

# MONT BLANC 5,066M

The Green Twins set a new tandem paramotor altitude world record in April.  
World-record holder Ant Green describes how it went



## ▲ WHITE MOUNTAIN

Ant Green and Eliot Nochez look across at Tim Green and Pierre-Emilio Medina, above the summit of Mont Blanc

**A**t 4,810m Mont Blanc is the tallest mountain in Western Europe. It's also one of the busiest, with cablecars strung across its flanks, bringing in thousands of skiers, climbers and mountaineers each year.

With easy access and good weather forecasting available, it was the perfect spot for the Green Twins' latest adventure: an attempt on the altitude world record for tandem paramotoring.

The record was first set in 2000 by British pilot Kevin Bates and passenger Jane Brooks when they reached the mighty altitude of 1,334m ASL above Wales. Two years later

France's Frédéric Jacques and passenger unknown pushed the boat out and got to 3,036m above Savines-le-Lac in France.

Almost unbelievably that stood for a decade, until Ryan Shaw (USA) came along with passenger Deanna Lucky. Together they smashed the 4,000m mark and reached 4,605m, launching from Peoria, Arizona on 12 July 2012.

To break the record with style the brothers would have to take off, get to 5,000m, and it would be in the bag. The record is all about altitude, not height gained, so starting somewhere high seemed the obvious thing to do.



# THE IDEA

"We came up with the idea about a year before we did the record," says Ant. "Tim and I went up to Chamonix with our brand new Parajet/Vittorazi paramotors and a couple of pair of skis and started by filming around the Mer de Glace.

"We tried to get to the summit then but we couldn't do it on the tandem, not enough power. We went back down and got the second machine out and then flew solo to the top. Really cool but we were kind of disappointed we couldn't do it on tandem.

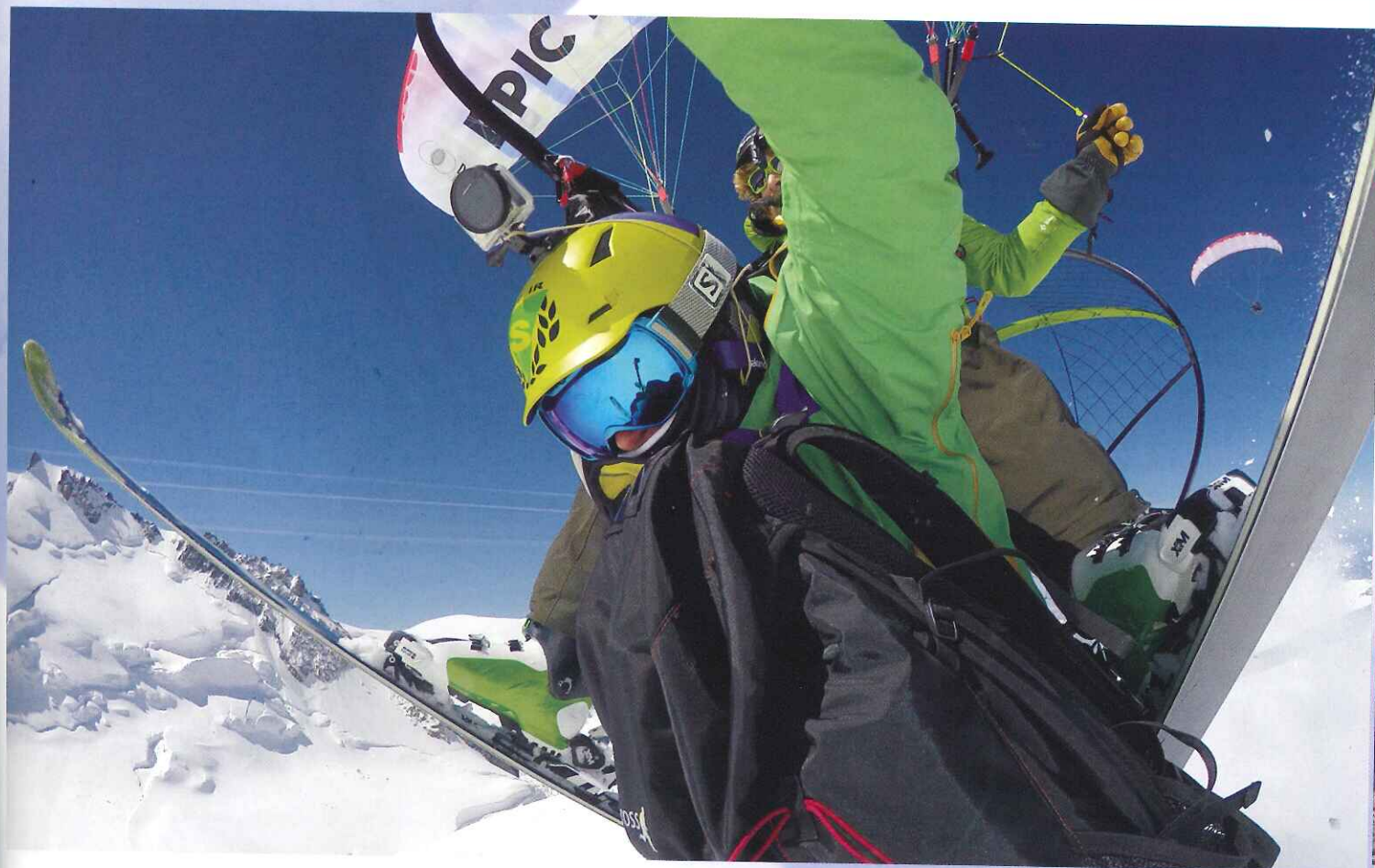
"So we thought we'd organise a project to get the engines running better, get higher performing propellers, and take off from 3,500m. So we'd already be half way. The struggle is to find the take-off area – for the sake of the official record it has to be perfectly level and less than one-degree descent for 100m around you. The Col du Midi above the Vallee Blanche is the only suitable place in the whole region."

