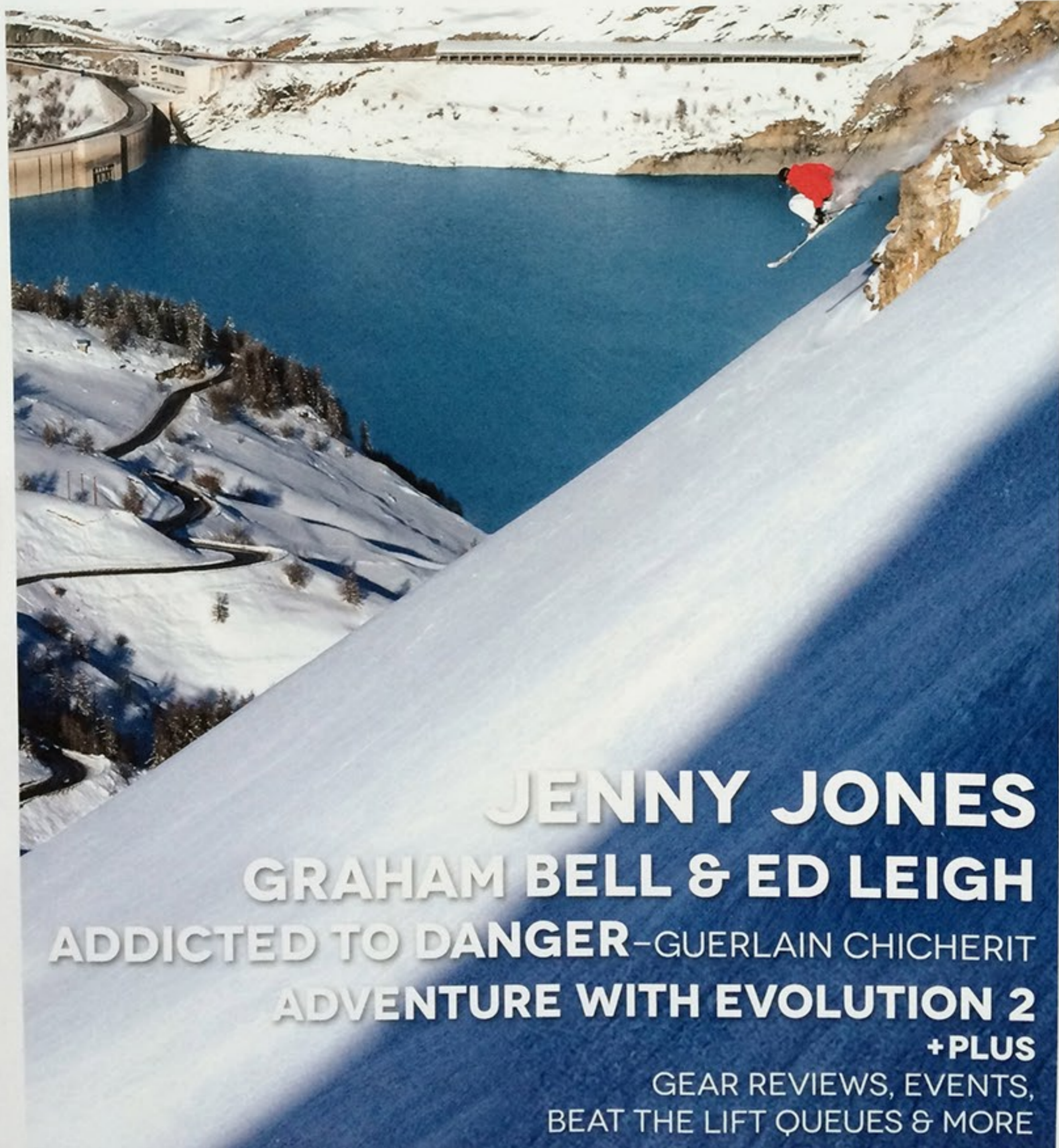


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HAUTE TARENTEISE



**JENNY JONES  
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**ADDICTED TO DANGER**—GUERLAIN CHICHERIT  
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perception that extreme sports are for men and they are better at them, and although that view is shifting, it still exists."

That's not to say women don't tackle extreme sports differently, or lose their femininity while they're doing it.

"People laugh at my motto 'if your knickers are right your day goes right,'" says Squash. "You can be clean and comfortable on a mountain. There's this macho attitude 'I'm not having a shower or changing my underwear' on an expedition and women don't like that, it puts them off."

So clean knickers can power you to the top of a mountain, and bit of lipstick doesn't go amiss either. After they were wheeled out as 'token women' in the Saab Salomon X-Adventure - a multi-discipline endurance event - Squash and three friends formed their own team, the Lipstick Blondes, and won an award for their 'Spirit of Adventure'.

