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# WIN YOUR OWN DREAM CARP LAKE



ABOVE: The Avenue creator Rob Hales and Des Taylor pose with a cracking mirror.

ABOVE LEFT: AT editor Richard Lee used float tactics to catch this 19lb common carp.

LEFT: Rob's son, Ollie, got in on the act with a chunky mirror that put up a really hard scrap.



light gear. It was a pleasure to see the smile on his face – a smile that confirmed yet again that as well as being editor of Angling Times, he's also a mad keen angler like me.

Although we were catching plenty of fish, I could see that Rob was getting a touch anxious that none of the real Avenue biggies had put in an appearance, but he needn't have worried. As if a switch had been flicked, the whackers woke up and we all soon connected with 'proper' uns'. First, Rob had one of 21lb 8oz, before Richard had a beauty of 29lb, which he caught after photographing three twenties for me. My best was a 25lb 4oz common, which was as good a sample of a carp as you are ever likely to see. I've always been a believer that carp only get bigger, not better-looking, and this illustrated the point.

We fished until dark and took a few other doubles before I ended the trip with a beautiful mirror about the same size as the one that I had started with on this red-letter day. In total we had taken 21 fish between us, including five exceeding 20lb. The two best, both commons, weighed in at 29lb and 25lb, while the rest averaged about 16lb. When you consider that with a little luck we could have had a couple of thirties, you realise what a very special place this is going to be.

The water will now be allowed to rest and the fish will continue to grow, waiting for the first of the lucky anglers that book the water for the week.

The Avenue costs £800 a week, but when that's divided between four anglers, £200 is a small price to pay for such cracking fishing in such a beautiful place.

The facilities include a luxury log cabin with cooking and drying facilities, toilet, showers, bedroom and TV room, making it ideal for anglers with families, as well as out-and-out carpers. The pegs are comfortable and spacious, being made from bark chippings to ensure they are always free from mud.

Essentially, you are locked into your own carp paradise for a whole week – and fishing doesn't get any better than that!

## HOW TO WIN A WEEK'S HOLIDAY AT THE AVENUE

**H**OW would you like to win your own carp lake and be among the first to fish for hard-fighting twenties, thirties and even forties on a water you've got to yourself? Sounds brilliant, doesn't it? Well, that's the fantastic prize Angling Times is offering one lucky reader in our exclusive competition.

We've teamed up with The Avenue owner Rob Hales to give one person, together with three mates, the chance to win a week's fishing at a water that looks certain to set new standards in UK carp fishing.

And, what's more, SBS will be supplying all the bait in the shape of the AV1 range of pellets and boilies! Each of the competition winners fishing The Avenue will get 10kg of pellets mixed especially for the fish in the venue and 10kg each of the new AV1 boilies. That's a prize package in itself worth more than £500!

As well as having exclusive access to the lake for seven days, the winner and his mates will also have full use of the permanent luxury log cabin that boasts a host of brilliant facilities.

The lake is set to open its doors in the summer of 2006 – and our winner will be among the first on. The seven days up for grabs start on Saturday, July 1 and run up to Saturday, July 8.

**How to win**  
Simply answer the question below and either post, phone or text the answer to Angling Times.

**How to enter by phone**  
Simply dial the number below and follow the instructions.

**How to enter by text**  
You can also enter the competition by sending the correct answer via a text message from your mobile phone. Text AT CARP, followed by your answer, name and address to:

**64646**

**How to enter by post**  
Write the answer on the back of a postcard or stuck-down envelope, along with your name and address, and send it to: 'The Avenue' competition, Angling Times, Bushfield House, Orton Centre, Peterborough, PE2 5UW. The closing date for entries is Tuesday, November 22, 2005.

The winner will be picked at random from a mixture of the correct phone line and postal entries.

The editor's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into. Employees of Angling Times' parent company Emap are not eligible to enter. Good luck.

### Terms and conditions

Calls cost £1 per minute from a BT landline and should last no longer than two minutes. Calls from mobiles and some other networks may vary. Texts cost £1.50. Usual network operator charges apply. Lines will close at midnight on Tuesday, November 22, 2005. You may enter as many times as you wish, and all correct entries will be entered into the final draw. There is no cash alternative, and the Editor's decision is final. The winner's name will be published in a future issue of Angling Times and the name and address can be obtained by writing to Angling Times.

