



World famous stars of alpinism met on July 9 and 10, 2010 in Selva/ Val Gardena for the first edition of the “Karl Unterkircher Award”. The winner is Ueli Steck from Switzerland.

After many months of intensive preparation by a dynamic working group and highly related to the memory of Karl, on Town Hall Square in Selva, on two consecutive days was held with great success the “Karl Unterkircher Award”.

On July 9 came together in Selva Val Gardena: Simone Moro (Italy) Markus Prezelj, Rok Blagus and Luka Lindic (Slovenia), Ueli Steck (Switzerland) Robert Jasper (Germany), Roger Scháli (Switzerland) Samuel Anthamatten and Michael Lerjen (Switzerland) as well as members of the award jury Ines Papert, Hans Kammerlander, Rolando Larcher, Carlo Caccia and Volker Leuchsner , not at least two chief editors of alpine magazines "Alp" "IBoderline" and "Klettern”.

On first evening in Piazza Municipio (town square), the first three projects in the form of a 20-minutes video recording have been submitted by the nominated climbers as follows:

- Simone Moro (Italy) and (Denis Urubko (Kazachistan) the letter absent for the first winter ascent of Makalu (8463 m) between 7 and 9 February 2009.
- Samuel Anthamatten and Michael Lerjen (Simon Anthamatten absent) (Switzerland) opening of a new direct route in alpine style on the south-east wall of the Jasemba (7350 m) between 27 - 29 October (1500 m, M5 und 90 °)
- Robert Jasper (Swiss) and Roger Scháli (German) for the first free ascent of the famous "Road of the Japanese" on the Eiger North Face. (8a).

To lighten the evening Hubert and Lucia Frontull have performed the song from the appropriate name "Dolomite".

On next day, the alpine world stars and the members of the jury were invited by the Catores climbers and Val Gardena mountain guides to do some climbing together. Towards on early afternoon all the alpinists went with the working group to the "Salei" mountain hut to have a nice afternoon eating and talking amongst themselves. This friendly meeting was much appreciated by these mountaineers who have taken the opportunity to exchange experiences and to discuss their future plans.

Later, on Piazza Nives, tourists and locals were waiting for the formal name-giving ceremony of the new multipurpose building in "Karl Unterkircher Zenter”. After the official speech by the Mayor Dr. Peter Mussner and words of thanks by Silke Unterkircher it was passed to remove the cover plate. Here our elite mountaineers have granted autographs and Silke was available to autograph the book on Karl "The last embrace of the mountain." A 'special honour was the presence of Kurt Diemberger during the party. Diemberger is an icon of mountaineering world and he is the only man alive who managed to climb two unclimbed eight-thousander.

The evening then continued with the second sequence of “Karl Unterkircher Award” at town square. Besides furthermore present were the Provincial Assessor Dr. Florian Mussner, who undertook the patronage of this event, the Mayor Dr. Peter

Mussner, the President of the Tourism Association Josef Kelder and other personalities from the tourism and business communities. Kasslatter Ellis, director of the Tourism Association and also part of the working group, presented and moderated the nominated mountaineers:

- Marko Prezelj, Rok Blagus the indication und Luka (Slovenia), authors of three new routes in splendid style in the group of Bhagirathi, in the Garhwal Himalayas. 15. September climb absolute Bhagirathi IV (6194 m) to the west wall and the north ridge (1000 m, D) 21:22. September: wall south-west (1300 m, 6b, M5 and WI5, ED) of Bhagirathi III (6454 m), from 29.09 to 10.01: wall south-west (1300 m, 6b +, M8 and WI6 +, ED + / ABO-) of the Bhagirathi II (6,512 m);
- Ueli Steck (Swiss) who has demonstrated a rare versatility beyond one hour and 56 minutes Schmid on the north face of Matterhorn (13. January), the Golden Gate (8) on El Capitan (May) and the normal routes of GII (8035 m, July 9) and Makalu (8463 m, September 24).

Between them was a performance of the song "Tribute to Karl" composed and written by Nicole Mussner (guitar) accompanied by Isabell Mussner (2. vocals) and Armin Grassberger (bongo). The public has enthusiastically received this interlude giving a long and warm applause.

The evening reached slowly to its highlight. Silke and Donato, an employee volunteer of Sportmeet (international network of sports brotherhood through sport, to which Karl felt bound) presented a project to support remote Lhasa in Tibet. For years Karl wanted to help children in Tibet and through this initiative we wanted to realize this wish. More detailed information on the website: www.famiglienuove.org Then followed words of thanks to the working group, to the sponsors and media partners Val Gardena Marketing and a brief tribute to Karl by the coordinators of this event Silke, brother Peter and Herbert Mussner, which are also the founders of this event. The solemn speech of "Karl Unterkircher Award" was held by Provincial Assessor Dr. Florian Mussner. Finally, Kurt Diemberger was asked on stage, who learned Karl in 2004 during the K2 Expedition. He paid tribute with a short speech and concluded with the words "The idealism of Karl continues: without being locked up without having to set a limit, without posing limits to what feels like the truth"

The jury's verdict of first edition Karl Unterkircher Award has kept to emphasize that the choice has been very difficult for the high level of all the five climbers, representing different aspects of mountaineering contemporary difficult to compare. The assignment of the prize "Karl Unterkircher Award" is therefore not intended as a race between the alpinists, but wants to honour the alpinist who is more likely in the spirit of Karl.

Ueli Steck was finally called on stage. A trained carpenter of Ringgenberg in Switzerland, accepted the twelve-pound Award of dolomite rock done by Moroder Gerold (in collaboration with Karl Runggaldier) and the cash prize of € 3000. The other nominees received an award in slightly smaller form, and a cash prize of Euro 1000. Michael Lerjen not sparing with praise, saying: "The greatest achievement have given the relatives and friends of Karl Unterkircher, because it takes more courage and energy to create such an award, than to ascend the Jasemba".

All in all, it's gratifying that the Karl Unterkircher Award became such a successful event. "A feast of alpinists," wrote a journal of mountaineering, "comparable in due

proportion, to the "Piolets d'Or"