But when you put yourself in extreme situations things can turn serious in an instant. On her Mont Blanc ascent, she and her climbing partner fell twice and only just managed to stop themselves hurtling off a

crevice. "That's when you need an honest understanding of yourself," Squash says. "I can pretend to be something, but then when the chips are down, if I find I don't have those qualities I could die. As I was falling, rather than being totally terrified I had an amazing calm come over me, I managed to stop. It showed me that fear doesn't have to paralyse you. I always say the day I'm not scared; that's the day I stop. It means you're gung ho."

For Squash, her quest to find her physical limits is the outward reflection of her inner search for happiness.

"I don't genuinely believe a lot of people invest any time in asking if they're happy, then acting on the answer," she says. "I consciously decided to figure out what happiness is and go after it. I want to keep being excited by life, never lose my 'joie de vivre'. People aim for big things but miss all those moments that add up to that. When I'm freezing on a mountain what gets me through is thinking about being sat in the sun in a friend's garden with a cup of tea."

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SQUASH AT: [SQUASHFALCONER.COM](http://SQUASHFALCONER.COM)



## FELICITY ASTON

If you've ever sat shivering alone on Tignes' Borsat chairlift in a biting January blizzard, you might have experienced a tiny percentage of the conditions Felicity Aston braved when she became the first woman to ski across Antarctica alone.

As a meteorologist, 35-year-old Felicity has led expeditions in aid of science as well as for her own pursuit of adventure. Her first job was with the British Antarctic Survey and it was during three years living in a small research station, almost completely cut off from the outside world, that her love for such a harsh environment grew.

"The reason Antarctica is special to me is

just 20 other people - "It was like Big Brother but you can't vote anyone off" - Felicity learned a lot about group dynamics that would prove essential on later missions.

"In endurance sports like polar expeditions, women perform really well as it involves stamina and psychology," she says. "Women in the polar environment are doing really great stuff but they're not as well-known as the guys. When you think of adventure personalities on TV, you immediately think Bear Grylls, Ben Fogle etc etc. But females on TV - Kate Humble is as adventurous as it gets."

The perception that a polar expedition

And when you're several weeks into a mission, low on supplies, freezing cold and running on reserve, you realise that "guys cry as much as girls, girls smell as bad after six weeks in a tent as guys".

Felicity now lives in Iceland - an ideal base for her missions. But what makes her keep pushing herself to these feats of endurance?

"Immediately after an expedition it's the most amazing feeling of complete contentment - it's a bit addictive" she explains. "So many people say they've always wanted to go on an expedition, and I wish I could sit them down



## SHE who DARES

WRITTEN BY **katie cooksey**

RIDING YOUR SKIS FASTER THAN YOUR CAR, JUMPING OFF A CLIFF IN A WINGED SUIT, TREKKING THE PLANET'S MOST DANGEROUS PLACES.

ONCE SEEN AS MACHO PURSUITS, MORE AND MORE WOMEN ARE TAKING THE LEAD IN EXTREME SPORTS AND CHANGING THE WAY THEY'RE VIEWED. SO WHY IS THE SCENE CHANGING? AND WHAT DRIVES THESE LADIES TO DITCH THE CREATURE COMFORTS AND THROW THEMSELVES HEADLONG INTO A LIFE OF RAW ADVENTURE?



## SQUASH FALCONER

Suggest jumping into a freezing lake, descending a mountain on a unicycle or anything that sounds silly to most people, and Squash is likely to say 'why not?'

After climbing the 6th highest mountain in the world - Cho Oyu in the Himalayas - she bum-boarded back down, earning the title of World's Highest Bum Boarder.

She summited the highest mountain in Europe, Mont Blanc, and in similar style became the first British woman to fly from

the top in a paraglider. Inevitably she conquered Mount Everest, though her plans to paraglide down were sadly thwarted by winds and the -50 degree temperature.

Ever heard of an Elliptigo? It's a cross between a bike and a cross-trainer. Squash is currently Elliptigo European Champion and holds the record for the longest distance travelled on one - a 3,074-mile epic round Europe.

"I have a can-do attitude," the 33-year-old explains. "I just always had this belief I

could do it. When I give talks to schools and groups I'm trying to encourage people to do whatever they want to do, whatever that is."

Squash's love of mountain adventure was sparked in Tignes, hiking up the Solaise to paraglide down as a seasonaire, and it's been her preferred training ground ever since. Recently her exploits grabbed the attention of TV producers and she's been recording her own adventure series, meeting extreme athletes in America.

"I love that I can show other women they can do it too," she says. "I think there's a