

## “PIOLET D’OR” 2005

The 14th « Piolet d’Or » ceremony took place on Friday 25th of February 2005, in Grenoble, France, in front of an audience of approximately 1000 estimated visitors. The Mayor of Grenoble M. Michel Destot and M. Alain Pilaud who is in charge of mountaineering affairs and events were attending as well. In addition a large number of famous well-known alpinists such as Lucien Berardini, Hubert Giot and Jean-Claude Marmier, were also present. Our objective this year was to create a diverse and international jury, made up of different generations of alpinists, who would be in a good position to appreciate the performance of each of the nominated candidates.

Members of the jury this year were:

### The President

Krzysztof Wielicki, from Poland, member of GHM, world-famous *Himalayan mountaineer*, who was the 5th to have climbed the 14 « 8000 » summits, and has a broad experience of 8000 solo climbing, he was in addition the 1st one to climb a 8000 peak in winter time solo.

### The members

For the very first time in the history of the “Piolet d’Or”, a woman, Yvette Vaucher was part of the jury. From Switzerland, a member of GHM, high class alpinist, she has currently a long list of impressive climbing expeditions, covering the various aspects of classic alpinism. Valeri Babanov, Russian citizen, member of GHM and Yuri Koshelenko, from Russia as well, were present as the winners from last year.

Stéphane Benoist, French, member of GHM, mountaineering guide and professional alpinist with several significant climbs such as the Thalay Shagar, last year, for which he was nominated for the “Piolet d’Or” and received the Cristal FFME 04 award.

The editors of Montagne magazine, co-founder of this award, and represented by Philippe Descamps.

Guy Chaumereuil, *founder* of the “Piolet d’Or” award, journalist and General Director of CAF « Club Alpin Français ».

Leslie Fucsko, president of GHM, 28 years of alpinism, a dozen expeditions and several new routes on big walls everywhere in the world.

Nominates of 2004 were:

### **1. K7 6.934m – SW Face**

**New route - 24/25 July 2004**

**Second ascent**

**5.10, ice 80°, M6+, A2**

**41 hours from Base Camp to summit and back  
Steve House solo.**

### **2. FITZ ROY 3440m – NE Face**

**Linea di Eleganza – February 2004**

**VI, 6c/A3, M7 - 1450m.**

**8 days and 6 bivvies**  
**Elio Orlandi - Luca Fava - Horacio Codo**

**3. MOOSE'S TOOTH 3150m - East Face**  
**Arctic Rage – attempt 22/23 March then 31 March to 3 April 2004**  
**VI, A2, ice 6+ - 1500m**  
**1st attempt: 2 days. 2nd attempt and success: 3 days – alpine style.**  
**Kevin Mahoney - Ben Gilmore**

**4. JANNU 7710m - North Face**  
**Russian Direct line – April/May 2004.**  
**6b/A3+, M6 - 2100m.**  
**50 days at Base Camp.**  
**A.Odinstov, A.Ruchkin, S.Borrisov, M.Mikhailov, G.Kirievski, M.Perchin,**  
**K.Totmianin, A.Bolotov, E.Prilepa, D.Pavlenko .**

**5. SHISHAPANGMA 8046m – South Face**  
**Voi Lafaille and Scott-MacIntyre-Baxter-Jones – 14 November to 13 December 2004.**  
**VII, ice 80°, mixed 55°.**  
**5 days for summit push, 2 nights above 7100m.**  
**Jean Christophe Lafaille, solo, without oxygen.**

**6. ACONCAGUA 6960m - South Face**  
**Johan's route - December 2003**  
**6b/A2, ice 100°, M6 - 2500m**  
**6 days on the face – alpine style**  
**Thomaz Humar and Ales Kozelj**

Every year the jury has the difficult task of selecting one exceptional success amongst a very impressive number of ascents which are very often hard to compare because of the diverse styles of climbing and types of projects. This year we found it particularly complicated due to the outstanding commitment exhibited by all teams, extremely difficult ascents and the diversity of the alpinist's styles. Amongst the achievements we found a high degree of technicality, and a huge number of contrasts. This did not make the choice of a winner any easier, as it is always a delicate decision to make and somewhat subjective. The jury's choice is not in any case a *universal* choice and is always open to discussion. And it does not mean that one ascent is superior to another one. In this sense, the "Piolet d'Or" is not meant to be the *absolute recognition award* recognized by all just as in alpinism, there is no "better" style or one particular type of practice which should be deemed as better than another one. Surely, the only real alpinism style worth its salt should be one which respects others' styles, and differences, all of which make this passion so rich. In alpinism, criteria are constantly changing, evolving at the same time as equipment, means of travel, knowledge and physical preparation. Other criteria are much more stable like the art and the way we climb, the human experience which is fodder for our dreams, the tenacity and the iron will. During our debates, one essential question has been raised: what moral heritage do we want to transfer to the next generation of alpinists, how would we like to imagine the future of this activity? This is certainly here the reason why the GHM group and the "Piolet d'Or" award exist. It shouldn't be necessary to insist here that the "Piolet d'Or" is not an award for the best in class, in favor of one or another style of alpinism. The "Piolet d'Or" award exists in order to promote and to commemorate the art of being through the art of climbing. It's also a unique

opportunity to reflect on the various climbing styles across the realities of the alpinism throughout the world.

After many hours of intense discussion and very rich exchanges, and a number of choices which were sometimes totally unexpected, followed by a real contest which developed between the different generations of alpinists, the Jury, has finally decided to give the ‘Piolet d’Or 2005’ award to the Russian team who climbed Jannu. Although the opinions of the members of the jury were all very different we decided to give the award to the ascent of Jannu for its historical significance, even if some might question certain of the technical aspects of the Russian team’s performance. We especially want to recognize the team spirit exhibited by this team: an element which is often missing in modern expeditions, which too often focus on individual performance. In the case of the Russian team, their high team spirit clearly played an important role in their success.

A ‘special award’ designated by the audience was started up this year for the 14th ‘Piolet d’Or’ session, and was awarded for the ascent of Steve House on K7, in a very contrasting style to the Russian team. This ascent will certainly remain as one of the major achievement of 2004.

The diverging opinions of the jury, as well as the audience’s choice really underline just how difficult and complex such a hierarchical choice can be, faced with the impressive list of achievements of this exciting passion for mountains, which really group together so many different styles of mountaineering and as many different levels of appreciation.

The president of GHM  
Leslie Fucskó