



BOGNER

WILLY BOGNER
1960, SQUAW VALLEY

CONGRATULATIONS

TO THE U.S. SKI AND SNOWBOARD
HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2017

HERMANN GOLLNER

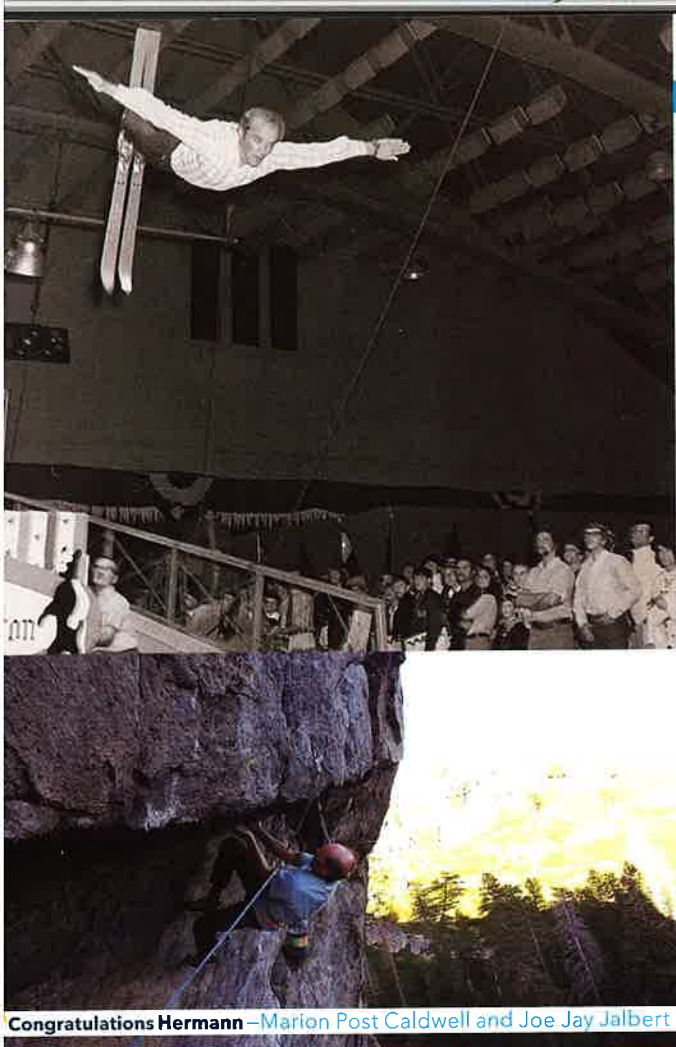
After his promising competitive career was cut short, Hermann Gollner pioneered freestyle aerials, became an iconic coach, and invented a ground-breaking race gate.

Among skiing's cognoscenti, Hermann Gollner is a revered, almost mythical figure. But despite pioneering freestyle aerials, designing the screw-in race gate still in use today, and coaching some 20 racers to the ranks of U.S. Ski Team, the Austrian native's remarkable multi-tasking has stayed mostly under the radar with the general skiing public.

Combining a gymnastics background with painstaking preparation, Gollner performed the world's first double backward somersault and then the first triple forward flip in the mid-1960s. Gollner next unleashed the remarkable Moebius Flip, a single flip with a full twist that happened so quickly it was confusing to the naked eye. Along with partner Tom Leroy, Gollner pushed the needle on aerial acrobatics while appearing in groundbreaking films such as *The Moebius Flip* and *Ski the Outer Limits*. Performing on 210-centimeter GS skis and forced to repeatedly absorb the shock of mostly flat landing zones, the two set the table for the creation of the freestyle aerials discipline that has been an Olympics staple since 1992.

While teaching and coaching at Killington in the late 1960s, Gollner was a consistent top finisher on the professional ski racing circuit. Seamlessly shifting gears, in 1971 he won the first international freestyle competition at Waterville Valley, N.H., and the keys to a shiny





Congratulations Hermann—Marion Post Caldwell and Joe Jay Jalbert

new Corvette Stingray. But rather than chase his own aspirations, Gollner accepted the position as head coach of the newly founded Stratton Mountain School in Vermont, embarking on a long and legendary career as a race coach. He became famous, and grudgingly beloved, by his students for a quiet intensity and hard-core approach to dryland training, which might involve hauling a backpack full of rocks on a long-distance run. But his main goal was always to bring out the best in others, and the racers he touched remain fiercely loyal to him today.

He coached at Stratton from 1971 to 1985, mentoring some 20 skiers to reach the U.S. Ski Team roster. While he spent a two-year stint leading the women's U.S. Ski Team from 1978 through the 1980 Olympics, his most significant contribution—and passion—was in working with athletes in their critical formative years.

The hinged plastic slalom gate changed ski racing when it was introduced in the early 1980s, allowing competitors to ski through rather than around the old bamboo poles. But the gates easily came out of the snow, forcing coaches and gatekeepers into a non-stop drill to replace them. As a skilled climber familiar with the ice screw used in glacier climbing, Gollner invented a threaded pole base that would screw firmly into place in the snow—and also flex over a wider radius. It was adopted by the FIS in 1987 and has been a fixture ever since, though the invention was a “financial disaster” for Gollner, due to the exorbitant costs of the fabrication and patenting process.

