

Tim Paisley's INTERNATIONAL CARPER

ISSUE 122 December 2013

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

CHANTY MONSTER

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OF THIS FANTASTIC COMMON



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TOMAS BLAZEK MOBY DICK

A 20-YEAR JOURNEY TO MY DREAM

Czechoslovakian angler Thomas Blazek is an experienced big-water specialist enjoying success on a variety of waters across Europe, but little did he know what he was going to catch when he tackled the might Lac du Der. Read on.

Nestled in the northeast of France is the beautiful 4,800-hectare Lac du Der, a water that I'd had in my mind for a few years, knowing that sooner rather than later I'd tackle this awe-inspiring water, and that time was now.

The year began on two other lakes in France – a successful spring expedition with my friend Martin (see iBlog update here), when we visited our favourite water in the south of France, Lac de Saint Cassien, somewhere we have fished for more than 10 years. I'd also planned two further trips to another big lake in the northeast, where in the past I had fished from the bank and from the boat. Those two sessions were nowhere near as good as in the previous years; the biggest fish I caught was a mirror of just over 20kg. I caught him from extreme distance, probably close on 1,000m, the closer areas only producing catfish. I was a bit upset and I needed a break from this water, which is a place I've fished for several years because I've been on the trail of one particularly beautiful fish. Unfortunately, I've never hooked him – not yet. It was time for a change of scene and a new challenge to get the mind working and the heart pumping. I will go back later to hunt for the big linear in this beautiful lake!



Destination Lac du Der

It was new and unknown, dragging me forward with excitement and motivation. I'm sure you know what this feels like and how it affects you. I started to plan a trip – a big autumn adventure.

I'd chosen my venue, one where I knew

OPPOSITE An old fighter – Scarface.

ABOVE One of the Lac du Der common carp, which grow very quickly.

BELOW With fights that last all night, a good meal is very important to regain your energy.

about a big common – a very big common, and his home is the truly massive Lac du Der. Big fish are usually very territorial and often spend time in the same places at the same time every year. A place in the night zone where this fish had been caught in previous years had already been booked. This meant that I had to think carefully about my next move,

and where to go. Finally, I settled on a different area in another night zone. I booked it for 20 days! I often go to Europe for 10-day sessions, but it's not enough time to build up the swim correctly. On these shorter trips you are always too dependent on the weather conditions in that short window of opportunity. A longer trip gives you more possibilities and the chance to build the swim, waiting for the right conditions for big fish to go on the feed. In my experience, carp, and especially big carp, are always aware when boilies and particles are fed into an area, even when they don't feed for a week due to the weather. But when the conditions are correct they return to the spot quickly

because they remember where the larder is. So I decided that this would be my last expedition for this year and I would

spend 20 days on the bank, and try to create a larder to tempt them.

Feeding – I had a Plan

I knew that for the duration of my 20-day stay I couldn't change my swim and actively

...you could have knocked me over with a feather when Kerry explained that they had counted over 60 carp jumping before 10 o'clock the previous night and they had been catching consistently...

seek the carp. So by massive feeding, we would attract bream and smaller carp into our fishing area with the hope of experiencing some action. I always count on the fact that carp are curious, and I have to do something positive to draw them into the swim. The plan for our campaign was easy; we had prepared 250kg of dry particles, consisting of rape and wheat, plus 200kg of pickled tiger nuts. We also had 50kg Carprack Amino pellets, and finally 300kg of the finest Carprack boilies from Imperial Baits in a variety of flavours, including Monster, Fish, Elite and Elite Strawberry. That adds up to 800kg of feeding potential, which we would definitely need





The aftershow party.



over the three weeks. We certainly had no intention of taking anything home with us. Over the last few years we'd been pretty successful with this tactic on similar big waters, so saw no reason to change our tactics. When you actually break down the 800kg feeding strategy for three fishermen for three weeks, it isn't that much bait; it means roughly 266kg for each angler, and that's about 80-90kg per angler per week. That's approximately 13.3kg each day, which equates to 3.3kg per rod per day, of which only 1.25kg is boilies. I hope this gives you a better understanding of how we feed and what we are trying to achieve.

