

## Bruno Gouvy

1962 - 1990

For three years, Bruno Gouvy was the fastest monoskier in the world, reaching 177 km/h on a monoski. It was in 1983 that he set this record, which stood until 1986.

Even if this is just a blink on his illustrious resume, it says a lot about Bruno Gouvy, always ready for a good time, as long as that good time was defined by great effort, risk and thrill.

Gouvy was a pioneer in the multi-sport approach to adventure, using all the tools available at the time to maximize the fun and challenge of descending the Alps' most mythical peaks.

In an interview published in Ski (January 1989), he said, "I'm not strictly a climber, snowboarder, skydiver or windsurfer. I'm happy to play in any conditions."

Gouvy was born in 1962 to parents who were passionate about sailing. He translated that love of the sea into windsurfing, going so far as to cross the Mediterranean on a board. Perhaps that gave him an idea of his future, dedicated to pushing the limits. "When it's over," he told Ski Magazine, "I want it again and again. But it's not just the risk and thrill that's satisfying. It's the effort. I don't like things too easy.

And so he set big goals without compromise. In 1986, he parachuted from a helicopter to land on the Petite Aiguille de Dru. After rappelling down two-thirds of the wall, he snowboarded down the central hanging glacier at 50 degrees to a cliff. He then took a paraglider out of his bag and flew to Chamonix

In 1988, he climbed the Eiger, bivouacked near the summit and snowboarded down it, then helicoptered to the summit of the Matterhorn, snowboarded down it and helicoptered again to the summit of the south face of the Grands Jorasses. By nightfall, he had made three massive descents in one day. He almost lost a few fingers to frostbite on this attempt, but he fought with the doctors to resist the impending amputations. Who can say whether the doctor's prognosis was wrong or whether Gouvy's will triumphed over medicine? Either way, Gouvy avoided gangrene and kept all his fingers intact.

He became as good at snowboarding as his contemporaries on skis, which was unheard of at the time. He was part of a group to make the first snowboard descent of Mont Blanc and the first snowboarder above the 8,000 meter mark in the Himalayas. While skiers were perfecting their high angle jump turns, Gouvy did the same thing on a snowboard, except he had an ice axe in each hand...

Bruno Gouvy died in 1990, at the age of 27, on the Aiguille Verte du Mont Blanc. He had been transported by helicopter to the summit and had begun his descent by skidding uncontrollably for 1000 m. He was unable to recover and fell into a crevasse.

"Gouvtor" did not become famous, which is a pity considering his impressive record of achievement. But he left his mark on all those who had the privilege to know him.