

THE PEAK



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HONG KONG
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NADJA SWAROVSKI

THE GLAMOROUS FACE OF
HER FAMILY'S
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MONACO'S THRILLING GRAND PRIX 2013

HK\$50.00





BANKING ON

THE PEAK

Between them, Argentina natives Horacio Cunietti and Horacio Galanti have nearly 50 years experience in climbing the most dangerous mountains on Earth. But the peak of their careers has been their recent ascent of Mount Everest where, sponsored by Standard Chartered Bank, the duo used a new app which allowed them to trade stock on the top of the world. They talked exclusively to *The PEAK* about their love of mountain climbing despite its many dangers.

WORDS ELIZABETH WOOD PHOTOS JIMMY LUK & STANDARD CHARTERED BANK



Sixty years ago, Sir Edmund Hilary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay became the first climbers to reach the summit of Mount Everest. After spending two grueling months scaling the highest peak in the world with rudimentary gear—think woolen suits, wood-handled ice axes and hefty steel crampons—the pair spent a triumphant 15 minutes at the summit.

On the anniversary of that remarkable achievement, two Argentinean mountaineers, Horacio Galanti and Horacio Cunietti partnered with Standard Chartered Bank to set a new world record - this time in mobile banking technology. Battling strong winds, freezing temperatures and life threatening conditions, the daring duo successfully launched Standard Chartered Bank's new mobile banking app "Breeze" at the summit of Mount Everest.

Developed in Singapore and Hong Kong, the new technology offers a suite of banking and lifestyle apps designed to address the needs of today's globally-connected, tech-savvy customers. Currently available in more than six Asian countries, as well as the United Arab Emirates, the smartphone app allows users to transfer funds, send electronic cheques, trade shares and even search for and buy a property. More than a million users have downloaded the app since its launch.

During their Everest expedition, the two Horacios successfully traded shares with Breeze Trade and conducted funds transfers with Breeze Banking at Everest Camp 3, located at 6,500 metres. They then confirmed their bank account balances



with Breeze Balance at Everest Camp 4 located at 8,000 metres.

“Our mountaineers capture the spirit of our brand promise, Here for Good,” says Ashley Veasey, CIO of Standard Chartered Bank Hong Kong. “The world’s highest banking transactions on Mount Everest, including the first ever stock order at Base Camp for 50 Standard Chartered shares from the Hong Kong Stock Exchange symbolises the bank’s innovation leadership to go above and beyond customer expectations. We had no hesitation linking up with these two men to make a few records, and congratulate them on their successful climb to the top.”

Together, the two seasoned

mountaineers have nearly 50 years experience climbing the highest mountains on Earth. Since meeting for the first time in 2005 on the icy slopes of Alaska’s Mount McKinley, where temperatures routinely drop 50 degrees below freezing, they decided to set their sights on their ultimate goal, conquering Mount Everest.

Reaching 8,848 metres (29,029 feet) above sea level- that’s the average altitude that commercial passenger jets fly - Everest is an extremely inhospitable place. Located in the Mahalangur section of the Himalayas, the mountain’s summit straddles the border separating China and Nepal. Temperatures at the top are typically around 36 degrees below zero in the winter and can drop

to as low as 60 degrees below. Despite the dangers of hurricane force winds, sudden and unpredictable weather changes, and high altitude sickness, the mountain attracts a myriad of professional and amateur climbers each season. Around 3,000 people have successfully climbed the mountain; but at the cost of 210 lives.

It is not for the faint of heart, says Galanti, a civil engineer working in Canada, who has made over 30 high altitude summits, and has also participated in the Canadian Death Race - a 125km ultra-marathon in the Rocky Mountains.