Getting Started

We arrived in heavy rain and the reality was that we could only set up camp, and because it was pretty late, we decided to leave everything else for the next day.

The following morning we took to the boats for a detailed exploration of what lay in front of us. We didn't find any significant depth changes, so spread eight buoys evenly across the area in front of us. We put one rod on the leading edge of an area of stumps, and the remaining rods in different spots, but all close to similar structures, with maximum depths of about five metres. We fed a large area in front of each of our buoys and distributed the rods accordingly.

Takes started to come fairly quickly and regularly, although most of the action was at night, and the big fish had

yet to make an appearance. Our setups are always the same wherever we fish and have proved themselves time and again. We use Snowman presentations using a Carptrack Elite Strawberry 24mm bottom bait with a 16mm V-Pop on top. This is wrapped in paste and given a coating of GLM, and finally we add a PVA bag of pellets boosted with GLM Liquid. In addition to us three fishermen we were also accompanied by a cameraman because we intended to produce a DVD about big-lake fishing, a project we'd wanted to do for some time. We hope you'll be able to see the full film very soon.

The lakebed is covered with tree stumps in many areas which are completely smothered in mussels, therefore you have to really think about your setup to withstand such a harsh underwater environment. We use a braided line called Snaggy Water, which is the best I know for abrasion-resistance against mussels and there is little risk of it cutting on something sharp such as a shell. Other braid lines or monofilament lines were almost impossible to use in these conditions because they simply aren't up to the job. For the last 30m of line we use Shock-it leader with a 0.70mm diameter, which is very durable and abrasion-resistant. Even though I had to change my leaders after every fish simply because they were so shredded, I was more than happy with the performance – better a roughed-up line that stayed

ABOVE TOP My hookbaits are coated in the Carptrack Liquid/Powder paste. It's the best fish magnet and I count on it on all my fishing trips!

ABOVE MIDDLE On every hookbait we put one of these PVA bags filled with Carptrack Amino pellets and soaked in liquid and powder. The carp find our bait even faster.

ABOVE BOTTOM We fed a lot of bait over a large area, and in the end I reached my target with this tactic – a needle in a haystack!

BELOW It quickly turned into a mudbath and our energy was sapped.

intact, rather than a cut-off any day.

The nature of the area was such that our rigs were designed to release our heavy leads on the take in an effort to get the fish to rise in the water. The hooklink I'd chosen was Easy Soft in 25lb, with a Size 4 RSH 1000. This pattern seems to stay in place regardless of what happens and is great for this style of fishing, even when the fish swim under the stumps. When this happens you have to use the anchor to try to pick up your line the far side of the snag, then cut it and rejoin to carry on the fight. Unfortunately, I often caught the line straight on the hooklink and ripped the hook from its mouth.

The rain was so incessant and the level of the lake was rising, rather than falling as it normally does at this time of the year. In fact, one of the inlet streams was in major flood and a massive amount of dirty water started to colour the entire lake. The



incoming water also carried other debris, in the form of branches and grasses that began to catch on our lines and made life very difficult. All day and night I had to walk out and tighten the drag on my reels, so in the morning they were as tight as possible and the pressure on the line was immense. This was a nightmare and none of us was getting any sleep, thanks to the constant bleeping of the alarms and the never-ending battle of freeing them from drifting rubbish. All this was also the reason we couldn't use subfloats and keep our line above the snags.

It was on the 12th day, in the morning, that Vilo came to chat while I was lying on the bedchair. I hadn't slept all night and was completely shattered, and as we quietly chatted I had a take that was dragging line from the fully-tightened clutch at an alarming rate.

The Battle with Moby Dick Had Started

The take had come on a rig that had been out for at least two days and had obviously stayed good, in spite of the horrendous conditions. I didn't wait for anything, I grabbed the rod before splashing through the waves to clamber into my iBoat and set off towards the fish. On the way to my spot the line was snagged at least five times! Every time I

ABOVE I'd got it! Moby Dick – the needle in a haystack! 35.8kg and the biggest carp from the massive Lac du Der.

