



Press release

Karl Unterkircher Award 2010

For the first time, exceptional mountaineers are awarded on July 9 and 10 in Selva - Val Gardena

The extreme mountaineer Karl Unterkircher died on the 15th July 2008 during an expedition on Nanga Parbat.

Family, friends and colleagues have decided to create an award in honour of Karl to keep his name alive in the world of mountaineering.. The 'Karl Unterkircher award' will be given in Selva on the 9th and 10th July 2010.

The award will be granted to mountaineer who during the year 2009 have demonstrated great climbing skill or have carried out extreme expeditions in alpine style (without oxygen or porters). This event will be organised every year.

Karl's life as an extreme mountaineer was brief but very intense. Nonetheless he has become undoubtedly part of mountaineering history. After hard training and scores of climbs, in 2004 Karl celebrated his greatest achievement; climbing both Mount Everest and K2 within two months of each other in alpine style and without oxygen! He was awarded a place in the Guinness Book Of Records 2008 for this most extraordinary accomplishment. These were just two of the extreme expeditions that Karl carried out. At least once a year he would leave for yet another challenging quest, always in alpine style without oxygen or porters and nearly all of his routes were first ascents. A high point was climbing the un-scaled North Face of the Gasherbrum II in 2007, this was considered in the mountaineering world to be one of the most impressive achievements in recent years. His extreme performances were known all over the world.

Karl climbed mountains all over the world, without ever forgetting his roots back in Selva Gardena in the heart of the dolomites. He was a mountain guide and member of the historic 'Catores' climbing group and also the president of the mountain rescue 'Aiut Alpin Dolmites'. The '**Karl Unterkircher Award**' will be granted to other such mountaineers who share Karl's choice in style (rigorously alpine style without oxygen or porters).

The award will be given to 5 European mountaineers or groups of mountaineers who have been nominated by the Val Gardena Mountain Guides or the 'Catores' climbing school.

The achievements of the nominated mountaineers will be presented to the public during two evenings, the international group of judges will make their irrevocable decision and the winner will be presented with the 'Karl Unterkircher Award'. The first prize consists of a medal and Euro 3000, the other mountaineers will be given a consolation prize of Euro 1000. The cost of all participants journey to Selva will be covered.

Half board accommodation for the duration of the competition will be covered by the Selva Tourist Board.

The founders of the award are:

1. *Creator and coordinators:* Silke Unterkircher (Karl's widow), Peter Unterkircher (Karl's brother) and Herbert Mussner;
2. *Patron:* Florian Mussner, Provincial Councillor for Culture and Ladin Schools;

3. *Selectors and nominators of candidates:* Adam Holzknicht, Stefan Stuflesser ('Catores' Alpine School), Reinhard Senoner, Ivo Rabanser (Alpine Guides Val Gardena);
4. *Organisers of all events:* Josef Kelder (President) and Ellis Kasslatter (Director) of the Selva Gardena Tourist Information Office;
5. *Publicity and advertising:* Christine Demetz (President) and Gunter Pitscheider (Director) of Gardena Marketing.

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Homepage Karl Unterkircher : www.karlunterkircher.com

Homepage Val Gardena: www.valgardena.it

The event is also supported by: The Selva Council, Montagna.tv (Bergamo) – media partner, Fiera of Bolzano, Gruppo Santini Bolzano, Mammut-Socrep (Ortisei), Avirex (Milano), Post Card (Milano), Karrell (Salorno)

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