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Moreno Borriero [00:00:11] Well. Fishing means everything to me. I've been fishing all my life. When I moved to Italy in 1980 at university I met a fellow student who said on "Sunday I'm going fishing." And I said, "Oh yes. I'm also a fisherman." Because I'd been fishing with my dad forever. But he said: "but I'm going fly fishing." I said "What? For trout? There are trout in Italy?" I couldn't believe it. And I said "you better teach me." And he taught me everything I know. And even when I meet him now, after, that was 1981. He's still my teacher he's still my mentor.

James Thull [00:00:54] What's his name?

Moreno Borriero [00:00:55] His name is Pie- Pietro Christaldo. Any he, funnily enough, comes from Calabria which is in southern Italy. And no one ever thinks that a person from that part of Italy would be a fly fisherman.

Moreno Borriero [00:01:13] Yes, I started fishing with my dad. We were coarse fishermen, fishing for carp. In the local dams and the reservoirs and the rivers. But I had always had this thing about fishing with a fly over the lure. I used to see his catalogues as a child and just paged through them, even before I could read and I used to get this... excitement in my my stomach when I used to see the flies. And I always thought 'that must be a better way to catch fish.' And so I was fortunate enough to meet Pietro and that got me started. It was it's been a house on fire ever since. I love fly fishing, I live for fly fishing, I dream about fly fishing, and as Norman Maclean said: I am haunted by waters.

Moreno Borriero [00:02:07] I've been in Italy for 37 years, I'm... Fished for a long time with, uh, just as a loner with my teacher, with Pietro. Then in 1999 I met some people from my area who had a club and I joined the club. And now I'm the president of that club.

James Thull [00:02:30] What is the name of the club?

Moreno Borriero [00:02:32] Friends of Fly. And it's based in Lucca. Made of a bunch of crazy guys because fly fishermen are crazy people. They are wonderful people.

Moreno Borriero [00:02:49] Fishing in Italy? One, as I said earlier, you do not think of Italy as a fly fishing venue. But they are fantastic rivers. Just think that we have the Dolomites and the Alps and those bring down beautiful waters. With beautiful trout. Brown Trout. Marble Trout and Grayling. And Brookies, especially up in the mountains. European Brookies, very small ones. But very colorful and very fun to catch. Then all the way down, Italy, as you know, Italy is mountainous. We have the Apennine Mountains and the Apuan Alps in the area where I live, and those all bring down very cold, fresh, beautiful, pristine waters. And they are all populated with a beautiful population of trout. [speaking Italian] We have a good population of fly fishermen in Italy. Who are, in general, very, very good at what they do. They are experts. They are very passionate about what they do. And in general they fish a lot better than one would think for, for, for Italy. But we do things very well.

Moreno Borriero [00:04:57] Well I'd always had this idea to own a bamboo rod. But the rods that I picked up--used to pick them up at these flea markets and that, these old rods--I would pick them up and I'd find them very whippy. But I found that they had a special, something special about them. They had a special character. And I just wanted to own one, just to have it, for historical reasons. Then in 2005 I had the opportunity to meet my

friends of the Italian Bamboo Rod Makers Association, and they were holding a bamboo only day when you can fish the local river only with bamboo. And I went and I picked up a rod by one of my good friends, Marco Giardina. And I went fishing with that rod and a silk line. I was fishing silk lines already. I caught a whole lot of fish and I said 'this can work.' That rod was beautiful. It had a very modern action. I said 'it's nothing like those things I would pick up at the flea markets that were whippy and noodly.' And it felt like I was fishing with a good quality carbon fiber rod. And so I got interested in 2006. That association held the first rod making class; I participated. And that just, but I just wanted a bamboo rod! And I went to the class to have my own bamboo rod. But then, I got home and my friends saw this work of art--which is not a work of art, but it's my number one and I'll never get, get rid of it. It's beautiful. Full of glue lines but anyway--and they looked at this thing, like, they tested it on the lawn and they said: "I want one." And I started making rods for my friends, first. And then I started going to shows to promote my guiding business. And I would bring my rods around. And people started seeing them, want, and wanting them. And it just caught on, and it's been like that ever since. I've made, I don't remember how many rods, but at least 250. In these 11 years and you strive for quality. No bamboo rod is perfect, there's always a small imperfection that the maker will find. But... You have to think that it's something that's been made by an artisan. And although you strive for perfection there's never perfection but they are still beautiful works of art, and they are not only beautiful works of art they are very, very efficient fishing instruments.

