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Gavin Erwin [00:00:10] Let's think. Not necessarily a story but more of a, of it's my life, fishing is my life. As simple as that. I don't-- Without fishing I wouldn't know what to do. But the richness and just, yeah. Fishing is my life.

Gavin Erwin [00:00:37] My dad actually, at a very young age, he brought me up into fishing. He used to like it and he used to take me fishing every, almost every weekend of the month because I forced him to. And then from there, I got way more obsessed with it than he ever could be. So I just, yeah. Fishing started very, very early. And I just took it to the next level.

Gavin Erwin [00:01:09] I, as I said before, I am an obsessed fisherman, and I've always been artistic. Also from my dad's side, and he always used to have paper, scrap paper lying around for all the kids, and I've got two brothers. And we would just doodle all day with the scrap paper, and you always had this-- he would encourage us to, if you had something in your head, you think of something put it down on paper. Raw. Be creative. And, um... Yeah. From there, I painted my first fish related painting at the age of... just must have been about six. And still slowly got into, dabbled, used do doodles of fish. And then only at the age of about 15, 16 I really got into it. And I started painting fish related pictures, sketches, all that. And by the age of 20, I became a professional artist, I started making money out of it. And, that money would go towards supporting my addiction for fishing, and fishing trips and all that.

Gavin Erwin [00:02:20] Well, the more traditional style is-- is acrylic. I do use acrylic. A lot of people think by the way it's painted, it's oil, but no, it is acrylic. And I just love working with it, because you can put layers and layers, it dries quickly. And, yeah if it's not right you can fix it. And, and also do a bit of a pencil drawing. I love my pencil sketches, all traditional style. And then, recently, I got into sharpie... sketches. Sharpie is just like a fancy name for a koki, but it's an international brand of koki permanent marker. And it comes in really funky colors. And, uh, I just started playing around with that. And lately I've been coming up with some really, really nice stuff with these Sharpies. Vibrant. Beautiful. Clean. Yeah. I just love doing them. They're really fun.

James Thull [00:03:11] Excellent. Are any of these pieces done with Sharpie?

Gavin Erwin [00:03:14] Yeah.

James Thull [00:03:15] Would you mind holding one up?

Gavin Erwin [00:03:16] Yeah absolutely. Let me find an original here. [off-screen speaking] So... Yeah this is, uh, one of my sharpie sketches I was talking about. By looking at this, you can see, you can see the, the way the abstract colors come out. Purple, blue. It's not, necessarily realistic to the, to the accurate-- accuracy of the actual fish but, I just find it fun to do because there isn't many boundaries, it's art and you can really just play around.

Gavin Erwin [00:03:55] Artist wise... Jeez, Yusniel Santos. I think his stuff is really, really, really fantastic. So creative. Colors, as well. Very vivid. Fantastic study. Other than that, there's a lot. Obviously my fellow artist Peter Brigg. And Tom Sutcliffe. I can really, really relate with that stuff, man. I mean, he's-- he's a really nice person as well. Fine man.

Gavin Erwin [00:04:30] I would say, absolutely. Hundred percent. Everyone should, in my opinion, obviously it's a bit biased, but everyone should do a bit of fly fishing. It, really does get you out into nature, makes you appreciate something that's not your typical, everyday city life. You can, you can get out, enjoy the nature. Just, just see what life is about. There's more to life than the city. So color-wise, yeah we-- in South Africa we are trying to get, all different races into the whole fly fishing thing. If it's guiding, if it's fly tying. Yeah. We just encourage everyone to do a bit of fly fishing, yeah.

Gavin Erwin [00:05:15] Oh. I think that the special part of fishing in South Africa is the diversity. You can travel 20 minutes out of your hometown, and you can be fishing for one species. And then you can go in the opposite direction 20 minutes, and you'd be catching another species. And then, obviously, the main water sources here; like the Zambezi, the Okavango, which hold some of the best type of fishing in Africa. And, you know, if you know the Tiger, big teeth. Dramatic, fast, beautiful red orange colors coming off the fins. Just, it's a proper predator fish.

Gavin Erwin [00:06:00] It's hard because South-- South Africa is diverse in that retrospect. So there's lots of beautiful places around. So I couldn't really pick one but I'll pick maybe two or three. Just to--

James Thull [00:06:16] That's fine.

