

A Week at Cania Dam

By Trev Saunders – Southern Brisbane Sportfishing Club

A couple of weeks ago, my wife Glenys, says “I’m bored, how about we go fishing for a week”. My answer was “Do you really want to go tenting it again after the wet, windy, two month trip to SA? I thought we were going to wait for the A’van we had ordered to arrive”. I’m not really happy with short notice for a week away. I’m the type that wants a little more time to prepare. So it was all systems go, re arranging work, grandson care etc. and it was off to Cania Dam.

Now the last and only time that we had been to Cania was about 10 years ago. It was down to about 8% and we only caught a couple of Bass and a Saratoga. This time it was 73% which meant a lot more water to explore. We got away at 5am, spending a couple of hours at Nanango with old friends Norm and June Collingwood before heading north into cloudy skies. Pulling up for a comfort stop at Ban Ban Springs, a traveller told us that they were predicting a cyclone to form in the Coral Sea. Great, we must be drought breakers when we travel. The rain increased as we went further up the Burnett Highway, absolutely bucketing down at Eidsvold. Arriving at the Cania Big 4 van park at 3.30pm, it was a damp camp set up.



Next morning, the rain had stopped, but the clouds were still threatening. The dam itself is about 3km up the road from the park, and the concrete ramp was well and truly usable, not at the bottom of a substantial hill like the previous trip. Cania is one of the most picturesque dams we have fished. All have their own unique features, but Cania has these magnificent sheer sandstone escarpments looming above it. It is often referred to as the Little Carnarvon Gorge. We trolled for about 30 minutes in the main basin, before heading off to look at the upper

section. No a long run, about 10minutes, at the present capacity, you don’t have to wind around all the bends. Last time the timber at the top was high and dry. This time there was about 11 to 18m along the course of the creek line.

Now being semi retired, I’ve been filling the time in making timber lures. A recent trip to BP dam, saw the fish sitting deep and taking small 50mm lures, so I knocked up a couple for this scenario, using 1mm bibs to improve the diving factor. Clipping a couple on, both made with white cedar, purple and a pink tops over the natural timber. We trolled from the start of the timber, and around a couple of bends. No result, but heaps of fish on the sounder all sitting from the bottom up to about 4m. About 45 minutes passed, a couple of bumps on my

lure, and then fish on. Instantaneously, Glen hooked up as well. What a start, a double hook up, both Bass. Glen's was 45cm, mine a couple longer. The biggest Bass we had both ever caught, and we've both been Bass fisher folk for almost 40 years.



For the next hour, it was a hook up or strike as we went over the same spot. The total was 12 Bass with about 6 dropped. All the fish were from 40 to 48cm, full of fight and hitting like express trains. The next day, 3 boats were up on the same area, casting with not a lot of action. We moved up around the bend and decided to work further up, casting to structure, and up along a deep gully. Cania was so low for years. there has been a regrowth of trees to the sapling stage and with the level now up they have formed even more structure.

Casting to a stand of these spindly trees, using a spinner bait with a soft plastic tail. A weight on the line as if fouled in weed? I cranked faster, to get the lure back to clear the



weed? As I sped up, a savage hit. Another 45cm Bass slugged it out. That Bass hit so hard, it pulled the blade out of the swivel on the spinner bait. Over to other bank, a few logs sloping down into the water, Glen put the lure against them, and bang, another 45 cm fish. We fished up the gully for one more hit, went back out and down, towards the hot spot, another two 45cm Bass trolling.

The next day (3) was our 4wd driving day. We drove back through Monto, up to Kalpower, and down the Dawes Range to the top of the Boyne River (Awoonga Dam's feeder) I had heard

about an old copper/gold/silver mine, long abandoned in the ranges, and was keen to find it (one of my pet things) We found the track in, and after an hour in 4wd and one section (are we going to get up that? she asked) in 1st low range we came on three 4wd's setting up camp near the first of the smelter chimneys. They were from the Rocky 4wd club, in for the weekend to try to find some hitherto missing features in there. A yarn with them helped us find some very interesting mining history.



dropping off.

Day 4 on the dam, nothing on the troll at the usual spot. Off up to the gully again. This time casting to lay down timber at the mouth of it, Glen hooked up with the same lure she had been using all week (when she's on a good thing, she won't change) This time a 50cm Yellowbelly. We managed another Bass on the troll going back. The fish numbers were

Day 5, the wind was now getting up, so we cast to banks in the lee of the wind. Three hits, but nothing stuck (only a Spangled Perch). Another troll at the top of Bass alley, Glen got slammed, and I mean slammed big time, a short run, and around a snag. There went her now, best, favourite, purple backed, go to lure. She was so crooked she wouldn't put another on. Back through again, with the same lure, but pink back, exactly the same thing happened to me on the same snag.



That night, the rain started, Debbie was on the move. A wet pack up and we were off at 8am, raining all the way home to Brisbane. A great trip, could have fished harder, didn't do some things I had planned, fly fishing, looking for Saratoga, but the size of those Bass well and truly made up for it.