

★ Fly-Fishing with Leonardo da Vinci

David Ladensohn

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In a compelling, conversational style that brings together two unlikely subjects, David Ladensohn's book explores fly fishing alongside the life and legacy of Leonardo da Vinci.

The book follows da Vinci's life with admiration, including his unlikely rise to prominence despite his humble beginnings. While da Vinci is known for his contributions to Western thought as an artist, inventor, and engineer, Ladensohn argues that the ways da Vinci fixated on the flow and movement of water in rivers were perhaps his greatest obsession. Thus, tracing a day of fly-fishing, Ladensohn fixates on how water moves over a rock in a Colorado trout stream. Through these observations, he comes to see how da Vinci's explorations of river currents' motion around objects might also inform where the fish he targets are likely to be hiding. These thoughts become the springboard for a text that is part sporting memoir and fishing guide and part biography.

Filled with vibrant images of idyllic streams, drawings by da Vinci, and fishing concepts, this self-deprecating, jocular text includes lofty, poignant explorations of life and nature, as when Ladensohn expresses joy over catching a fish: "To be attached to a trout by hook and line ... is to feel pure wildness." Concise chapters shift between the central subjects, either looking at a fishing challenge or an aspect of da Vinci's life, each complementing and building on the other. Ladensohn's research trips and insights, including seeing famous works in person like da Vinci's *Codex Arundel*, add insight into his joyful personal process.

Approachable and inviting, *Fly-Fishing with Leonardo da Vinci* combines biographical research and memoir elements to deliver charming exploration of water, invention, and lives led by curiosity.

MIKE GOOD (November / December 2024)

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