



WILD

ROSES

Edition 3



TECHNICAL
APPAREL FOR
THE OUTDOOR
W O M A N



Sue Ershler began climbing in 1992 with her husband Phil and in May of 2002, Sue and Phil became the first couple to climb the highest peaks on all seven continents. With numerous other summits and plenty of backcountry experience under her belt, Sue is an ideal source of feedback for our Wild Roses line. We are proud to support her and foster her endeavors and accomplishments.

When I looked up at massive Mt. McKinley, 20,320 ft. high, I said, "I am in way over my head this time." Phil, my husband, who had climbed Mt. Everest in 1984 said, "We are not going to climb the mountain in one day. We will walk a bit one day, then sleep, then walk some more. Just like eating an elephant—one bite at a time."

Phil's attitude has guided me throughout my climbing adventures. I'd never climbed a mountain before 1992, but in 2002, we made it to the top of Everest completing our goal of climbing the highest peak on each of the world's seven continents together.

Born in Oregon, raised with three older brothers and no sisters, I learned to run and be tough to survive. My parents always supported and encouraged us to do our best in every endeavor.

I'd spent 20 years entrenched in my sales career, exercising in the evenings and on weekends. Great mentors helped me progress to a Vice President position in sales for a worldwide telecommunications corporation.

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During the holidays in 1991, I met Phil Ershler, who had been guiding climbers up mountains internationally for the past 25 years. His conversation was peppered with terms such as crampons, ascenders and carabiners. I had no idea what these devices were, but was anxious to learn, so when he invited me to climb Mt. Rainier with him in the summer of 1992, I accepted. As I struggled through snow and ice and over crevasses, I sometimes had trouble breathing. But nothing matched my sense of accomplishment when I stood on the 14,410 ft. summit. Nowhere in life have I duplicated that feeling.

For the next several years, I attempted to climb mountains whenever possible while on vacation. And we climbed each mountain just as Phil had said we would—"One bite at a time." By the end of 1999, we had climbed six of the seven summits together.

Our millennium goal was to climb Everest, but after Phil was hospitalized in August 2000 with some serious health issues, we postponed the climb. While he rapidly recovered, we focused on ascending Everest in 2001.

My career limited my exercise time, since I flew almost weekly to different cities. My assistant helped by including my workouts in my meeting schedule,

and booking me into hotels near a full gym or place where I could jog. After months of hard work and preparation, I took a three-month leave from my corporate job and in March of 2001, we joined a small expedition and headed for Everest.

The wind was blowing, a light snow was falling and we could see lightning in the distance as we headed for the summit on May 25, 2001. At 2:30 a.m. we had reached the balcony at 27,600 ft. just 1,500 ft. from the top. Phil had lost significant vision, a temporary condition caused by wind and bitter cold temperatures, he said, "We need to go down, can you live with that?" I was happy that we were alive, safe, and together but disappointed that we were not successful. We descended. The climb was over.

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During my sales career, I had learned that whether it is rejection or failure, never quit, try to figure out what you can learn from it and move on. Failure is just a requirement to attain loftier goals. I wrote down my climbing goals, and looked at them every day until they became doable. I became single-mindedly focused on climbing to 29,035 ft., the top of Everest.

Since 1992, I'd accomplished 31 successful climbs of peaks over 14,000 ft. including 17 successful ascents of Mt. Rainier and hundreds of day hikes with over 3,000 foot vertical gains. And all the while, I'd been with Phil, who kept us safe through all the years of climbing. He not only helped me physically, by carrying my extra gear when it was too heavy, but emotionally, by never letting me give up on myself. We had proven to be such a good team that we were married in 1996.



Determined to complete the seven summits together, we planned a rematch of Everest for 2002. This time, I took a greater risk and left my job in January 2002 to focus only on the climb. After nearly two months of acclimatizing, climbing from one camp to another, at times experiencing freezing winds, on May 16, 2002, we successfully reached the summit of Mt. Everest. Stepping onto the top of the world was one of the happiest days of my life.



While on the mountain, we celebrated my 46th birthday. I hope to live the rest of my birthdays with this philosophy, "follow your heart and live your important dreams." And I'll do it one bite at a time.

Thanks Wild Roses and OR for helping to support my adventures.

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