## ► EPIC

The record was filmed for Epic TV

## ▼ DROP OFF

Eliot Nochez goes for a ski







## TUNING UP

"We were flying prototype props from E-Props, designed just before the record. They have cooling fins on them – right where it gets close to the engine there are aggressive fins that suck air into the engine, cooling it. The props are long and skinny, almost sailplane like in shape and are more efficient, you get more thrust.

"There are a lot of problems flying at 5,000m. There's a lot less oxygen, so the engines have to run a lot leaner. You need less fuel too, in order to have the same air/fuel mix.

"At the Vittorazi factory we jury rigged a system so we could adjust that mix while we're flying. We just had to turn a wheel on our flight decks and that turned the screw in the engine. We were monitoring exhaust gas temperature, head temperature and the RPM with the new Flytec Element. Those are the main things that are crucial to not destroying the engine.

"We only had to adjust the carburettor four times in the flight, at 500m, 1000m, 1500m, 2,000m. We can adjust within five degrees, it's really accurate. The difference between 50RPM and not having 50RPM is huge at 5,000m because we were only climbing at 0.1m/s at the end of the flight."

▲ **BASE CAMP**  
On the Cold du Midi

► **TUNE UP**  
The team used biofuel to power the engines







## THE PEOPLE

"My brother and I flew the gliders. For the record, my passenger was Eliot Nochez, a really good pilot, speedrider and skier. Part of the project was to take him up and drop him off on the summit of Mont Blanc du Tacul so he could speedride back down. We did that three times before we made the record attempt.

"I also took pro skier Leo Slemitt for a drop-off stunt but that didn't work out so well. He's an exceptional freeride skier, but not so confident in the air. On the last run we flew up together and at about 50cm above the slope Leo jumped off the passenger seat but he still had one leg buckle done up. The result was we crashed on the summit of the Tacul. He was really shocked! So was I. We were both OK though – with just a bent frame and shattered propeller. He skied down and I set up and took off again. Thanks to cameraman Pierre-Emilio Medina – Tim's cameraman/passenger – we got some great footage of everything and it was good to trial the engines.

"Ulric Jessop acted as our official FAI observer. He works for the Paragliding World Cup and had just come back from a comp in Brazil. He flew into Nice, went home to get his gear then drove non-stop up to Chamonix for us. He was on top of everything, really organised. Without an official observer you don't get an official record."

## THE WEATHER

"We wanted light northerlies with unstable thermic conditions. We had that for about five days so it was perfect. It was still very stable above cloudbase though. High pressure means sinking air so it makes it harder.

"In the end we took off about 5pm and managed to climb up before using a mix of thermals, dynamic wind and power to get us to the summit. Once we were there we floated around a bit filming until we dropped to idle and headed back. I got to 5,066m and Tim made 5,030m. We landed at 6.30pm."