Gavin Erwin [00:06:16] Just to sort of sum it up. There's a place called Sterkfontein Dam, up in the mountains. Close to the Drakensberg. And you wouldn't think a freshwater lake would be so clear and with the blue that, that comes off that water, you can look straight down and it's, it's almost turquoise. And people come all around the world to, to fish in this piece of water due to the Small Mouth Yellowfish, it's indigenous to the spot and it's dry fly fishing, but not with little, tiny little dry flies. We're talking big hoppers, foam hoppers. Big things and they take that fly with great enthusiasm. And they come flying out the water. And, yeah, they just don't stop fighting. Very beautiful. Second of all I would have to say uh, I would say Jozini. That's pretty close to whe-- I stay, in retrospect. It's a good target fishing place. Wild. You can see elephants five meters away from you, while you're fly fishing. Special, special, special place in my heart. And then, second of all, our coastline is also very diverse. Many, many species to catch, fly, if you can get that right. Species upon species. Sometimes, we might end up with a-- with a 30 kg carp or something.

Gavin Erwin [00:07:57] Well there is, there is a funny story when we were kids. We went out with my brother and my two friends. And we were on this small little boat that my dad used to call it his pride and joy. And we used to have a 15 horsepower motor. We went to a place in, uh, Mpumalanga called Loskof Dam, which is renowned for hippos, crocodiles. It's just wild and pretty dangerous. And we're motoring along to this fishing spot, the one time, and all of a sudden we see something poking out the water. And I think in everyone's head everyone thought at exactly the same time, 'that's a hippo ear.' So, but by that time we really had the momentum, we were going to go into this thing and, dramatic, we're all panicking, going, "Oh no, this is it." And. This is about one meter away we see this little turtle, and he just pops his head. And yeah. Shaken. To say the least.

Gavin Erwin [00:08:59] That's a tough one as well but I'd, I'd have to say [unintelligible], Saudi Arabia, I think it is. It's GT big game fishing to its max. I mean you get Giant Trevally, [unintelligible], the size close to, you know, 50, 60 kgs on fly and you don't, you don't struggle with numbers either. And there's also a hell of a lot of other species to catch

on fly, which I just think is so diverse. So yes that would be one and then Madagascar? Magical, wild, and, fish galore.

Gavin Erwin [00:09:47] What concerns me about the health of our rivers is the pollution, pollution is the main contributor to the degrading quality of the water. And this is disappointing, how our government, our council does not, well they do see the problem but they just don't want to see it. They push it aside, and install sewage. Let's talk about the Vaal River, there's still sewage, you can see it driving, in plain sight, along the highway. You can see the sewage pouring into the, into the river itself. You can see it. But the council has done nothing about it. They can see it but, it's, yeah it's disgusting that they can just look past that and just forget about it. Horrible.

Gavin Erwin [00:10:38] Yeah, I would, I would. First of all, I'd get them hooked into their first fish, even if it's a fish easy to catch, maybe a trout. 'Cause as soon as you get that bend in the rod, that tight line, it's, you don't have to do much after that, you almost get addicted to fishing with that sort of adrenaline going through you. So that's the first step, get hooked into a fish no matter what size, sorted. And then from there, any question that they would ask, I'd try to give as, as best answer as I can, information. I love giving information and, and just getting kids enthusiastic about fly fishing. It's just brilliant.

Gavin Erwin [00:11:27] It depends. Someone who can just soak it in, just appreciate where they are at that time not, not just to go out there and fish and just zone out completely. Someone who can actually appreciate what you're going through. As I am too sharing, with that person, at that time. And yeah, someone who can also just, sit back, have a beer and just relax; listen to the sound of nature and yeah, lovely.

Gavin Erwin [00:12:04] Yes, yeah I do. I've been fly tying since a young kid. My first fly was a patch cut out of my Border Collie's tail. Black and white little fly, and it actually caught fish from there, I thought, 'wow. That was pretty cool.' Obviously, my material has advanced from there. But otherwise no, it's, I've been doing for a really long time, and I'm passionate about it. Just love the artistic side of it, you, you just like art you can use your hands you can use, your creativity to come up with different stuff.

Gavin Erwin [00:12:47] Okay. Let's put it this way. I haven't used someone else's fly in probably about eight years. It's just something I don't want to do. After you catch your first fly, on your first, your first fish on your own homemade fly, that you've done with your own hands. It's pretty much, indescribable what that feeling is like, so you. I wouldn't, I wouldn't trade anyone else's fly for mine, even if I don't catch anything. And your fly is working ten times better, I'll still push that aside and still flail about with my fly.

Gavin Erwin [00:13:29] The most beautiful would be the dry flies. I love, I love dry flies. They really are, the flair, they got so much character, so much movement. And so much detail that goes into it. Each fly. Each fly can or one fly can have as much as 10 materials in it, and it can be pretty complex. I just love the, yeah. No, they're just beautiful things.

Gavin Erwin [00:14:03] Absolutely, I'd just say keep. Gordon, you want to get in here?

Gordon [00:14:11] Nah, sorry.

Gavin Erwin [00:14:11] Sure, okay. No, just say, keep going, keep fishing, keep tying flies. Keep doing what you're doing. Get into, out into the bush. Out into the wild as often as you can, get that therapy and just love life, yeah.