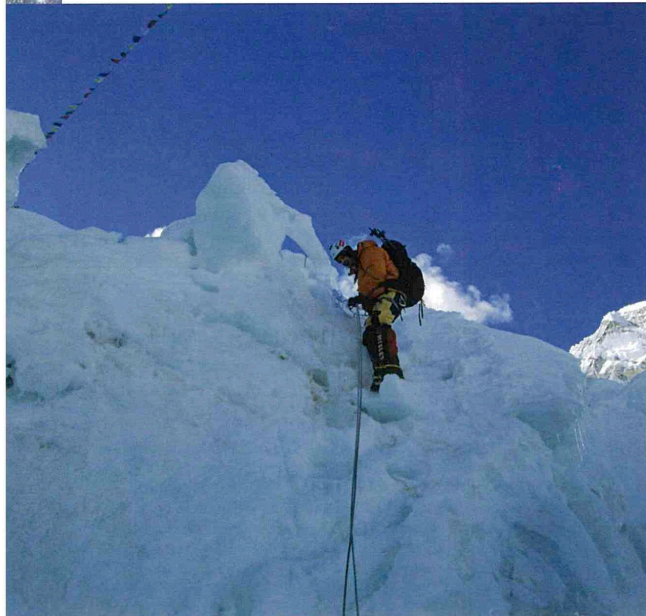
“You see a lot of people on Everest who should not be there. I would say at least 50 percent of those climbing are



PHOTO: JIMMY LUK



Horacio Galanti and Horacio Cunietti with some essential items used during their Mount Everest expedition.



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not qualified. They might not be ready, but they have the money (climbing Everest doesn't come cheap: it can cost around HK\$600,000 to climb to the summit). And this causes problems for others. If some climbers are not keeping a certain pace, especially at particular bottleneck sections, for example, there is the possibility for traffic jams and this can throw your whole schedule off."

Training for the assault takes a lifetime, Galanti adds. "We have been passionate mountaineers for as long as we can remember. After deciding to seriously plan our Everest expedition, we continued to scale some of the world's most intimidating peaks together." As part of their training, the pair returned to Mount McKinley a year ago, and conquered the summit in only 17 days - most climbers take a month.

The challenge of reaching the top is as much psychological as it is physical, says Cunietti, a professor of mountaineering in his native Mendoza. Cunietti has made more than 120 high altitude summits around the world, and in 2012, he set a world record for the most summits of his local 7,000 metre peak, Mount Aconcagua. He is also the first in the world to complete a full circumnavigation of the mountain.

"It takes around two months to climb Everest, so you need to keep your mind focused the entire time. When you are on the mountain you can forget

MOUNT EVEREST: A TIMELINE

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD'S MOST RENOWNED SUMMIT

- 1856**

The mountains height is determined for the first time by the Great Trigonometric Survey of British India. It was known to them as Peak XV.
- 1865**

Peak XV is renamed Mount Everest after Sir George Everest, the Surveyor General of India, by Britain's Royal Geographical Society.
- 1921**

First British expedition to Everest, led by Lt Col Charles Howard-Bury, and including George Mallory, reaches 6700m, establishing the north ridge route.
- 1924**

Mallory and climbing partner Andrew Irvine disappear during a summit attempt. There is still debate on whether they reached the top. Mallory's body was only found in 1999, while Irvine's body, and the camera he was recorded to have with him, remain lost on the mountain.
- 1953**

Climber Edmund Hillary from New Zealand and Nepalese Tenzing Norgay became the first people to reach the summit of Everest.





about home comforts and luxuries. Above base camp there are no showers and no toilets. Food is dehydrated and you have little or no appetite because of the lack of oxygen. But you need to have the mental stamina to force yourself to eat. When climbing at high altitude you burn between 8,000 to 10,000 calories per day. We were consciously trying to eat fatty foods to maintain our weight. Despite this we still lost between 8 to 10

kilograms each.”

During the descent of their historic climb, the two Horacios engaged in a much needed environmental initiative to recover debris left behind by other expeditions over the decades. Tattered tents, empty oxygen cylinders and abandoned food cartons from past expeditions now litter the once pristine slopes of Everest, making it one of the most polluted mountains on Earth. The

duo managed to haul some 400 pounds of debris, and about 50 oxygen cylinders down the slopes.

“It is a shame that the mountain has become so polluted, but when climbers are in a life or death situation and go into survival mode, the last thing you expect them to think about is reducing their environmental footprint and collecting their rubbish,” says Galanti. ▲



1975

Japanese climber Junko Tabei became the first woman to climb Everest.

1990

Peter Hillary, son of Sir Edmund, successfully climbed the mountain, making the pair the first father and son to do so.

2010

American Jordan Romero became the youngest person to climb Everest at the age of 13.

2012

Around 240 people reached the summit every day during the climbing season.

2013

80-year-old Yuichiro Miura of Japan became the oldest man to climb Everest.