Moreno Borriero [00:07:58] Well, I respect... First of all, my friends who taught me this art. Alberto Portotelee, who was my teacher and my mentor. And when I need advice I still call him up. Gabriela Gordy who was the president of the, IBRMA, the Italian Bamboo Rod Makers Association, who is a very very talented rod maker. Marco Giardina, who is excellent. He cannot cast or fish very well but he makes the most beautiful fishing, and efficient, fishing rods. Then who else? Massimo Giuliani who is also on the committee of IBRMA. He makes, I use him as a benchmark because his rods are impeccable. I don't think you can find a defect on those rods because he's so OCD about his work. Then the Americans. I have lots of time for Bill Harms. Who, I have the honor of owning one of his Quadrato rods. Then, uh, uh, who else? Tim Anderson. Who is not a commercial rod maker, but he makes the most beautiful rods. I've learned a lot from him. He's always got something interesting and something new to share. Jeff Wagner, Bear Brandon. I have great respect for Glen Brackett and Jerry Kustich from Sweetgrass, and, and above all, for a gentleman called Calum Gladstone who was the last rod maker for Hardy. With Tom Moran, who unfortunately passed away. And, unfortunately, Hardy has since decided to eliminate cane rods from the, from the range of products. Which would be like, Fiat stopping to make Ferraris.

Moreno Borriero [00:10:04] Guiding is a very difficult job. But it is a wonderful job because I get to meet the most fantastic people. From all over the world. United States, South America, Japan, uh, Scandinavia, England, France, Belgium and, South Africa, Australia, New, even New Zealand. I meet the most fantastic people. I guide them once or twice, and then we become friends and when they come back we fish together. Because I've taken enough of their money.

Moreno Borriero [00:10:40] A woman. A woman is much easier to teach because a woman listens more. Number one. Number two: in general they have much more, a much better coordination. Especially if they've done ballet dancing, classical dancing, or some... One of those, uh, exercises where you need coordination. But they listen. They listen, and they will do what you tell them to do.

Moreno Borriero [00:11:09] Well I have three, three rivers I guide on mainly. One is the Lima River. Which is in, which I helped to create the managed part of. It is a beautiful pristine free stone river that comes down from the Apennine Alps. The most beautiful river in central Italy. With very, very difficult trout. There is a strain of trout in that river called the Mediterranean Brown. Which is endemic. It is not very different to the German Brown. But it has a different, um, physiology. It will not run to the sea when the waters get warm. So in the old days, we were stocking with hybrids of Atlantic Browns. And we were wondering why these fish were not spawning. And why they were not... They were disappearing from from our waters. But when our waters got warm, they would just run to the sea and not make it back because there are barrages, there are dams, there are reservoirs. And although, sometimes, they would spawn, they spawn in a different moment. They spawn when our rivers are too high. Whereas, the Mediterranean Brown spawns later on in the season. Unfortunately, we, when we knew nothing about trout breeding and trout biology, we adopted the Austrian fishing calendar. Which starts the last Sunday of February, and ends the first Sunday of October. Our season should start around the 1st of May, of April, sorry, and end in November. Because our trout, you're actually catching these Mediterranean Browns that have eggs and milk. So we're working on changing the calendar, but it's a tough job.

Moreno Borriero [00:13:14] Well, yes. It is special because you know that it's been there forever. It is special because, those Mediterranean Brown Trout are extremely spooky. Extremely difficult to catch, because you need to consider that in Europe; Brown Trout have been fished for, or hunted, for at least 50 to 100 thousand years. And that makes them a little bit more difficult than the American Rainbow, who has probably been fished for the last 200 years. So they are less spooky. So catching one of those is difficult. You need to be very accurate with your casting. Very quiet. No fal- very few false casts, very long leaders, thin tippet. And if you don't do things right they disappear. Another characteristic they have is that you do not see them in the river. You do not see them swimming by, because they are so well camouflaged. And so I have to tell my guests when I'm guiding that they will not see fish unless they rise to their, to their fly. And then they disappear. They just disappear.

