

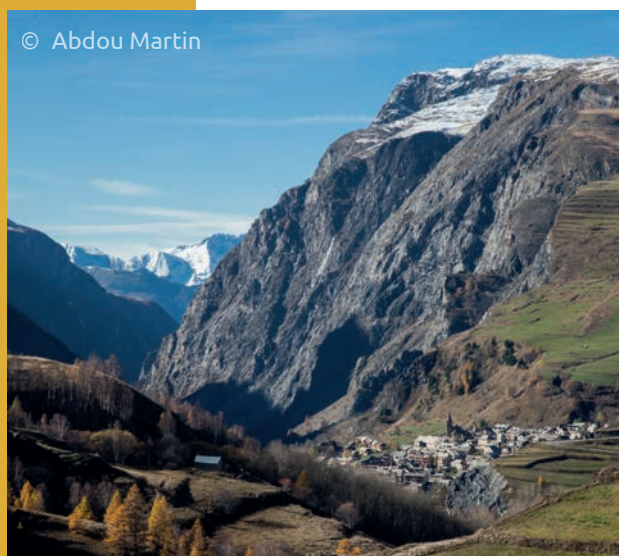
# Piolets d'Or 2016

## Global Alpinism Meeting

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from 14 to 17 of April 2016 in La Grave-La Meije:  
a very special Piolets d'Or event!

The upcoming Piolets d'Or will take place next month in La Grave-La Meije. This will be an especially rich event, featuring an opening night gathering in Briançon and a four-day international celebration in the area surrounding La Meije.



We'll spend three friendly, interactive evenings at our 'base camp' in La Grave. Our motto for these four days will be "*action, inspiration, and sharing*". The time will be filled with encounters with alpinists, outdoor activities, films, small interactive conferences, exhibitions, exchanges, a big celebratory lunch at 3,200 metres, literary cafes, etc.

### Opening night event in Briançon on Wednesday 13 April

This year's event is special because it will be highlighting the spirit of international openness and solidarity. **A forum featuring surprise guests** (policymakers, journalists, alpinists, authors) will be held at 6 pm and is open to the public at the Briançon theatre.

The forum will be followed by **an evening dedicated to modern alpinism in the region of La Meije**. You'll get to know the climbers who've made the most notable ascents of the past 15 years and who have a keen perspective on the area's low-profile but thriving alpine climbing scene!

### The Piolets d'Or in La Grave from 14 to 17 of April

The event is organised around three main themes that reflect the spirit and values of the Piolets d'Or.

- **Great International Alpinism**, with the presentation of the most notable ascents of 2015 in the presence of the first ascensionists : Nikita Balabanov, Mikhail Fomin, Mick Fowler, Paul Ramsden, Jerome Sullivan, Lise Billon, Diego Simari, Antoine Moineville, Hayden Kennedy, Marko Prezelj, Urban Novak, Manu Pellissier.

This event will also provide a unique opportunity to meet the man to whom the 2016 Piolets d'Or Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented, Voytek Kurtyka, who will be accompanied by several of his climbing partners. The friendly atmosphere will also provide the public with the opportunity to interact with some living legends (Doug Scott, Catherine Destivelle, Christophe Profit, John Porter, Robert Schauer, Jean Troillet, Sandy Allan, Andy Parkin, Victor Saunders...), as well as many other alpinists from all over the world.

Three new films, as well as several book presentations, will further enliven the event.

- **At the La Grave Base Camp:** the numerous activities and presentations (films, exhibitions, discussions, concerts, local cuisine, etc.) will highlight this unique region and its mountain culture.
- **Mountain activities:** various mountain activities will be on offer to the public. From the Col du Lautaret to the Vallons de la Meije, the glacier at 3,200 metres, and the south facing highlands above La Grave, come and discover the region of La Meije with mountain professionals and connoisseurs who know how to share their passion!