### ▲ WINNING TEAM

L to R: Tim and Ant Green, FAI observer Ulric Jessop, Pierre-Emilio Medina and Eliot Nochez



# THE GEAR

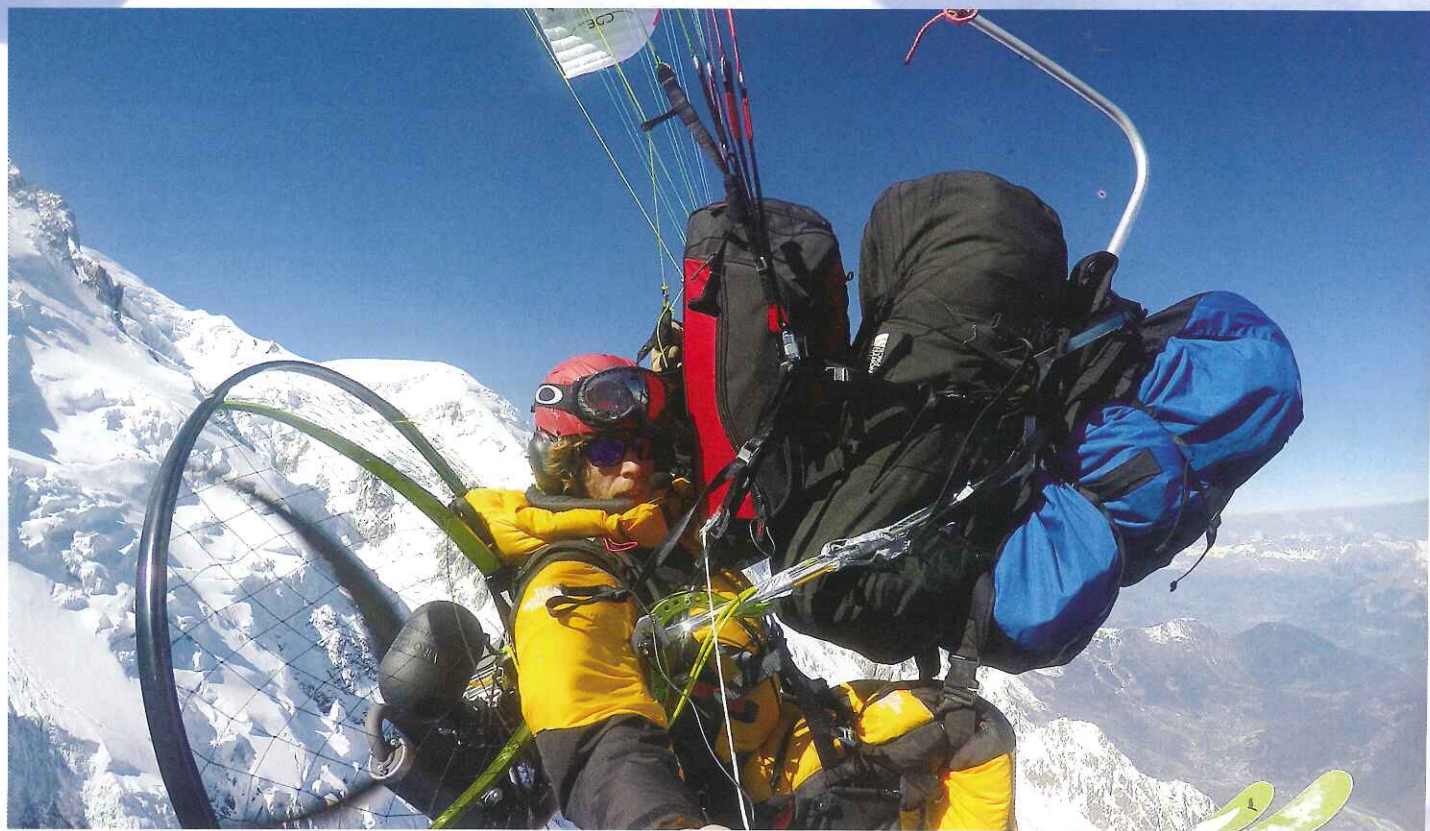
"The pile of equipment that we had was enormous! We must have had 1,000kg of stuff. We had 80 litres of biofuel, camera equipment, the two tandem Parajet Paramotors with Vittorazi 185cc Moster engines, Sup'Air harnesses, BGD wings, a North Face Dome tent and Himalayan down suits, skis, boots, helmets, radios, and lots of mountain gear. Some of it went up in the telecabine but Tim and I also did a shuttle run up from the valley floor.

"We both footlaunched with this huge bag of gear. It was chaos. We almost ended the whole trip just with the take-off because as soon as Tim took off he got a huge deflation in midday super-strong conditions. He stalled his wing and recovered it, then flew back and landed.

"We had to readjust and he took off again, but it was kind of sketchy. It was because we were flying with tandem bridles, and when they don't have a proper passenger in front they're flipped up really high, so the brakes are much higher than usual. That was just getting some equipment up to the base camp! "In the end it didn't take very long – less than an hour to get up there."

