

SPEAKER'S BIOGRAPHY

Mike Horn (South Africa)



Date of Birth: 16th of July 1966
Profession: Professional Explorer
Nationality: South African
Residing: Les Moulins, Switzerland
Qualifications: Diploma in Human Movement Science, Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

His history of spectacular exploits:

2007: Himalaya Expedition – two 8'000 meters summits climbed in alpine style and without additional oxygen. Gasherbrum I (8068 m) and Gasherbrum II (8035 m).

2006: First ever North Pole Winter Expedition - 1000 kms trek from Russia to the North Pole with Norwegian explorer Borge Ousland, during the Arctic Winter.

2002-2004: Arktos, the first solo, unpowered, 20'000 kms circumnavigation of the Arctic Circle.

2000: Latitude Zero, the 40'000 kms circumnavigation of the world along the equator.

1997: The 6 month solo and unassisted traverse of the South American Continent descending of the Amazon River on hydro speed.

1995: World record descent of a waterfall on hydrospeed.

1991: Paragliding expedition in the Peruvian Andes.

Mike Horn was born in Johannesburg in South Africa on the 16th of July 1966.

After studying Human Movement Science at the University of Stellenbosch, he left South Africa in 1990 to travel to Europe where he started work as a ski instructor, river and canyoning guide.

In 1991, he left for a paragliding and rafting expedition in the Peruvian Andes. On his return he was asked to become a member of the <Sector No Limits> sports team and shortly after descended the Mont Blanc Glacier on a body board ending at the French Riviera.

In 1995, Mike opened the <No Limits> Outdoor Activity Sports Center in Switzerland.

It was during this time that Mike broke the world record for the highest descent of a waterfall with a hydrospeed, on the Pacuare River in Costa Rica. (22 m)

In 1997, Mike launched his first big expedition: the 6 month solo traverse of the South American continent. He left on foot from the Pacific Ocean and climbed to the source of the Amazon River high in the Peruvian Andes. From here he descended the 7'000 km of river on a hydrospeed until he reached the Atlantic Ocean.

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Since then, Mike has become fascinated by yet another sport: sailing. With the best of professors, Laurent Bourgnon, they won the Multicocques Grand Prix.

After this he was asked to join the crew on Mari Cha III, a 45 m monohull, as winner, a position requiring great physical strength. Much to their delight they beat the transatlantic world record by 2 days and 14 hours.

In 1999, Mike launched another big adventure: the circumnavigation of the world along the equator. He baptized the expedition < Latitude Zero >, around the world solitaire in 17 months, from June 1999 to October 2000, and without any motorized transport. Starting in Gabon on the West Coast of Africa he traversed the Atlantic Ocean in a small trimaran of 8 meters. On his arrival in South America, he left his boat in the care of his logistics team then continued on foot and pirogue through the Amazon jungle only to find his trimaran awaiting him once again on the West Coast. After three months of navigation on the Pacific Ocean he arrived at the Indonesian Islands and then crossed the Indian Ocean. Africa, the last continent, he crossed on foot, on VTT and pirogue.

Mike is the first man ever to achieve such a feat and after this become internationally renowned and received many merits and prizes, namely the <Laureus Award> for 'Best Alternative Sportsman of the Year', Adventurer of the Year for the Out there magazine and the Toison d'Or for the film festival in Dijon.

The next expedition was in 2002 when Mike attempted a solo and unassisted crossing of the North Pole. Much to his disappointment, this trip was aborted 45 days later because of bad frostbite to his fingers.

One month after having the tips of his fingers amputated Mike set off again, and this time for his biggest adventure - the circumnavigation of the Arctic Circle, solo and without the aid of any motor or dogs. This expedition was called <Arktos> and took Mike 2 years and 3 months to complete, once again setting another record by being the first ever person to complete, non-stop, the 20'000 kms around the Arctic Circle enduring two harsh Arctic winters with temperatures reaching as low as -60°C.

With still a strong desire to reach the North Pole, Mike decided along with Norwegian explorer Borge Ousland, to reach the North Pole on foot. On the 23rd of March 2006, after 60 days and 5 hours of walking Mike and Borge finally accomplished what they set out to achieve. They are the first people ever to walk to the North Pole in the sunless Arctic winter, walking 10-12 hours a day pulling their sledges laden with 160kg of equipment in the extreme Arctic temperatures and in 24 hours of complete darkness for the majority of the expedition. This expedition creates a new chapter in Arctic History.

July 2007, Mike spent two months in Pakistan for an Himalayan Expedition together with Jean Troillet, Fred Roux and Olivier Roduit. The team successfully reached the summit of Gasherbrum I (8068m) and Gasherbrum II (8035m) without the use of additional oxygen and in alpine style, meaning doing the whole ascension and return without stopover, porters, food and only little water to drink. This was Mike's first experience at such altitudes and it proves his ability to adapt to all terrains.

Mike lives in Switzerland with his wife, Cathy and two daughters, Annika and Jessica (14 and 13 years old).

Mike has now written five books about his expeditions, each of which have reached the 'best sellers list' in France. These books are currently available in several different languages world-wide. Films have also been made and have won many prizes throughout Europe.

Mike is a motivational conference speaker and gives both public and private appearances, travelling constantly throughout Europe, and overseas.

Website : www.mikehorn.com