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novice fly fisher

The Allure of Fly Fishing

It's a lesson we can all afford to learn in today's fast-paced world...how to relax, get away and reconnect with nature. On almost any given day, fly fishing can teach us just that.

"People seem to be so attached to their cell phones these days," says guide Tony Dunaske (below). "I tell them, 'Leave it in the car and if after an hour, you still want it, I'll come back and get it.' No one has ever asked me to."

Tony has been fly fishing since he was a boy growing up in Gaylord, Michigan. A professional photographer and professor by "trade," he's been offering fly fishing lessons since Hidden River Golf & Casting Club opened in 1997.

Laura Hunt of McLean, Virginia, who has spent summers in northern Michigan most of her life, loves fly fishing. "It's such a relaxing experience when I'm on the river and I'm just thinking: 'lift, push, count' and nothing else," Laura says.

"The thing about learning something new is that you have fewer expectations and preconceived notions of how it should be."

She and her husband, Jim, wanted to share the experience with their daughters. Three of the four girls, ages 9 to 20, have taken lessons with Tony. Daughter Laurie, 18, appreciates the sport's single focus. She says, "It's bizarre to have almost nothing else going on in your mind."

A lesson with Tony includes the basics of casting practiced on a pond near the 18th hole of this unusual operation, followed by time on the Maple River in front of the Hidden River lodge. A 1.5-mile section of the stream flows through the Hidden River property.

The motion of fly casting is unique, but the mechanics are easily learned—as long as you let the equipment do the work.

"You can make this as simple or as complicated as you want," Laura says. "The key is to keep it simple." ■

BY DIANNA STAMPLER



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