BELOW I was so happy to share the joy with my friends, and several came to visit for the photo session.

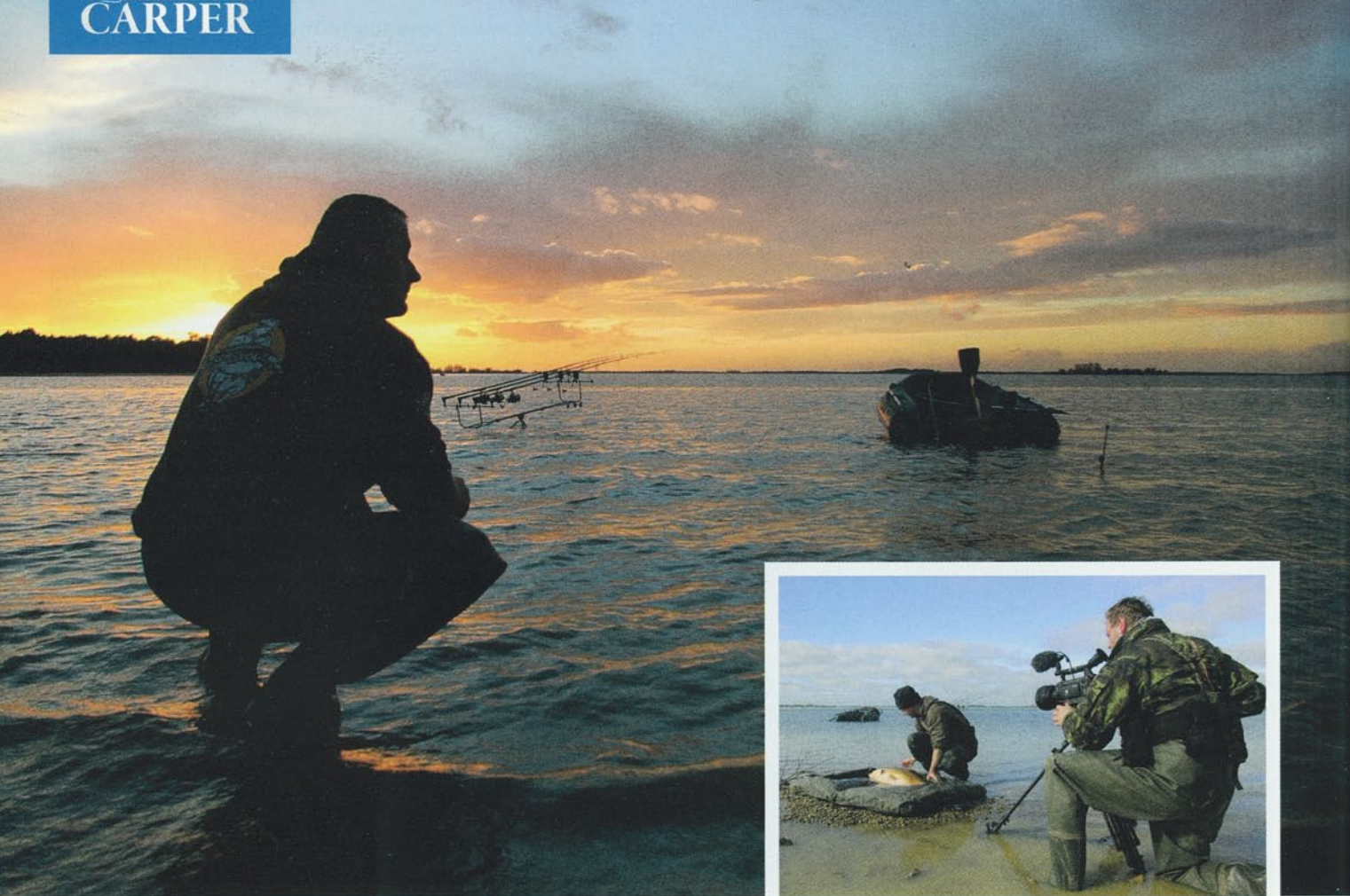
had to use the anchor to catch the line, cut, and connect again. It was exhausting work being battered by waves, but if you want to get the best results you have to be out in these extreme conditions, which is when the fish often feed.

