

venue detectives

Cherry Lakes

Carp fishing holiday venues in the UK don't get much better than Cherry Lakes, so we sent TC editor **MARC COULSON** for a closer look...

Nestled in the stunning Cotswolds, Cherry Lakes is the creation of Mike and Judith Kirsch and boasts a combination of stunning accommodation, wonderful surroundings and, importantly, plenty of carp.

The passion that has gone into the venue itself is glaringly obvious... no stone has been left unturned in forming what might easily be described as the perfect angling-holiday venue. The entire, fully secure site is immaculate and, when I stayed in the newest of the lodges – Pochard, on Cherry Mere – I joked that it was nicer than my home. In fact, I say joke, but it really wasn't far from the truth.

It was pristine and boasted everything you'd need for the duration of any stay. My mate Lloyd and I had a curry delivered on the first night from the local Indian and even that was top notch.

Pochard is the newest of the lodges and undoubtedly the five-star option.

The decor is superb, there wasn't a hint of dust in the entire place and the attention to detail in every area was impressively obvious. That all-important Wi-Fi was also readily available and easy to connect with.

ANGLER FILE Marc Coulson

AGE: 43

OCCUPATION: Editor, Total Carp & Group Editor, Advanced Carp Fishing

UK PB: 36lb 12oz

SPONSOR: N/A

Like I said, no stone has been left unturned and on my departure I hadn't found a single thing that I could fault.

So yeah, Pochard is the newest of the lodges on site, but each of the others is equally comfortable and impressive, albeit this one is undoubtedly the five-star option. Two double bedrooms make for plenty of room for couples sharing a trip and »

As far as lake exclusives go, this is one of the best we've been to.

the non-slip decking and platform outside offers ample room for two sets of rods.

On the subject of the decking, we were amazed at how much difference the non-slip timbers were. It was extremely damp on our visit but we remained sure-footed throughout. One thing I would say about fishing from wooden decking or platforms is that you'll need a pod. Sure, lots of anglers own stage stands, but Mike quite rightly doesn't want all and sundry screwing into his decking, which has been laid with care and which should be maintained in its current state. On that note, if you don't own a pod then you needn't worry because you can hire one from Mike and the team. In fact, you can hire any fishing kit that you need, so you could even take a non-fishing friend. Bait and terminal

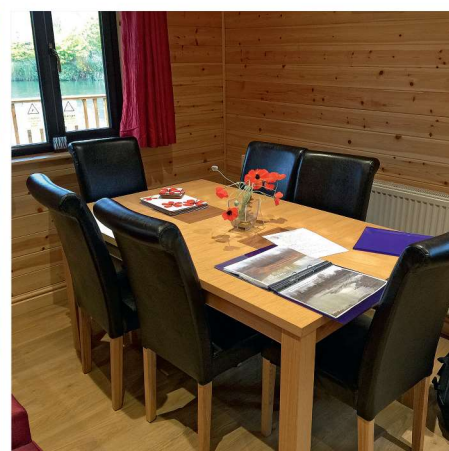
tackle are also available to buy on site so you literally have nothing to worry about while there.

So what about the fishing? Well, cleverly, the four lakes have been designed to offer anglers of all abilities something to go at and each has a different level of easiness, if you like. The original Cherry Lake is the one with the big girls in and offers a genuine challenge for the better angler. This one probably isn't for the novice and, refreshingly, Mike makes no bones about that.

"The other three lakes all offer a great chance of a bite, some 20-pounders and the odd surprise,



but Cherry Lake is a different proposition. Not everybody wants to come here and fish for bites; many of our returning customers like the fact that Cherry Lake offers a challenge,



There are fishing lodges then there are Cherry Lakes' lodges

- Fully equipped and spotless kitchen
- No more Pot Noodles, sit down and dine in luxury
- A comfortable double bed beats any bedchair
- The small touches simply set it off
- Unwind and even watch the TV
- Imagine a hot shower every morning
- A really perfect fishing retreat





Cherry Mere's big resident common at 32lb 4oz.

but with some extremely big rewards for those who get it right, including over 100 twenties, a good head of thirties and the venue record 40lb 4oz common!"

While chatting about this, Mike showed me just some of the huge number of big-fish captures from the big lake, some of which really got my juices flowing. I've already suggested that a return trip might be in order.

A read through the comments book in the lodges tells a similar story, with anglers loving every minute of their trip and vowing to return. Cherry Lakes boasts a large number of regular visitors and, really, that's the biggest compliment you can pay the place. If people are willing to keep coming back then it speaks volumes about what's on offer.

Another thing that struck me about all four lakes is that you don't see another angler from wherever you are fishing. To be fair, on the three smaller lakes it's because you have the place to yourself because they only feature one lodge each. However, Cherry Lake has been laid out so that from each of the three lodges (there's also a cottage!) you cannot see another, so you very much feel like you're fishing the lake exclusively. This extends to

your fishing space as well, with plenty of room and no fear of anglers fishing across you. The bottom in here is littered with features, so each of the 'swims' offers absolutely loads to go at in a fishing sense.

The other three, sorry I should give them their proper names – Cherry Mere, Cherry Pool and Cherry Springs – are much more uniform in terms of the lake bed, in keeping with their 'easier' status. They each boast carp over 20lb, with numbers varying from 200 to 400 plus, which respond to most tactics.

Holidays here carry a premium price, but for that you get genuine luxury and the chance to fish from the best 'bivvy' you'll ever have the pleasure of using. There are some excellent rates for the winter months, though, and I would urge you to check them out. All of the lakes offer the chance of a winter bite with the right approach and the lodges offer



Ady Blythe with the Cherry Lakes record common at 40lb 4oz.

warmth and comfort throughout. I don't know about you, but I'd much rather something like this than bivvying up at this time of year in the cold. Great fishing, in terrific surroundings and deluxe accommodation – if Carlsberg did fishing holidays... **TC**

WANT TO KNOW MORE

The Cherry Lakes website is regularly updated with news, catch reports and availability. Log on to www.cherrylakes.co.uk and be sure to follow the Facebook page too. Direct contact can be made by calling 01285 869887 and 07545 495881 or by e-mail at info@cherrylakes.co.uk.