



## **"Wright" place at the "Wright" time**

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"This is crazy, we have got to be insane to be out here" mumbled one of the passengers in my boat. I turned around to address the complaint and give them my assessment of the situation, "you are right, we are crazy" I agreed. My two passengers, Doug Pike and Art Wright, could only laugh as we struggled to get back to the launch and get out of the howling 20 plus mile an hour northwest wind that had swept Calcasieu Lake into a frenzy and made the water look something between a Yoo Hoo and coffee milk. As we loaded the boat and departed the ramp, Doug and I drove back to Orange and tried to warm up. "We were one day early, this stuff is going to blow through and Wednesday will be perfect" he remarked while loading his gear into his truck. "If I didn't have to get back to work I would stay one more day and give it another shot with you." I agreed and wished him well as he drove off cursing the wind and his schedule.

Meanwhile, a hundred or so miles to the east, Art Wright was making tracks for Baton Rouge and already plotting on fishing the next day. Wright, who is the Gulf Coast Sales Representative for Navionics was mixing business with pleasure by working in a fishing trip while calling on his respective dealers. During the first four months of the year this guy is non-stop, boat shows every weekend and most of the time during the week as well. Venues from Houston to Miami and all places in between, the guy does it all. One would think that a guy who works in the boat business would get lots of time to fish in some great locales, this is partly true but not always the case. It seems for some years Art Wright has become known all over the coast as the "Red Tide" or "Red Tide Wright" for his ability to show up and shut the fishing down. His legend is so far reaching that one famous story from Trinity Bay comes to mind as an example. Long-time guide and Troutmaster founder Mickey Eastman was heard over the VHF radio one day hollering "is Art Wright out here?" When asked why he wanted to know by a curious listener, Eastman responded "because nobody on the bay is catching any fish!" So the legend grew.

Later in the evening after I had finally gotten warm my cell phone rang and it was Wright who was now headed back towards Texas. "Do you think we can give it a go tomorrow?" he asked. I had already checked the weather forecast and told him it looked good so my answer was "yeah, it can't be any worse than today was."

We met the next morning under beautiful skies and considerably less wind. As we made our way across the lake, the difference a little calm weather had made overnight was incredible. The water had cleaned up and was downright beautiful along the eastern shoreline. Upon reaching our destination, I rigged up with a Slapstick from Bill Lewis lures while Wright opted for his tried and true topwater favorites. It didn't take long for the action to start. The first fish crushed the Slapstick as it twitched just below the surface. A fat, 5 pound trout came to the net, it was weighed, measured and then released. For the next hour we did battle with several other fish all over 4 pounds, the best ones were close to 7 pounds. During one flurry, Wright pitched a Catch 2000 into the mix and was rewarded with his biggest trout to date, a nice 6 and a half pounder. "This is my personal best fish" he remarked proudly, "now I just need one for the wall, 8 pounds or better" he said. Wright, who has been fishing the coast for many years, has been after his trophy fish for a long time. He has been to some of the finest water around only to have some sort of bad luck keep him from catching that magnum fish he so desired.

Later that afternoon the tide changed and the fish began to feed again after a midday lull. With warming

temperatures and plenty of bait, the trout were now aggressively taking topwater plugs; it was perfect. Wright heaved a bone colored Super Spook in the direction of some fleeing mullet and began his retrieve. The slow back and forth rhythm was abruptly broken as a hole in the water opened up and a huge trout blasted the plug in a foamy rush. The rod bent and the drag gave way to a really large fish. At this particular moment I could see that Art was in a bind, "man you are doing great, take your time and you got her" I coached. After seeing the size of the fish I really started coaching, this was a big fish. The fight lasted for several minutes and finally the huge trout gave up as I slid the net under her thick frame. As I pulled her up from the net you could not help but be amazed at the girth this fish was packing, over 17 inches worth to go along with just over 28 inches in length. High fives all around were the order of the day as we snapped pictures and exchanged excited remarks with another boat. The big trout tipped the scales at 8 pounds 10 ounces, a true trophy by any standard. As Art revived the big girl you see the giant monkey climb off his back, he had finally caught the fish he had been chasing for all those years. The big trout caught her second wind, flicked that big tail, and in a flash she was gone. A perfect ending to a great day on the water.