# The greatest ascents of 2015

Detailed portraits of alpinists on the website [www.pioletsdor.net](http://www.pioletsdor.net)

## Talung, 7,348 m (Nepal)



© Mikhail Fomin / Nikita Balabanov

Having gained confidence from their first ascent of the northwest pillar of Langshisha Ri (6,427 m) in 2014, during their maiden Himalayan expedition, Ukrainian alpinists Mikhail Fomin and Nikita Balabanov decided to up the level of commitment. From 18 to 23 October (five bivouacs), the pair made the first ascent of the coveted north-northwest pillar of Talung. Their ascent was the fifth of the mountain. The first ascent of the adjacent north face was nominated for a Piolet d'Or in 2014, and came after two attempts by Marek Holecek on this same pillar. Fomin and Balabanov's 1,700 m line, which they called Daddy Magnum Force, is rated ED+. The maximum difficulties are estimated at M6 and A3. The team considers that the route they climbed is close to the maximum of their abilities, and they were glad to be able to take turns each day with the route finding. They descended the west face, which they'd reconnoitred during the approach, with a bivouac at 6,700 m.



© Mikhail Fomin / Nikita Balabanov

## Gave Ding, 6,571m (Nepal)



© Mick Fowler / Paul Ramsden

The tenacious team of Paul Ramsden and Mick Fowler, who already received a Piolet d'Or in 2002 for their ascent of Siguniang and another in 2013 for the Prow of Shiva, made the first ascent of this isolated summit on the northwest border of Nepal. After studying different possibilities, the English climbers spent five days (from base camp to summit) putting up a very elegant new line on the north face. The route is protected from objective dangers. They reached the summit on 22 October and made the descent in two days by the west ridge and then a couloir on the north side. The overall difficulty of the 1,600 m route is estimated at ED+. Paul's description of the line: "*The first half is similar to the north face of the Eiger in terms of the complexity of the itinerary, the second half is similar to the Peuterey ridge.*"



© Mick Fowler / Paul Ramsden

## Cerro Kishtwar, 6,173 m (India)



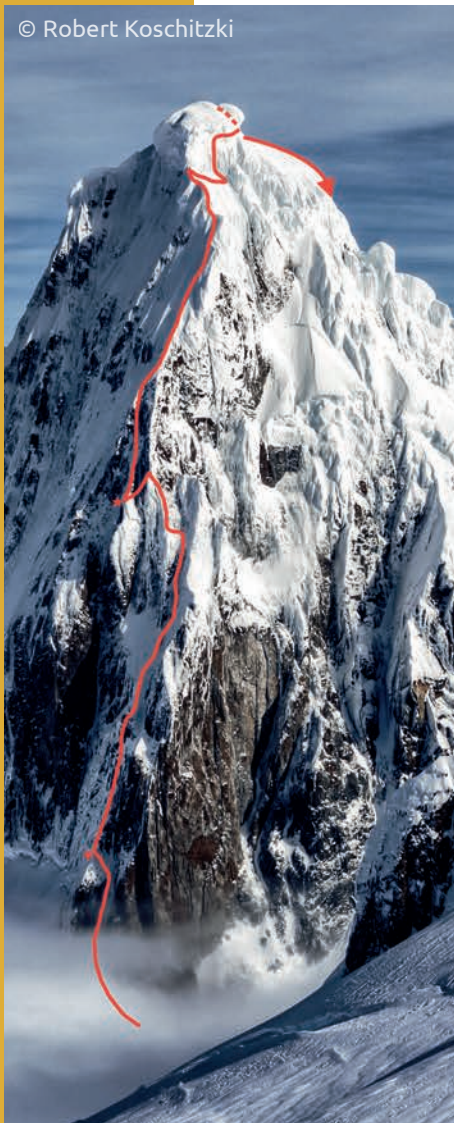
© Marko Prezelj

Following his ascent of Hagshu in 2014 (which received a Piolet d'Or in 2015), veteran Slovenian alpinist Marko Prezelj, whose routes in the past have already been awarded three Piolets d'Or, set his sights on the unexplored east side of the nearby Cerro Kishtwar. Mick Fowler and Steve Sustad made the first ascent of the peak by the northwest face in 1993. After acclimatizing with a first ascent of the south ridge of Chomochior (6,278m, 1,400m, D+), the four-person team of Marko Prezelj, American Hayden Kennedy (his new route on Baintha Brakk received a Piolet d'or in 2013), Frenchman Manu Pellissier, and Slovenian Urban Novak made the first ascent of Light Before Wisdom on 5-8 October 2015. The 1,200 m line is rated ED+ (more precisely: 5.11, WI6, M6, A2). The team descended by the south face and then rappelled the mountain's east couloir.



