

## REVIEW in FALLON'S ANGLER magazine

*Double Delphi: The Rise and Fall of a Fisherman's Fantasy*

By **Peter Mantle**

(Wallop Books, 2017)

Delphi, former seat of the Marquis of Sligo, famed to be named due to its resemblance to the site of the all-seeing oracle. Few places can evoke the same mystery and intrigue as this fishery in the far west of Ireland. It is a name that every salmon and sea trout angler should know. What they might not know is its unique story, how it was rescued from ruin, its fortunes turned around and rejuvenated by Peter Mantle and his business partners. What they might also not know, is how he lost it. But the fishery is still there—under 'new' management—while Mantle has successfully created one of the most treasured salt water angling havens in the Bahamas, Delphi Club at Rolling Harbour. What a journey.

I must confess that my own interest in Delphi is a longstanding and personal one. I have never fished it but my father certainly did, and on one occasion with TC Kingsmill Moore, who wrote extensively of Delphi in his magnum opus, the wonderfully titled *A Man May Fish*. My father talked of it fondly, and he met with some success there. Its name is such that it stood for the best of what fly fishing for sea trout and salmon in Ireland meant. It was ubiquitous, supernatural, laden with subtext. It has always meant something to me that I cannot quite quantify, but Delphi must be like that for many. But such is the nature of life, we tend only to see things from the outside. It is rare that we have the opportunity to be a fly on the wall.

And that is the nub of it. In many ways, this is a glorious kiss-and-tell of what went on behind the scenes of a magical place, but a desirable business, and as such, a place of success and conflict. Mantle takes us on the complete journey, explaining how, and why, he forged the opportunity to own this marquee fishery, and what he sacrificed to run it, keep it, and protect it. But also, how he transported—what he believed to be—its core values to another part of the world without losing any of the magic. It matters to Mantle, and you can feel it.

I loved this book, more than I have loved many, and as such this may seem a shameless plug, but you must read it. Mantle, a trained journalist and long-time contributor to *Trout & Salmon*, knows how to write. It is a hefty tome, well designed with fantastic photography, and oozes the quality one might expect from somebody who is used to handling prized Atlantic Salmon or giant bonefish. He is never far from a heartfelt opinion, but if that is not the nature of memoirs, then what is? And there are moments when the quality of his prose makes you pause. While the book might meander at times (due in large to the amount of water he needs to cover), it maintains its focus to keep the pages turning themselves. The stories he recounts make for exciting reading too: the visit of Prince Charles; the Walter Mitty character who fools everybody; the steady catching of astounding fish, all recounted with the love and sensitivity of somebody who understood and cherished the tradition and history of both locations. Last but not least, it is a hugely valuable insight into the battle to protect our salmon and sea trout from the blight that is salmon farming. We all know this issue is gathering pace, and here is somebody who was there from the start. It makes for fascinating reading.

I believe illness urged Mantle to write this memoir, and having recovered, he is settled near the river Test in Hampshire. We have not, thank heavens, seen the last of him. Buy this book, and learn.

*Review by Garrett Fallon*