



AAC Publications

Hansjörg Auer, 1984 – 2019

Hansjörg Auer was born February 18, 1984, and was raised on his family's alpine farm in the Ötztal valley of Tirol, Austria. He grew up in an environment where climbing came naturally. Before he'd even reached the age of ten, he'd already summited a 3,000m peak in winter with his older brother and regular climbing partner, Matthias. In 2006, Hansjörg free soloed the classic Tempi Moderni ("Modern Times"), a 6c+ (5.11c) route of 27 pitches on the Marmolada's south face, in Italy's Dolomites. Hansjörg kept the feat largely to himself, for fear of scorn from his family and friends, but slowly word got out and his mythical status began to unfold.

The following year, 2007, Hansjörg redefined free soloing in the Alps when he climbed Via Attraverso il Pesce, commonly known as "The Fish," also on the Marmolada's south Face. The 37-pitch route, named after a large fish-shaped pocket on the 20th pitch, is graded 7b+ (5.12c). From this point forward, Hansjörg was no longer an undercover hardman. Adding to the audacity was the fact that Hansjörg hadn't previously climbed the route cleanly on a rope prior to his free solo. Up to this point, Hansjörg was a certified UIAGM guide who had studied to become an elementary school teacher. It wasn't always easy for him to admit, but deep down he had always wanted to climb for a living. His free solo of the Fish solidified that opportunity.

Hansjörg had a talent for just about every style of climbing. Shortly after turning to climbing full-time, he climbed his first 5.14c sport route, and with his younger brother Vitus he managed a first ascent of his own on the Marmolada, an 8b (5.13d) they named Bruderliebe ("Brotherly Love").

In 2012, together with Michael "Much" Mayr, Hansjörg again turned his attention to the Marmolada, where the two of them made the first free ascent of the bolt-less L'ultimo Dei Paracadutisti, which weighs in at 8b+ (5.14a) and is still unrepeated. Right up until Hansjörg's untimely passing, Much and Hansjörg forged a collection of diverse first ascents across five continents, the majority of which are unrepeated.

In remembering Hansjörg, one also has to mention his achievements in the Himalaya and Karakoram, starting in 2013 with the first ascent of Kunyang Chhish East, carried out with the Swiss ace Simon Anthamatten and Matthias Auer. The three tackled the southwest face of this 7,000-meter peak with technical difficulties up to M5. The ascent was followed by a 2017 first ascent of Gimmigela East (7,005 meters) with a fellow Austrian, Alex Blümel, and a solo first ascent of Lupghar Sar West (7,157 meters) in 2018. For the latter, Hansjörg won a Piolet d'Or in 2019, posthumously.

Hansjörg lived and climbed with an unmeasurable amount of optimistic stubbornness, sweet irreverence, courage, and love. He never held back, and he never disguised or feared his own vulnerabilities. Hansjörg is mourned by his partner, Tatjana, his family and friends, and the people of the Ötztal valley where he was raised and rests.

– Cody Roth

Images



Article Details

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|----------------|-------------|
| Author | Cody Roth |
| Publication | AAJ |
| Volume | 62 |
| Issue | 94 |
| Page | |
| Copyright Date | 2020 |
| Article Type | In memoriam |