



Press Release

Chamonix, 25th February



17th edition of the Piolets d'Or: Celebration of mountaineering 22nd to 25th of April 2009 Chamonix-Mont-Blanc – Courmayeur

As a real celebration of worldwide mountaineering, the Piolets d'Or undertakes to its defend fundamental values. This revitalised 17th annual event will bring together mountaineers from all four corners of the Earth in a veritable festival. Conferences, debates, films, meetings and other cultural activities will be shared between Courmayeur and Chamonix-Mont-Blanc, from 22nd to 25th April 2009.

Piolets d'Or 2009

The Groupe de Haute Montagne, Nivéales publishing and the magazines Montagnes Magazine and Vertical, organisers of this edition, have selected the members of the jury. They are supported by the AAJ, American Alpine Journal, the gold standard, in terms of compiling and investigating the big first climbs achieved throughout all the mountain ranges of the world.

For the first time the AAJ is officially supporting the Piolets d'Or, in keeping with the new spirit of promoting a taste for adventure, a desire for exploration and the art of climbing summits, rather than the spirit of competition.

An international Jury

The members of the Jury are all personalities in the world of mountaineering. Renowned mountaineers and journalists, they are informed and impassioned.

The members of the organisation committee do not participate in the selection of the nominees nor in the final vote of the jury but they vouch for the integrity of its work.

Doug Scott (GB) - Mountain Climber - President of the jury

Mountain climber, explorer, also one of the pioneers of the light-weight style of climbing in the Himalayas, Doug Scott has completed some 45 expeditions on the highest mountains in the world. He has reached 40 summits, of which half of them opened new routes or were climbed for the first time in alpine style. Apart from his ascent of the south-west face of Mount Everest in 1975, where he had to use oxygen, he has achieved all the other ascents with classic, simple mountaineering equipment. He has also climbed the highest peaks of the 7 continents. In 1999, he received the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographic Society.

Dodo Kopold (Slovakia) – Mountain Climber

A top level mountaineer, aged 32, he opened up extremely difficult new routes (mixed and rock) in Pakistan, before ascending, in the past few years, 6 summits over 8000 metres in alpine style and without oxygen.

Jim Donini (USA) – Mountain Climber

Current president of the American Alpine Club, he is a specialist of Patagonia. In the Himalayas, among other things, he reached the highest point so far on the Northern Ridge of Latok I, with Jeff Lowe in 1978, a route that was still unconquered in 2008 despite several attempts.

Peter Habeler (Austria) – Mountain Climber

From 1969 he carried out record ascents of the big routes of the Alps and the Andes Cordillera before turning his attention to the Himalayas. In 1975 with Reinhold Messner, he achieved his first alpine style ascent of an 8000m mountain in the Grasherbrum, and in 1978, he climbed Mount Everest without oxygen. Guide, ski instructor, youth worker, editor, writer - always busy, Peter Habeler, is a great connoisseur of the world of mountaineering.

Im Duck Yong (Korea) – Journalist

Independent journalist, Im Duck Yong keeps the mountain community informed of accomplishments in Asia and he is the spokesperson of the Asian alpine culture. Notably, he has been involved for the last three years in the organisation of the Asian Piolets d'Or.

Dario Rodriguez (Spain) - Journalist

Co-editor-in-chief of Desnivel magazine, the top Spanish mountaineering and climbing publication.

The Nominees

Maximum 6 teams nominated

The jury will have to choose between 57 big first ascents, achieved during 2008 by men or women of all nationalities on the 5 continents.

Mountaineering, climbs, expeditions - all these mountain exploits are unique performances.

The jury is currently working on the selection of a list of 6 ascents that will be published by the end of February.

On 24th and 25th April in Chamonix-Mont-Blanc and Courmayeur, the jury will reward the most significant achievements of the year.

And for the first time, a Piolet d'or will be awarded to a mountaineer for his exemplary career.

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