**09065 500436**

**QUESTION:** In which county is The Avenue?



**H**OW carp fishing has changed in the last 30 years. When I first started, you had a job finding a water that actually held the species, let alone big ones. But over the years, huge stocking programmes have seen carp become the most fished-for quarry in England.

Sometimes I find the current scenario difficult to comprehend. If you had told me a couple of decades ago that venues would be dug and filled only with carp I would not have believed it. Back when I started, very few anglers had gear capable of landing anything bigger than rolb. Now, though, we have waters purposely built and stocked with 20lb, 30lb and even 40lb beasts. I wonder if young anglers realise how lucky they are?



**DES TAYLOR**

**WATER: THE AVENUE TARGET: BIG CARP**

Bizarrely, there are a few anglers out there who think that making such fishing readily available is wrong – but for the life of me I can't see why. Just what is the crime in giving the average man, who might have only limited time to fish, the chance of catching a dream carp? Nothing, that's what. The only drawback I can see is that many of these waters are either run by expensive syndicates, or have

become very crowded, so it's no surprise that over in France you can hire a whole lake to yourself, or with a few mates, for a short period. I've done it, and thoroughly enjoyed the freedom of safe car parking, plenty of space to move around and lots of 40lb carp, too. The only problem is that going to France entails a fair amount of travelling, which takes time out of the holiday.

Rob Hales, who owns the famous The Monument fishery, saw all the advantages of such a set-up, but instead of buying a place on the Continent, he has created a water on his land in Staffordshire. He's called it The Avenue, after the three-quarter-mile drive through a row of pine trees to get to the water.

At the end it opens up on to a car park where a beautiful log cabin is currently being built ready for the opening, and in front of that lies a water that has been there since the 18th Century, but fell into disrepair. Rob has re-dug and de-silted the two-acre lake and planted reeds, lilies and trees – as well as stocking it with mirrors to 35lb-plus which, by the time it opens to the public next summer, will exceed 40lb. There is also a big head of twenties, a sprinkling of

thirties and a good number of mid-doubles that will be substantially bigger in a few months. What a water!

Rob has been feeding the fish on a mixture of Corn Steep Liquor Pellets and a new fishmeal boilie that SBS has developed for the water, just as it did for The Monument with the M1. I'm sure the AV1 will be as much a success as the M1.

The place is now fully stocked with 150 carp, which is one hell of a lot for a small venue, so it should be a good runs water. Just imagine my excitement when Rob invited AT editor Richard Lee and me to join him for a test fish on the lake.

In the week leading up to the trip we couldn't stop talking on the phone about it and, after much discussion, we formulated a plan.

What could be simpler than to fish a rod apiece on AV1 boilies over a bed of Corn Steep Liquor Pellets – the very bait the fish had been fed on?

We also decided to loosefeed sweetcorn in the margins and try the float because, as effective as the lead is, there is no better way of catching carp than on a waggler. On arrival, we looked over the lake and had the choice of wherever we wanted. Sheer heaven!

I selected a peg in front of the car park where the wind was blowing. Richard opted for one alongside a line of brambles, while Rob chose a spot under a huge old oak tree which overhangs the water on one of the small islands. All three were classic swims.

The lake has only four pegs, and the 'spare' one was at the back of the island, so I baited it for a

little look later in the day. I got off to a flyer. Before the other lads had barely set up, I netted a common carp of about 14lb on plastic corn – a favourite of mine on new, unfished waters, especially when the fish have been fed sweetcorn.

Not long after, Rob was into a fish on the AV1 boilie – a bait he rates as the best that SBS has done. Some recommendation, to say the least! Rob might be better-known for his fishery-making expertise but be in no doubt, he is a very capable angler, especially when it comes to carp. And he soon proved that fact with another one, this time at 18lb.

That sparked a manic spell, and we took it in turns to land a succession of quality fish. Richard even took a common of 19lb on the float, which he did well to land on such