

# BOOK REVIEW THE LAGUNA

BY ANDRES SPINETTI | Review by Jim Gebhart

The Laguna Madre (Spanish for “Mother Lagoon”) is considered the jewel of the Texas Gulf Coast. This long, narrow body of water is only one of six hypersaline lagoons worldwide. It is both a playground for outdoor aficionados and a sensitive habitat for many aquatic and avian species. The Laguna stretches south from Corpus Christi beyond the Texas / Mexico border into Tamaulipas, Mexico. According to the National Park Service, the Laguna Madre accounts for 80% of all Texas seagrass beds and is historically the most productive bay fishery in Texas.

As a young man who grew up in the Rio Grande Valley, the Laguna Madre shaped Andres Spinetti's life in dramatic ways. He started fly fishing when he was twelve and developed his casting and fishing skills under the mentorship of renowned fly fishers, including Tim O'Brien and Rick Hartman. With their tutelage and guidance, Andres began exploring the Laguna and discovered his creative side when he completed his first film project, *Madres Padres*, in 2020.

In 2023, he started *The Laguna Podcast*; at the time of this publication, he has interviewed almost fifty knowledgeable and influential personalities associated with fly fishing and conservation along the Gulf Coast of Texas. According to Andres, “Through the podcast, I have been able to meet and create rapport with some of the industry's titans, which in turn has allowed me to finally put together a project I had only ever dreamt about: *LAGUNA*. It's a coffee table book that illustrates the stories told by many of the people I am proud to call my guests on the podcast. It includes 288 pages, over 320 images, and 14 short stories from people who share the same passion.”

This beautiful book is an homage to the Laguna Madre. The photographs bring into focus the people, places, scenery, and wildlife that further define this habitat's uniqueness, and the 14 stories offer musings from thought leaders in the fields of fly fishing, conservation, boat mechanics, art, and life.

The image shows the front cover of the book 'LAGUNA'. The title 'LAGUNA' is printed in a large, black, serif font, centered on a light grey background. The book cover is partially obscured by a dark grey vertical bar on the left side of the page.

## LAGUNA

### **Eric Glass, on fly fishing**

“Alas, it turns out there are two kinds of luck, and with one comes disappointment. Of course, the two forms of luck attend most activities. Among them, fly fishing. I am a firm believer that gremlins lurk everywhere within the sport whose job it is to watch over the gulf that exists between the anticipated and the actual.”

### **Jako Lucas, on conservation**

“I think as humans, we can easily overlook something that is easily attainable and forget how privileged we are with everything we have. As with all fisheries and natural resources around the planet, we need to make sure we respect and look after them. I have guided the Texas coast for six years now and call Texas home. I will do what I can to respect and look after this amazing place.”

### **Rick Hartman, on fly casting**

“Watching a fly line unroll, momentarily suspended after the energy is expelled, the float downward, captivated me years ago. In truth, still does.”

### **Bill Gammel, closing remarks in the epilogue**

“Your relationships are more important than the number of fish you catch. It is the act of fishing. The day spent together in search of the fish. It is the process, the poling, setting a drift, the cast, setting the hook, fish lost, fish landed, laughs had, and moments shared. It is not about the picture or the post. We are stewards of both the fish and the friendships that God has given us. They are not guaranteed to last forever. They must be cultivated, cared for, and made of highest importance. We can only share a moment once, but we can relive it forever. . . .”

*LAGUNA* is available from select fly shops in Texas; copies can also be ordered directly from Andres.

**MSRP:** US\$140

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