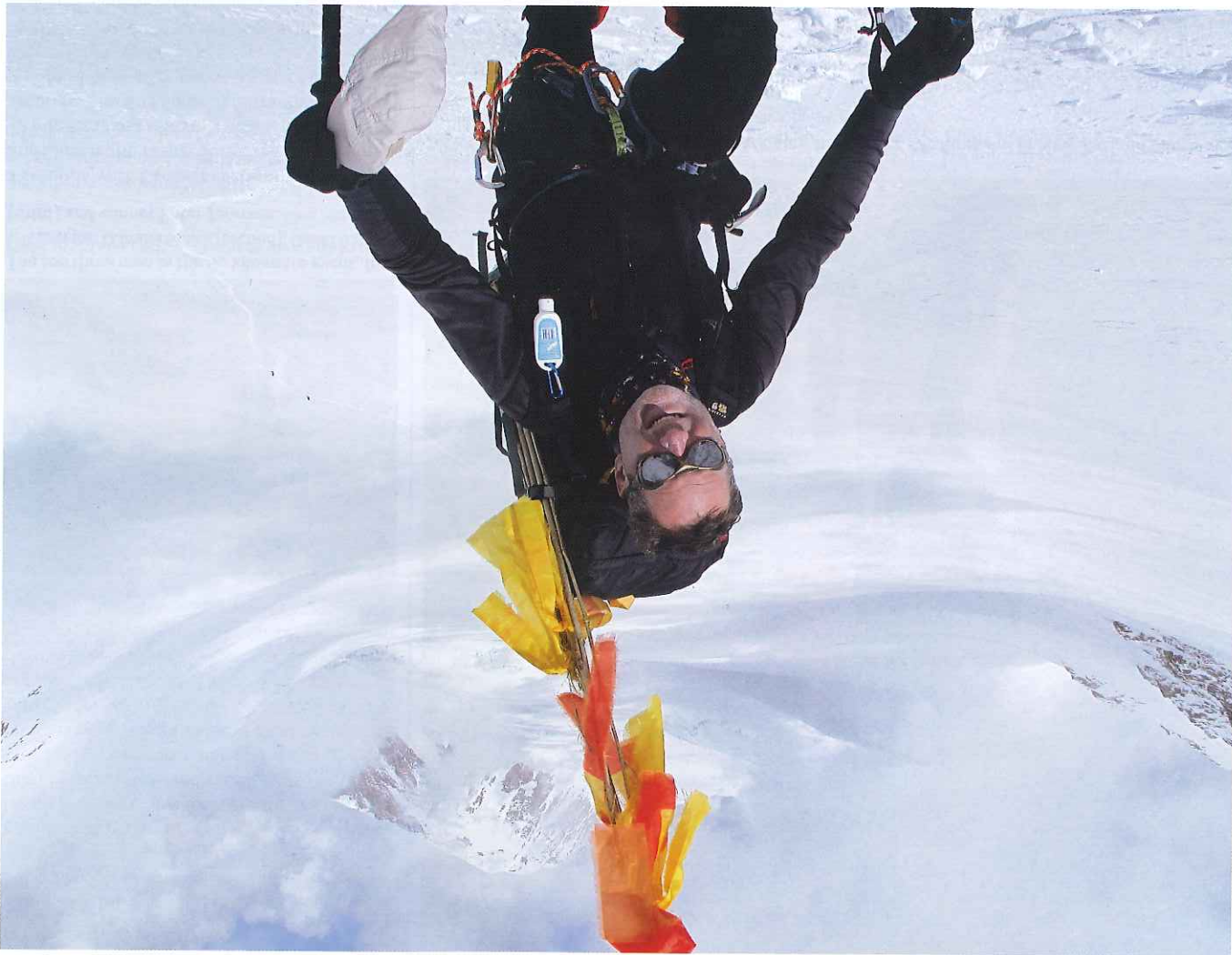


Summit of dreams

Zac Zaharias reports that Australian mountaineer Andrew Lock has achieved the Himalayan grand slam



Andrew Lock making his way up to Camp Three on Shisha Pangma's North Face during his successful ascent in October. Lock is now the first Australian to summit all peaks over 8000 metres, a remarkable achievement. Andrew Lock collection

On 2 October, Andrew Lock (see profile in *Wild* the like. 'I'm still reveling in the success of the first Australian to summit all 14 of the world's 8000 metre peaks when he finally climbed the main peak of Shisha Pangma (8027 metres) with Welshman Neil Ward. This was Lock's 23rd major Himalayan expedition and his fifth attempt on Shisha Pangma, the lowest and so-called 'easiest' of the 8000 metre peaks. Lock's patience, judgement and tenacity—hallmarks of his mountaineering career—paid off. 'It was an absolute knife-edge ridge and we had to delicately tip-toe our way along this ridge towards the top', he said. After summiting at 5 pm, following a 12-hour climb that took them across the avalanche-prone slopes on the North Face, Lock and his companion spent a harrowing night in an open bivvy at 7600 metres, in temperatures down to -30°C , after being caught in a storm during the descent.

'I'm still on a real high from the climb. I'm absolutely exhausted and very dehydrated and as he made bold attempts on Nanga Parbat and Broad Peak by new routes. His psychologically important second 8000 metre summit was Over the next four years success eluded him as he made bold attempts on Nanga Parbat and Broad Peak by new routes. His psychologically important second 8000 metre summit was

Lock started climbing in New Zealand in 1986, inspired by a talk Tim Macartney-Snape gave following his successful ascent of Mt Everest (8850 metres) by the North Face in 1984. From modest beginnings in Alaska, the Himalaya and the Pamirs, he moved on to big mountains in 1991, when he reached 8300 metres on Mt Everest. Returning in 1993, he reached 8200 metres. Success came later that year with an ascent of K2 (8614 metres), on which he climbed with the legendary Anatoli Boukreev. The ascent was marred by two deaths but demonstrated Lock's ability to stay alive.

Next year, as a finale, Lock is to attempt Mt Everest without supplementary oxygen. Should he make his third ascent of Mt Everest, he will join a handful of climbers who have done all of the 8000 metre peaks without oxygen. Although ordinary achievement is largely unnoticed or unappreciated by most Australians.

From then on, Lock systematically ticked the big mountains off, one by one and, in some instances, two in a season or two in a year, following numerous Australian records along the way. Increasingly, he climbed solo for part or a significant section of the climb, or in small teams. Climbing big mountains can be a game of roulette but his sixth sense kept him alive, particularly on notoriously dangerous climbs such as Nanga Parbat, K2 and Annapurna I.