

Brothers with Arms

By Doug Hanning

My brother and I have been hunting the waters off Brisbane for a number of years now, our names have become synonymous with both reef and in particular Bluewater mayhem as our skills have slowly developed over numerous hunts. We are most certainly hooked for life and will forever be out wide armed to the teeth chasing those dream fish, I wouldn't have it any other way.

To fuel our desire we require to dive regularly otherwise we start to show signs of anxiety and stress, I think our girlfriends would certainly be testament to that, so it is a question of getting wet often and when the sea is flat during the week we will change our work schedule to fit in you better believe it.

Another midweek dive this time just a Hanning episode both brothers and the old man were the crew. I was sporting my new gun, a 1.6 aluminium Edge gun manufactured by Tony Heugh I was keen to test the ability to bring down fish at distances that I would previously often fall short on or simply not take a shot at.

With 30 metres visibility the first drift sparked our interest when a bunch of kingies moved in, they were on or near the bottom some 30 metres below we thought stuff that so we dropped the flasher fortunately kingies are an incredibly stupid fish excuse me I meant to say inquisitive fish and they came up off the bottom, one in particular came right up to 10 – 15 metres where I had Mr 1.6 waiting in the wings. I let fly the 2.2 metre spear cannoned into the kingie and off it went I let it run since I was worried that such a large 7mm spear may bend more easily than a shorter spear. The kingie was close to the bottom still producing some solid kicks when I noticed Dan had descended on it with the aim of ending the fight, I could not tell exactly what was going on down there but I heard the shot and assumed all was well but when I tried to pull up the fish I could feel it still kicking I thought to myself Dan's shot must have missed, when he surfaced I said "fine I'll get it myself" Dan has a reputation for choking on second shots anyway I should have known. Quickly I grabbed a gun from the old man in the boat and dropped down, I had one of those 'what the hell is going on' moments when a 10 kilo cod was hauled past me half way down on my descent, it then clicked what Dan had done maybe I was a bit harsh on him aaahhh forget it I have a job to do.



Since we have made an accord to seek out and find at least one new area when we go diving we drift



some different areas this eventuated in some parrots and also a few Gold spot wrasse finding a spot in the esky mos of these were shot around the 20 metre mark. Dan hit the bottom in 20 metres and was looking into what I could tell from above him to be a nice looking ledge or cave, he waited for an eternity the reason being he had noticed a coronation trout sitting inside but was waiting for him to move out so he didn't get hooked up down there, he actually had to hold off on a few Tuskfish that were milling around too, no he wanted that coronation, the more bottom time you have the more selective you can be. Eventually the fish got concerned and tried to flee the ledge, thwack the fight began with Dan frantically trying



to hold him free of the structure, once it appeared the fish was spent he let go and retreated to the wonderful world of oxygen a now distant memory.

Another reef, another drift and more fish seems to be the way these we just keep moving and moving, the territory we cover in a day is quite staggering. Speaking of the next reef Dan was on the bottom on the first dive when on the way back up he pointed in one direction, I did not even look to where he was pointing choosing to plummet and find out later. During my swift descent I pivoted allowing my vision to move without losing too much form and there he was a nice little macky, I aimed and placed what I thought was a strong shot, but he ran hard very hard eventually I hauled him back and Dan slammed a second spear in him but he then decided to run again, we couldn't believe it he just wasn't that big.

Once that was eventually thrown in the boat a 15 – 20 kilo kingie made an appearance on the burley which the old man had been continuing to throw in from the boat, Dan seized this opportunity placing a mid body shot as the kingie chomped on a piece of burley. All hell broke loose at this point, the kingie ran straight down Dan tried to stop him but the rope was destroying his gloves the ripping noise quickly becoming a clanging noise as the kingie just happened to find the best cave on the reef, entered it and then smashed the living hell out of the spear. It was almost bent back down on itself when we got it back, very impressive.

After that effort Dan swapped guns and went back down choosing to try and run down some snapper that were in on the burley, they were not playing the game at this stage so Dan was pleased to see blue spectre of a large Tuskfish moving carefree amongst the other parrots and small wrasses. Dan waited for him to turn then nailed him with a great shot, something he must have lacked on the kingie.



We pressed on with a constant flow of burley, as a response the snapper began to grow in numbers and they also moved further up off the bottom, now they were smashing it hard and fast I dropped down near them but made my motions slow and my profile small trying to not intimidate these wary fish. They were moving so fast around me, the thought of tracking them was out of the question, I could have waited on sinking piece of bait but just as I was thinking about it one moved in front of me and I simply fired from the hip and stoned em. Dan was in shock when he noticed that, I hit the surface to hear “I don't believe it, your all arse you bastard!”



I quickly rushed to deal with the snapper quickly and was back ready in a flash, a quick turnaround is what you want when the fish are feeding on the burley trail. I had noticed some jobbies had moved in underneath us, they were making sweeping movements taking feed in the process. I knew Dan was nearby and would very soon take the fight to the jobbies shooting the place up, well I was ready and he was snoozing so I figured there is no time like the present and off I went. Waiting at 18 metres the jobbies had moved away but I suspected they were addicted to the oil in pilchards; it makes them go crazy, so I just decided to play it out and wait. Sure enough the incessant need to feed took

control and they made a move back I was of course armed with a 1.6 so I had plenty of time to place a shot, one down.

Back at the surface I watched Dan as he hit the bottom looking for a job, being that he is not as presentable as myself the jobbies understandably took flight. The situation became quite comical when on my next dive they had returned and I was able to secure another one, it was like watching a replay as Dan went back down and they were nowhere to be seen then I went back down and hit one full range with my colossal cannon, the spear had smashed the spine full range how accurate is that!

And when I say full range I mean full range! The fish had actually fallen off the spear and was beginning to fall into deep water. I could not do anything about it as I needed to breath, but Dan came down but had to make a decision between a large gold spot and the dead fish before it got too deep, he shot the jobbie after all better to be safe than sorry.█

One last spot and a couple more fish was the plan as we jumped in on another of our excellent spots saved in the GPS. I dropped down to about 20 metres where I noticed a nice cod and was able to plug him with a stone shot, I was satisfied with that effort but my mind shifted to another as a nice trout came out of hiding to see what the noise was. I surfaced only to find Dan ears had closed up and he was out of action for the rest of the day, okay its up to me and back down I went. Fortunately the Trout had stayed pretty much in the area and I was able to capture that, I was rapped and about ready to call it a day when I thought what about one more drop, down I went and out of a cave popped a tusky so I claimed that too before winding up my rig to end the day, an absolute ripper of a day.

