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Major Mountain Milestones

By Rebecca Williamson

Wanaka company Adventure Consultants is celebrating another milestone climbing year in Nepal, with eight clients successfully summiting Mt Everest, along with 20 guides and Sherpas.

General manager Suze Kelly says the outstanding season can be attributed to both optimal weather conditions and the dedication of the Adventure Consultants guides who led the two-month-long expeditions.

“We had excellent weather and a great team who supported each other,” she says. “For a summit day we need good weather at the right time in mid-May and this past season there were 11 ideal weather days in a row.

“Our guides Rob Smith and Lydia Bradey did a fantastic job guiding everyone to the summit and back safely and providing leadership, as did our all-star Sherpa team.”

Suze says the climbing season, which is springtime in Nepal, ended with a tremendous personal achievement for Adventure Consultants owner and renowned mountaineer Guy Cotter, who summited Mt Everest for the fifth time this year while leading the Triple Crown, a challenging expedition climbing the three highest peaks in the Everest cirque – Nuptse (7864m), Mt Everest (8850m) and Lhotse (8516m).

“No-one has actually summited all three in one season. It was an ambitious project – Lhotse is the fourth highest mountain in the world and one of the 148,000m peaks,” says Suze. “Guy had a private Singaporean client for the expedition and they just missed out on the summit of Nuptse due to adverse weather, before climbing Mt Everest and Lhotse back-to-back two weeks later.”

She says the Lhotse summit is accessible from the same high camp that is used for climbing Mt Everest.

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Suze says Adventure Consultants’ African and European expeditions have also exceeded expectations this year, with multiple groups climbing Tanzania’s Mt Kilimanjaro (5895m) as well as Mont Blanc (4810m) on the French-Italian border.

“Our European Alps climbing school and guided ascents programmes have been particularly busy as well.”



Camping on High

The FirstTracks Wanaka Alpine Heli Camp opened this year by Adventure Consultants in the McKerrow Range near Lake Hawea gave ski tourers a taste of accommodation high in the mountains.

General manager Suze Kelly says while the company has been running one-day guided ski tours in the McKerrow Range for two years there has never been an overnight option.

The heated geodesic dome sleeping and dining tent has been installed at the camp accommodating up to six people and can only be accessed via helicopter.

“A morning helicopter ride drops skiers off with our ski guide at the ridge top for a day of ski touring, followed by an evening at the camp. Then people wake up to incredible views of the Southern Alps and do it all again,” she says.

During the summer season from October to March the camp will be used by hiking groups keen to explore the remote wilderness or, says Suze, just relax in relative comfort and style in one of New Zealand’s most serene spots.

“There are options to hike as little or as much as you like and staying at the camp is an amazing experience in itself.”



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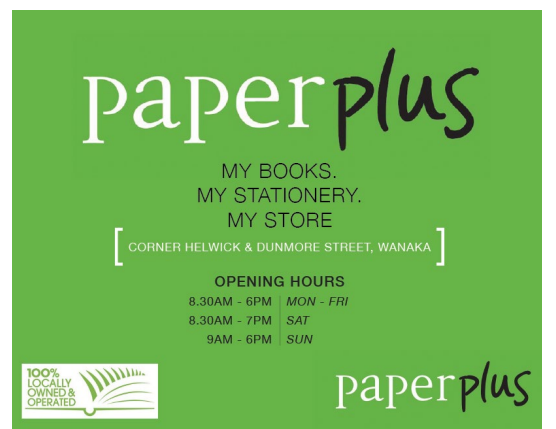


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