Moreno Borriero [00:14:30] Well we have a severe problem at the moment in Italy. Our rivers are tending to become cleaner and cleaner; as more and more households have water treatment, or are linked on to the sewage, public sewage. So you don't, they don't empty their sewage into the rivers anymore. Factories are forced to have water treatment plants onsite. Especially now, area where they, we have a very important paper industry. So. In the old days, they would just dump all their waste into the rivers and our rivers were sterile. Now the rivers are healthy. We have two major problems. Number one: micro hydroelectric on all the small tributaries of our rivers. Unfortunately, this Mediterranean Brown will live in the main river and spawn in the small rivers. They go upstream to the small rivers to spawn, and they find these micro hydroelectric and they just. They've ruined the spawning grounds. That is a severe problem for us, and we've been fighting against, against it for years and years, but we just cannot get by the bureaucracy and the money. That, that is around hydroelectric. Number two: we have a serious problem with cormorants. Cormorants have become, they used to migrate to Central Europe, but they would be fishing in the sea. That's their natural habitat. Now, the sea has grown rather poor in fish and they've moved into the rivers and they are cleaning out our rivers. An average cormorant will eat 700 grams of fish a day. We are getting to the, to the stage that you can find, in some of the rivers, only very big fish or only very small fish. The whole middle population is disappearing. That is a severe problem. And we cannot do anything about it. At the moment, they do not go back. They mig- they do not migrate back to, to the

northern countries. And they actually breed. And we have a breeding population. I think the last census was about 500,000 couples. Which is a severe problem. And you cannot shoot them, you cannot kill them, because they are protected species. At least in Italy.

Moreno Borriero [00:17:04] Very important. I don't know, I think in the States you have a lot of children, a lot of kids, young men--and even young ladies--who will go fishing with their fathers. It's a tradition. In the States, if you fish, you fly fish. There's very little other kinds of fishing. You fly fish. You know? That's it. So you are getting a generation change, you're keeping up the population. In Europe, the generation of fishermen is getting older and older because we do not have this turnover anymore. Young kids do not go fishing anymore. They are not interested in fishing. They do not play outside anymore. They do not go fishing with a bent pin and a cork, for, for little... Whatever fish that are in the local rivers and then slowly, like we all did, you progress. They, they stay at home and they, they're the heads down generation. Like that. And that is a problem. I think, I have spoken about this recently with, I think with Marc Petijon. That we are probably the last generation of fly fishermen in, in at least in Europe.

Moreno Borriero [00:18:29] That concerns me because once you get the fly fisherman off the rivers, then you get, you, you. The people that check the health of the rivers disappear. Because the environmental agencies are in their offices. The fishermen on the river and they see the changes day-by-day, and they see if there are problems: if there has been a dump, if someone has dumped some sewage or whatever, they notice the changes. Fly fisherman are particularly sensitive to the environment. There are, at least in Italy, the course fishermen, the ones that fish with worms. They are not discerning from that point of view. They, they don't notice these things. The fly fishermen do notice them, because they'll see: there are no more insects, or less insects. There are no more hatches, the trout population is on the decrease. We need to stock to keep the rivers populated. You need to help nature. We have, we are destroying, slowly destroying nature, and the fact that fly fishermen disappear from our rivers will be a disaster.

Moreno Borriero [00:19:53] ...I don't know. That's a difficult question. What piece of advice? It must come from them. They must have the passion inside them. It's difficult for me to transmit passion to someone. I can talk about it with great emphasis and passion. But if they are not interested, it will not stick on.

James Thull [00:20:08] Do you recommend joining a club or?

Moreno Borriero [00:20:10] That, joining a club is fundamental. Fundamental, because you get all the information on hand straightaway. Unfortunately, the net is destroying our clubs. Because people are tending to get the information online. And they do not need to go to a club. To learn certain things. They may need casting classes. But then for the rest, they are not interested. They're not interested in participating in the associate, association part of fly fishing. Of the get, getting together, the networking, of being together with other fishermen. We have a generation of fishermen that have never belonged to clubs, that are on the rivers, that unfortunately do not have that insight that us older generation have with regards to the environment. Because they have not been taught that, they have not had what I was taught in the beginning by Pietro. He, he told me all the, the, the problems that we had already in 1980, 1981 and these, if you will go on the net you will not get that imprinting. At all. So it's very important to to belong to a club.

Moreno Borriero [00:21:37] Last comments. Go out, get on the river. Fish. Enjoy yourself. It's relaxing, it's fun. The world of fly fishing, wherever you are you meet a fly fisherman, he'll be your friend. Immediately. You bond with that person immediately. Get out there.