## ▼▶ ALL THE GEAR

Tim and Ant flew a mountain of gear up from the valley floor. Enough for four days on the mountain







## THE ALTITUDE

"We knew we wanted to be up there a couple of days so we would get acclimatised. We were going up and down with our ski passengers, but it's not such a huge altitude that we risked hypoxia or blacking out. I mean I didn't even feel the altitude."

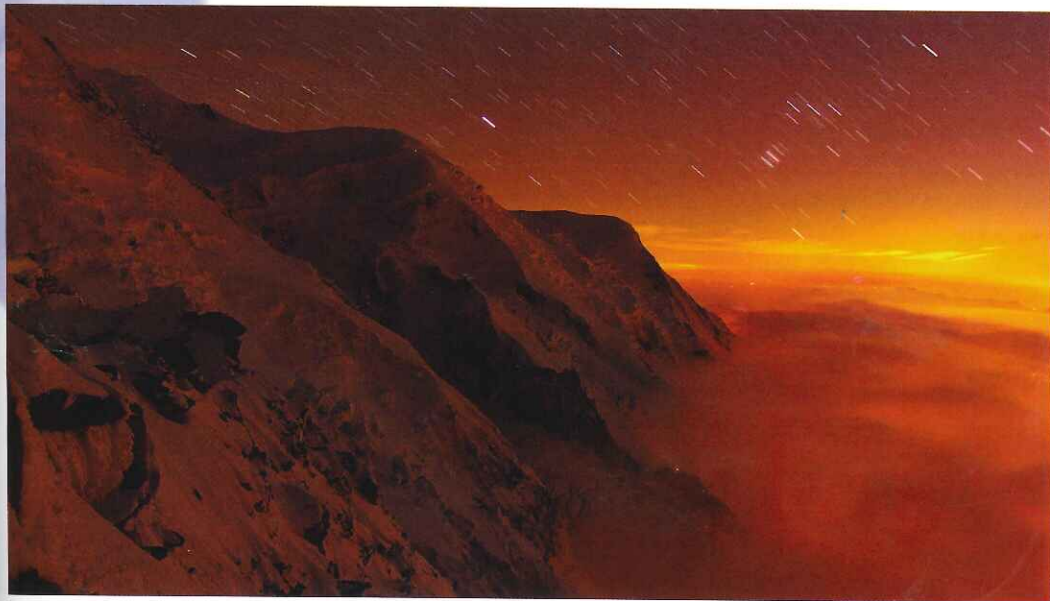
"The first day sleeping in the refuge we didn't sleep very well, no one did, which is normal. But that was the only thing. Everything was heavier and I got tired more easily, but that was it."

"Everyone up there was interested in what we were doing. Nobody said we couldn't do it. The

Col du Midi is actually a designated altiport for aeroplanes on skis. You are allowed to take off from up there. We were being really cautious and respectful to other people as far as noise pollution and we were very clean and tidy, we didn't bother anyone. We used biofuel, so it was a green expedition in more ways than one."

### ▲ MOUNTAIN LIFE

Launching on skis made it easier  
Ulric Jessop in full kit  
The path down from the Midi station  
Night on the mountain







## Record breakers

**Date:** 22 April 2015

**Pilot:** Ant Green

**Passenger:** Eliot Nochez

**Record:** Tandem Paramotor

**Altitude**

**Altitude:** 5,066m

**Gear:** BGD Dual Lite

**Engines:** Parajet Zenith frame;  
Vittorazi Moster 185 FACTORY/

PLUS engine; E-Props Hélices  
props; Flytec Element; Sup'Air  
harnesses; BGD Dual Lite; North  
Face suits.

**Official observer:** Ulric Jessop

**Location:** Col du Midi, Mont  
Blanc, France

*Tim Green and Pierre-Emilio  
Medina got to 5,030m*

## FROM THE TOP

"The view was epic. It looked like the Earth was bending down below you. We couldn't see the curvature of the earth, but since everything is below you and it's flat all around, it feels like you're in a GoPro Fisheye lens. It was cold though, about -10C to -15C. Our passengers were like icicles when we landed. Pierre had been operating the main camera while Eliot had a GoPro on a stick to play with.

"Once we landed back on the take-off we still had to get down and off the mountain. Tim took off with tonnes and tonnes of equipment. It took all my strength to lift it up off his skis. Then he just gassed it and the wing floated it, and as soon as he obviously wasn't just going to go piling down the north face of this col, I let go and skied away. He floated off the hill and he was fine.

"The landing was a bit funny, on the grass with skis and everything. It took a little while to extract him out of the pile of gear!" ❧

