

**VERTICAL**

## Turkey Adventure climbing in the Ala Daglar

The Duke of Abruzzi  
The last of the romantics

## Nuptse Less than 8000m and proud of it!

Love Actually  
Climbing couples through the ages

## Swiss extreme



Vertical Classic  
Ryan-Lochmatter on the Aiguille du Plan

English Edition N°6 June - July 2007 - £ 3.75



ISSN 1120-3764 - Code N° 0000-00000000 - 00 000 000  
Publ. cost 0,0000 - Total 0,0000 €

# LOVE ACTUALLY

Not many couples manage to truly share the pleasure of climbing in the mountains together. Differences in standard and motivation often mean that a particular route will never be seen as a worthwhile objective by both partners. Moreover, mountains are often considered to be an escape from everyday life, a secret garden. And yet climbing as a couple can be a rich and very satisfying experience. *Vertical* goes to the heart of the matter.

## For better or for worse

**Julie-Ann Clyma and Roger Payne have a lot in common. They love climbing, they love travelling and they love each other. Whereas many couples find communicating in the kitchen challenging enough, Julie-Ann reckons it's easy on a mountain.**

By Christophe Dumarest

Julie-Ann Clyma (NZ) and Roger Payne (UK) are both IFMGA mountain guides, living and working in Leysin, Switzerland. In addition to climbing and guiding, Julie-Ann has a background in public health research, with a PhD from the University of Manchester. Roger has a background in education and sports administration, first as National Officer, then General Secretary at the British Mountaineering Council (BMC) and then as the first Sport and Development Director for the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA).

### How did you meet?

Mountains are the reason we first met. In 1985 I had left my home in New Zealand to make an expedition to the Cordillera Blanca in Peru with a group of friends. At the same time Roger was there with a British expedition to make a filmed ascent of a new route on Nevada Kayesh. In the village of Huascaran I met their base camp manager, and he invited me and the other women on our team to a party at the base camp. I met Roger at that party, and we were married in the UK less than two years later.

### What have you climbed together?

Together we have made some first ascents in Britain and the Alps and over 20 expeditions to the Himalayas, Alaska and the

Andes. We have been three times to 8000m peaks, but our real interest is to make new routes and first ascents of more technical climbs at lower altitudes.

We are also very interested in mountain training and development. In 1992 and 1993, as part of our expeditions to Broad Peak and K2, we worked with the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) and our expedition sponsor - Eastern Electricity - to facilitate the installation of micro-hydro electricity schemes in two remote mountain villages.

In 2002 we organised a filmed expedition to Nepal for the UIAA and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to raise awareness about the impact of global warming in the Himalayas and the threat of glacial lake outburst floods. Also in 2002, for the

UIAA and World Conservation Union (IUCN), we organised a 'Swiss Summit' with climbers from India and Pakistan to promote the protection of mountain areas; in particular the Siachen Glacier which has been the scene of a long running military conflict.

In the past three years we have made joint expeditions with the Sikkim Amateur Mountaineering Association (SAMA) to help provide training for their members, and promote mountain tourism in Sikkim.

### Can you tell me what it means for you to climb as a couple?

Climbing as a couple means that we get to share all the hardships together, but also all the pleasures. It makes for a very strong bond when you survive the times that can

Julie-Ann Clyma and Roger Payne share the joys of expedition life. Photo Payne/Clyma.



Above: On the north face of Changabang, Julie-Ann and Roger made two attempts on this wall. Photo Payne/Clyma.

Right: Storm and spindrift. Might as well keep smiling. Photo Payne/Clyma.

be difficult or dangerous. For us the summits are important, but even more important, is that we come back safely.

### What are the advantages and disadvantages of climbing with your partner? Is it different to climbing with someone else?

Climbing together has the advantage that we know each other so well, that we know exactly how to work on the mountain together, and communication is easy. I can't think of a disadvantage! It is different to climbing with another partner. I think together in the Himalayas we are probably more cautious about safety.

### Can you tell me about any particularly difficult or funny moments that you have had together in the mountains?

We have had some extraordinary adventures together in the mountains. Some were very risky, like when we were hit by avalanches on the north face of Changabang and on the south face of Pumari Chhish.

Others were very dramatic, like when Julie-Ann was hit by lightning near the summit of Mont Blanc du Tacul (she was temporarily blinded in one eye and paralysed on one side). Also when we rescued a climber from high on K2, and during the steepest part of the descent of the Black Pyramid, an in-situ rope broke while Roger was abseiling with the injured climber hanging from his harness.

Also memorable are the many good and interesting people we have met in the mountains, including many people who

have helped us, and some we have been able to help. But probably the most memorable experiences are the summit moments, when after days and weeks of climbing, the difficulties of the mountain are solved and you reach the top; like our first ascent of Mount Grosvenor in China. But even then there was uncertainty, as we had to find a new route to make the descent. Of course it is most memorable when you think that you will not be lucky enough to reach the summit. It was like this on our climbs of Nanda Devi East and Chomolhari. At the last minute the weather gave us an opportunity, and with all our effort we made the summit and returned to base camp. It is experiences like these that remind you of the important things in life, and the amazing opportunities we have. ■

