a large bonfire, a great barbecue and lovely French specialities, such as freshly-caught seafood grilled over the fire. We all relaxed, chatted and enjoyed the food and drink. It was a perfect evening.

Slightly hung over, our fishing began a little later than usual the next morning, but we knew the routine. At midday came the first run of the day. As the alarm sounded, a celebratory shout echoed through our camp, and before long, Alex had succeeded in landing one of the prettiest Cassien carp I've seen. Damien had seen this fish before, in the West Arm, where it weighed 27kg, but it was now gleaming in all its beauty in front of us at a weight of 28kg. What a moment of pure joy. I had goosebumps just looking at him. It was the first day of 2015 and there was a new PB in the net for Alex, and we were all ecstatic. We celebrated as good friends having a super unforgettable time.

Thursday and Friday were to be our last fishing days, and as dusk settled and we prepared to pack up, we kept our finger crossed for another fish, always keeping an eye on the time. Suddenly, out of the blue, we heard a voice: "Bonjour. Garde de pêche." Suddenly the mood of the moment changed completely. It was just before 7 o'clock and the rods were still in the water, and although we tried to explain

**BELOW** It was Christmas Day and the morning mists were rising. It might have been winter but the water temperature was still nearly 11°C.

to the police that we brought the rods in at 7.00 every evening before packing up and leaving the lake, our protestations did nothing to alleviate the situation. We were told we were night fishing and that was that! According to the apps on our phones, sunset was at 5.22, so add one hour, which we thought we were allowed for packing up, etc., and that makes 6.22. OK, we were pushing it a little to 7.00 o'clock, but that last hour was when the bites came. The whole situation just continued to deteriorate, and according to the officers, we should have had our rods in at 5.00; they were not interested in listening to our excuses. The result was a fine of €135 per person for night fishing, plus a summons to appear in court. Whether that will happen we still don't know. The only good thing was that our tackle wasn't confiscated, but it was itemised and photographed for some reason. OK, we may have been pushing our luck (slightly!), but we hadn't expected this sort of treatment from what we thought was a volunteer police force, and we were taken aback by their demonstration of power and arrogance. We departed a day earlier than planned, disheartened and despondent, but at least we'd had some lovely fish before everything came to a crashing halt. It was time to close the storybook on another Cassien adventure, and another chapter had been written. IC

only return after a few days. When they do, and if they feel safe, it's very often the hookbait they'll take first. Because of my theories, I often don't bait up for several days once my rods are in, and I often leave them undisturbed for 2 or 3 days at a time.

Of course, this couldn't happen at Cassien because we stuck to the rules and brought our rods in at dusk. I've since heard that many anglers leave their baits in lake water for several days before feeding them so that the boilies appear older to the carp. This washed-out bait technique is one I've not used yet, but it's something I'm going to try.

As the week went on, the fishing became more routine. Our internal clocks registered the time and we were in bed early; we were eager to sally forth with the boats, ready to move at first light. We prepared the rods the evening before, so as soon as we got to the lake, we were

ready to move quickly onto our spots. All went according to plan, and going back to the second day in the swims, the first bigger fish of the trip tipped the scales at 18kg. The evening before, after just 3 hours of the rods being out with simple rigs and PVA sticks, Brad caught his first Cassien fish – a beautiful mirror.

Over time we came to realise that the fish were feeding in the shallower areas, and any rods fished deeper than 6.5m would not produce. We used very little bait and spread it widely – IBs Carptrack Fish and Banana boilies, plus a PVA stick filled with crushed boilies, salted nuts from the grocery store, and IBs Carptrack Amino Complex to finish it all off. We fished in depths of 3-5m and all went well – until day three on Rotkehlchen!

We awoke to a severe frost with temperatures of -10°C. All the kit, the rods, the boats – everything was covered

**TOP LEFT** On 1st January, a dream came true for Alex. One of Cassien's prettiest fish at 28kg – simply amazing and unforgettable!

**ABOVE LEFT** The fish I saw on the fish-finder just an hour before. Cassien gold in its purest form – all 20kg of it!

**ABOVE RIGHT** One of the nicest spots on Cassien – the Sun Place. In this swim you have the sun on your face from sunrise to sunset.







The uncaught 55lb common stocked recently into Le Bois de L'Etang.

## WINTER STOCKING FOR NEW LAKE

FRANCE: LE BOIS DE L'ETANG

Le Bois de L'Etang received a nice new edition to the existing stock recently. The lake, situated in Limoges, is due to open this year, and is for families or small groups of up to four anglers looking for big fish on an exclusive booking basis. With uncaught fish stocked in the last few months, more were added recently, including a stunning common weighing 55lb, which has never been fished for, and a 62lb common is planned for introduction in November 2015. The lake, along with several others, is under the management of Armfield Angling.

## IMPERIAL TEAM ON TOP FORM

FRANCE AND AUSTRIA: UNDISCLOSED VENUES

### 1: ALEX NEU

Alex Neu was born and raised in France but now lives in Germany. His parents' house is in the middle of the Côte d'Azur, and what could be better than a visit to them during the winter holidays? While there he fished the big lakes in the south, and on one sunny morning, this nice common graced his net. A 24mm Imperial Baits Carptrack Fish boilie wrapped in Liquid-Powder paste brought him success.

### 2: CLAUDIA DARGA

Imperial Baits lady angler, Claudia Darga, landed this mirror carp during a session characterised by an icy north wind. She had searched out a wind-protected cove and baited up with her favourite, Imperial Baits' Uncle Bait The Boilie. The bright pink boilie awakened the interest of the carp at a depth of 2m, just next to a bank of reeds.

### 3: DAMIEN SIMONELLI

Here's Damien pictured with one of the biggest common carp in Lac de Saint-Cassien at the moment. He used Imperial Baits' Carptrack Monster-Liver Cold Water boilies, and the scales topped out at something just over 2kg. The big common had chosen to spend the winter in the South Arm, where Damien had set his trap with two handfuls of boilies in 5m of water next to a weedbed.

### 4: DANIEL TRINKL

Daniel Trinkl loves the quiet isolation of winter angling. He fishes large natural lakes in Austria, and trusts in Imperial Baits' Carptrack Monster's Paradise Cold Water boilies, which have brought him many big winter carp. Typical of his catches is this nice common caught during a recent session. Daniel prefers to search out weedbeds and places his baits in the margins there.


### 5: SELINA KÜRNER

This winter carp weighed in at no less than 20kg. Selina used Carptrack Stickmix Cold Water boilies to tempt this lump from his hiding place. Selina fished a session in February and fed bait into an area around a row of sunken trees, where she knew the carp preferred to wait out the winter.



"The big common had chosen to spend the winter in the South Arm, where Damien had set his trap with two handfuls of boilies in 5m of water next to a weedbed"





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