

Blanking in paradise

By Ian Cox



I am at my happiest fishing small streams. Happiness becomes unadulterated joy when those streams are in tight precipitous valleys surrounded by rock. Its then that fishing and adventure merge.

It was thus an unexpected joy to have what was meant to be a still water fishing trip to the Eastern Cape leavened by a morning spent fishing below the falls at [Glen Arvon](#). This little piece of paradise is situated on Reg Playdon's farm, and is a world heritage site. The fishing is managed by Alan Hobson who together with his wife Annabel runs that other little piece of heaven that is the [Angler and Antelope guest house](#).

Glen Arvon is situated just outside Somerset East but getting to it is a bit of a mission. A 4x4 is essential and preferably one equipped with all terrain tyres. We made the hour drive from Somerset East in the luxury of a Prado. The high speed road tyres made the trip a little nerve wracking. Small

town garages don't generally stock the kind of tyre you put on a luxury SUV and they are bloody expensive.



Road travel goes back a century or two. Guiding a Landover over rough terrain

The fishing is a delight. Somerset East is in the little Karoo so one expects heat, thorny scrub and lots of sheep. And yes you will find lots of that. But the Bankberg that lies behind Somerset East where Glen Arvon is situated is a bit of an oddity. The Bankberg plateau tops out at about 1600m and on top looks identical to the kind of country you find around the Umgeni Vlei. It gets cold up there even in the middle of summer. Water temperature is the same as you get in KZN's Stillwater trout fisheries which is why the Karoo can and does offer trout fishing.





That's on top but what happens when that water goes off the edge of a 300ft waterfall, man oh man, now you are really cooking. The stream that flows out of the bottom of the Glen Arvon falls is really cold even though the day was hot, plus 30°C hot.

This and a supercharged oxygen supply make the fish feisty and they are not that small. The fish that came out were mainly in the 20 to 30cm category which is on the large side for small streams. Martin tells me they get a lot bigger. He has pulled a 45cm trout out of the pool below the falls.

This is real tail pocket water fishing as the river peters out about 3km below the falls.