© Marko Prezelj

## Cerro Riso Patron, 2,550 m (Chile)



© Robert Koschitzki

Cerro Riso Patron is located 50 kilometres to the southwest of Cerro Torre, in an isolated area between the Hielo Continental plateau and the Pacific fjords. During a first attempt on the south summit (which remains unclimbed) in 2014, an accident low down on the mountain interrupted their expedition early on. Accustomed to the complex logistics of climbing in the region, the international team composed of Lise Billon, Antoine Moineville (both French) and Jerome Sullivan (USA), decided to reattempt the challenge, joined this time by Argentinian climber Diego Simari (taking the place of Martin Elias). Unable to reach the foot of their initial objective, the team changed plans and shifted their sights to the main summit, which had already been climbed in 1988 by an Italian team. After an epic five-day approach, the foursome made the first ascent of the northeast pillar in three days from 22 to 24 September. This was the second ascent of the peak. Their 1,000 m route Hasta las Webas is rated ED-, with difficulties estimated at AI5+, M5, 90° and X. The first ascensionists nonetheless note that the grade takes into account the isolated location. They made the descent on the same day they summited, following the north ridge and then its flank.



© Lise Billon

# 2016 Piolets d'Or Provisional Programme

## Wednesday 13 April

### Opening of the 2016 Piolets d'Or

Briançon – Briançon Theatre

- 6 pm: Forum "The spirit of international openness"
- 8:30 pm: "Modern alpinism in the region of La Meije". Presentation of a dozen notable modern alpine ascents in the region of La Meije in the presence of the ascensionists.

## Friday 15 April

### 2016 Piolets d'Or Ascents Evening

Mess tent – La Grave

- 6:30 pm: "Great Alpinism" cocktail hour. Surprise presentations in the tent.
- Concert by the *Poissons Voyageurs*.
- **8:30 pm: presentation of the honoured ascents:**
  - *Talung* (Nepal) with Nikita Balabanov (Ukr) and Mikhail Fomin (Ukr).
  - *Cerro Riso Patron* (Chile) with Lise Billon (Fr), Antoine Moineville (Fr), Diego Simari (Arg) and Jerome Sullivan (USA).
  - *Gave Ding* (Nepal) with Paul Ramsden (GB) and Mick Fowler (GB).
  - *Cerro Kishtwar* (India) with Hayden Kennedy (USA), Urban Novak (Slov), Manu Pellissier (Fr) and Marko Prezelj (Slov).

## La Grave Base Camp

From Thursday 14 to Sunday 17 April

Numerous activities and presentations (films, exhibitions, discussions, concerts, local cuisine, etc.) will highlight this unique region and its mountain culture. Other activities at Camp 1 Villar d'Arène and Camp 2 Col du Lautaret.

Detailed Base Camp programme on the website [www.pioletsdor.net](http://www.pioletsdor.net)

## Thursday 14 April

### Inauguration of the Piolets d'Or Base Camp in La Grave

Mess tent – La Grave

- 6 pm: Concert.
- 8:30 pm: Film screening "K2 and the Invisible Footmen" (2015) by Lara Lee (USA). Follow in the footsteps of these invisible heroes: the porters of Pakistan...
- 10 pm: Film screening « *Dreamline* » by Bjarne Salen with Ptor Spriceniaks.

## Saturday 16th April

### 2016 Piolets d'Or Lifetime Achievement Award Reception with Voytek Kurtyka

Mess tent – La Grave

- 7 pm: Bar and buffet at Base Camp.
- 8:30 pm: Celebration of the exceptional career of Voytek Kurtyka, with his friends and climbing partners.
- Screening of the film "Art of Freedom" by Marek Klosowicz and Wojtek Slota.
- **Awarding of the 2016 Piolets d'Or.**
- Rock concert in the tent.

## Mountain activities

From Thursday 14 to Sunday 17 April

Various mountain activities will be proposed to the public. From the Col du Lautaret to the Vallons de la Meije, the glacier at 3,200 metres, and the south facing highlands above La Grave, come discover the region of La Meije with mountain professionals and connoisseurs who know how to pass along their passion!

Programme of activities available on the website [www.pioletsdor.net](http://www.pioletsdor.net)

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