

# CATHERINE DESTIVELLE

LONDON  
SPEAKER  
BUREAU

- One of the greatest French free climbers



## Topics

- Leadership
- Motivation

Catherine Destivelle is Europe's most adventurous and exciting female rock climber and mountaineer. Her daring accomplishments as a solo climber in scaling the most difficult and dangerous peaks without the use of safety ropes, support or back-up, are legendary. From 1985-88 she was considered the world's best woman climber. In 1990 she made a series of incredible climbs, including solo winter ascents of the three most legendary Alpine walls – the Eiger, the Grandes Jorasses and the Matterhorn – making her the most outstanding female climber of all time.

In 1985, Destivelle began her professional climbing career, starring in rock climbing films and winning multiple international climbing competitions. These included Sportroccia in 1985, (later known as the Rock Master annual competition), the Arco in 1986, and Bardonecchia climbing championships in 1986, 1987 and 1988.

In 1988, Destivelle climbed the still-new 13c route called Chouca at Buoux, France, a radically steep line of one-finger and two-finger pockets that had become the symbol of the sport-climbing revolution. It was then the hardest route in the world ever climbed by a woman.

After competing in the second Snowbird Cup in 1989, she retired from competitions to focus on mountaineering. In 1990 she free-climbed the Nameless Tower in Pakistan and solo climbed the Bonatti Pillar on Les Drus. In 1991, she opened up a new route up the famous west face of the Drus, during a remarkable 11 day solo-climb. In 1992, it took her 17 hours to solo the north face of the Eiger in the Bernese Oberland, a mythical rock-face, regarded as the most fatal in the Alps. During the same year, she attempted the huge Latok in Pakistan.

In 1993, she achieved the winter solo of the North Face of the Grandes Jorasses, and attempted the West Pillar of the Makalu in Nepal. She soloed in winter the Bonatti route on the North Face of the Matterhorn in 1994, and in 1995 she climbed the South West Face of Shishapangma in Tibet, and attempted the South Face of Annapurna. Destivelle climbed the Direct North Face of Cima Grande di Lavaredo in the Italian Dolomites in 1999, and was again the first woman for this solo ascent which took her 2 days.

She began to cut back on solo climbs in the late 1990s and developed an active career as a lecturer and writer. Destivelle is an extremely accomplished speaker, and gives inspirational presentations where she challenges and inspires her audience to re-focus their goals to achieve success by sharing her visions and startling achievements. She powerfully illustrates with slides, video footage and films the necessary vision, belief and self-determination needed to reach her full potential.

Destivelle has been the subject of several documentaries, including French director Rémy Tezier's, 'Beyond the Summits', which won the award for best feature-length

mountain film at the 2009 Banff Mountain Film Festival.

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