After a massive struggle battling the elements, I eventually arrived over the rig and it was also in a stump. I placed the rig in a depth of 4m and now it was in 5.2m! It was clear that it had been picked up, and even more apparent that there was still a fish attached as I

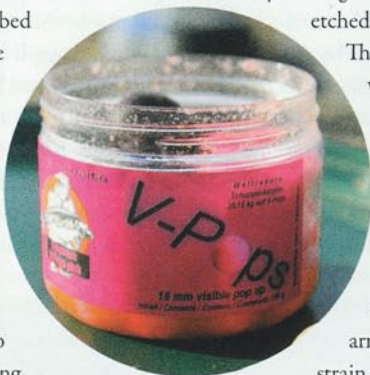
gently pulled the shockleader and felt the fish kick on the end. Five minutes of steady pressure eventually saw him slowly move and edge his way into open water – YES, he was free!

I got over the top of the carp, which promptly dragged me over 500m without any sign of fatigue. I started to suspect that it was a really huge fish. Had it been a catfish I would have been able to recognise the fight because I'd caught many of them on boilie and some of them were not small by any means. In the





distance I could see something black on the surface and I thought it was a buoy which was part submerged by the rising water. The fish started to head in that direction and suddenly I could see that it wasn't a buoy at all, but a sunken tree that rose from the lakebed 5m below to just above the surface. OMG, it was the mother of all snags! The fish didn't slow, and all too soon it approached the tree and just hung there for a while. I pictured every scenario in my mind, each getting progressively worse; everything was covered with mussels, and only a single touch against a sharp edge would see it all over. Endless seconds ticked by as I applied as much pressure as was humanly possible, there was a pause and after a second I saw a huge fizz of bubbles on the surface and the fish was free from the stump. I breathed a huge sigh of relief and vowed I'd never let it get anywhere near that snag again, no matter what. Just below the surface I glimpsed the most incredible sight, a monster carp edging towards me. At that moment I knew immediately that I had the largest



fish in the lake just centimetres from my net – Moby Dick could be mine!

With my heart pounding fit to burst, the moment I'd been waiting for in over 20 years of fishing had arrived. I readied my landing net, every single act etched forever on my mind.

The battle was not yet won, the carp was going deep again. Four times he dived for freedom, dragging braid from a tortured spool, but one final effort that saw my arm shaking under the strain guided the leviathan over the waiting net. He was mine.

The maelstrom around me froze for a second as I gulped down air. I WAS THE HAPPIEST MAN IN THE WORLD.

I just couldn't believe it! I put the carp carefully in the boat and I headed back towards our camp. He was totally full and it seemed that he enjoyed our boilies well. A moment later there was a 1kg boilie on the unhooking mat that he'd excreted. On the way back I was overcome with emotion

ABOVE Yes! It was the right choice to go in this area, and I enjoyed every minute on the Lac du Der.

INSET Our cameraman filmed all the time for our new DVD, *Carping on Big Lakes*.

LEFT The pink or white Carptrack V-Pops are my favourites.

BELOW Another common – maybe the next Moby Dick in a few years?!

and howled into the wind several times, my cries swept away in the turmoil.

To Jarda on the bank it was clear that it had finally happened, all our dreams lay next to me in the bottom of the boat, a true monster! Next door were Vili Strba and Zolt Bundik, from Hungary, and they were waiting with Jarda for my arrival! They helped us to deal with the fish and document the details, for which I would like to thank them. The needle on the scales spun and settled at just under 36kg, so we all agreed on the weight of 35.8kg. Photography and filming of my moment took place in the water so there was no chance of hurting this jewel.

After a few final seconds taking in every detail of my personal dream, we guided Moby Dick back to his home and I was so happy that I couldn't even talk!

I would like to thank all my friends, and especially my family, for their support, which helped me achieve such an unbelievable goal.

Tomas Blazek
Team Imperial
Baits. IC

