



In April/May of 2002 a strong team of Australian mountaineers will attempt to climb Manaslu. At 8,163 metres it is the eighth highest mountain in the world. Principally because of its relative isolation in west central Nepal, no Australians have attempted to reach its summit. The team will be led by Greg Mortimer, one of the world's great mountaineers, and includes three Australians who have climbed Everest.

The Mountain

The name Manaslu is derived from Sanskrit and is translated as "Mountain of the Spirit". Located in the beautiful, isolated and unspoiled wilderness of the Gorkha area in central Nepal, Manaslu attracts only a few expeditions each year. This majestic peak towers over its surrounding landscape, and can be seen easily from afar. It is about 70 kilometres from Annapurna, the tenth highest mountain in the world. The mountain's long ridges and numerous glaciers offer feasible approaches for expeditions from all directions. It was first climbed in 1956 by T. Imanishi of the Japanese Alpine Club and Sherpa Gyalzen Norbu. The Australian expedition intends to follow the same route used by these first climbers, along the northeast ridge. As with most, if not all of the 8,000 metre peaks, Manaslu has dealt mixed fortunes to those who have attempted to climb it. In 1972 fifteen Korean mountaineers died in an avalanche that raked it's slopes and it was on Manaslu that in 1974 the first female (a Japanese climber) reached the summit of an 8,000 metre peak. Only eight people have climbed the mountain in the last two years.

The Team

The team has been deliberately kept small to facilitate a flexible climbing plan. It has been carefully selected to blend the tremendous experience of older statesmen of Australian climbing with the strength and youth of other members of the team.

Greg Mortimer, 48, has a lifetime of climbing and mountaineering behind him. The mountains he has climbed are too numerous to list, but include in 1984 the first Australian ascent of Everest, via the Great Couloir, a climb which has not been repeated, and the first Australian ascent of K2 in 1990 by the very difficult and rarely climbed North Ridge. Both were without supplemental oxygen. Greg is now at the forefront of the Adventure Travel industry running trips to the Arctic and to Antarctica through his company Aurora Expeditions.

Geoff Robb, 48, banker. His first climb was of Aconcagua in 1996. He summited Shishapangma the 13th highest mountain in the world, in 1998 and then Everest in 1999. Since then he has climbed Mts. Elbrus, Vinson, Kilimanjaro, Denali and Carstensz to become the first Australian to climb the highest mountain on each of the seven continents (Carstensz is in Irian Jaya on the Australian Continental plate).

Brian “Henri” Laursen, 34, after extensive climbing in Europe summited Denali in 1998, Shishapangma in 1999, Cho Oyu (the world's 6th highest mountain) in 2000 and is the most recent Australian to summit Everest, when he was successful with the Australian Army Alpine Club in 2001. 'Henri' is an Adventure Training Instructor with the RAAF.

Ralph Pliner, 54, a lawyer, has been active in the mountains for many years, climbing in New Zealand, Nepal and Tibet. More recently Ralph summited Shishapangma in 1998 and Carstensz in 2001.

George Lloyd, 29, investment banker and engineer. George has climbed in New Zealand, Nepal, South America and the Pamirs. He completed a solo ascent to the summit of Aconcagua in 2000.

Andrew Peacock, 34, doctor, has climbed in New Zealand, North America and the Himalaya. He reached the central summit of Shishapangma in 1999 and recently climbed Khan Tengri (7000m) in Kazakhstan. His medical experience includes a volunteer stint with the Himalayan Rescue Association in Nepal focusing on altitude illness.

Sponsorship

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