Born on Sept. 5, 1943, the son of a policeman and stay-at-home mother, Gollner was raised in the Austrian resort town of Zell Am See. His loves were soccer, gymnastics, mountain climbing and skiing, and he was extremely proficient in all. Gollner won the Austrian Junior Championships GS at age 16, but then broke both of his legs in a horrific downhill training crash the next season. After bouncing back to win the European Junior Championships combined in 1961, he crashed his new car, an Audi that he'd bought on credit,

while driving back from a climbing trip in the Dolomites. He quickly realized that he'd have to work for 10 years straight just to pay off the debt, and that led him to immigrate to the U.S. in the fall of 1964. No less an authority than Jean-Claude Killy would later wonder what Gollner might have accomplished if his Austrian team career hadn't been cut short.

After leaving Stratton in the mid-1980s, Gollner served as a head coach at premier programs in Squaw Valley, Aspen and Sugar Bowl, and also worked as a private coach for eight years. Now retired and living near Lake Tahoe, he remains a model of fitness at age 74. He's currently rehabbing from two knee replacements and recovering his world-class climbing form. After conquering the legendary 5.13a Pump-o-Rama wall in Rifle Mountain Park three years ago, a feat that's been accomplished by perhaps two or three people in the world at his age, his next goal is to climb even higher.

Career Accomplishments



- 1959:** Winner, Austrian Junior Alpine Championships GS
- 1961:** Winner, European Junior Alpine Championships combined
- 1964:** Immigrated to the U.S. and settled in Killington, Vt.
- 1965:** Performed first double backward somersault

1967: Performed first forward triple somersault

1968: Created the Moebius Flip

1971: Winner of first premier international freestyle competition at Waterville Valley, N.H.

1971-1985: Serves as head coach at Stratton Mountain School, with two-year break to lead women's U.S. Ski Team

1987: FIS adopts Gollner's screw-in slalom pole

1986-2013: Held head coaching positions at Aspen, Squaw Valley and Sugar Bowl; also served as a private coach

Born: Sept. 5, 1943 (Hallein, Austria)



New England Ski Museum



SHORT TURNS Making Races Run More Smoothly

30 years ago, new U.S. Hall of Famer Herman Gollner found the way to keep gate poles from dislodging and delaying a race. BY JOHN FRY



Further problem: The gatekeeper had to run around and replace or bring a back-up and jam it back into its hole in the hard snow—sometimes the hole originally drilled by the course setter. Even with replacement poles, the work interrupted and postponed competitors and starting. An especially aggressive race could have a full course ready half after noon. If there wasn't time to make the pole sprigs, it became a dangerous hazard. In 1964, at Mt. St. Helens in France, Austrian racer Jean-Claude Killy was delayed by a slalom pole jammed in the high gate by his own men and women, almost killing him. The injury risk was so great that he was the inventor of a hinged plastic pole. To the challenge remained: How to make a pole that would remain sprigged throughout a race and not come out of the snow.

The hinged pole made its first appearance in international competition in the 1971 World Cup race at Waterville Valley, New Hampshire, using the Swedish-style pole from Skidule Racing Supply. With the new sprigged pole, racers no longer brained the pole with their shoulders and hips. Now they aimed the upper body directly at the coming pole, making it

All honor to Hermann Gollner



One of the greatest innovators in skiing history, including aeri-als, alpine coaching, and slalom pole design

—John Fry
Author, *The Story of Modern Skiing*



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What our members are saying...

I truly thank Pugski for all the amazing advice; you have been a voice I can trust and take your advice. And a BIG thank you to the whole community for offering great tips and advice." - **DaveM**

Keep doing what you do; it's not just your advice and expertise. It's that I can tell you are quality and that's what's important and sticks out. Do not underestimate the amount of personal sweat, risk, and sacrifice Phil and Tricia have personally put into establishing this site." - **ScotsSkier**

Info I really want to know is at Pugski ski reviews." - **Guy in Shorts**

My family got back into skiing after a 15-year break from the sport, not only did we find that the sport had evolved, but that just about everything else had changed as well, including the way people ski and learn about the sport. Pugski has now become a key part of our 'ski equipment' allowing us to share, and enjoy skiing 365 days a year." - **LKLA**

Mountains, and friends, one word: Pugski." - **Oldschoolskier**

It is a neat combo of Epic and TGR with a splash of Blister in your having a testing crew — thanks and love." - **sullywhacker**

I searched across Pugski looking for information as a new skier, of which I found more than 10 times what I needed, and now I check in multiple times a day for the community atmosphere." - **Started at 53**

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"Pugski.com has done an excellent job of providing a home for industry insiders to interact with consumers, minus the usual name calling and mudslinging. As someone who has moderated technical forums in the past, I realize the true nature of the commitment this effort entails. Thanks for providing a productive environment to further discussions on sport." - **Brian Frias, MasterFit Enterprises**

"The critical and passionate Pugski crowd keeps us honest and on our toes! It's always a pleasure to read the love, hate, and everything in between about our brand!" - **Josh Malczyk, global brand director, Line/Full Tilt**

"For us Pugski.com is a great way to connect with our customers in an open, honest, and encouraging environment. We are 'Gear for Skiers by Skiers' and Pugski.com does a fantastic job bringing skiers together from lots of different backgrounds, geographic locations, etc." - **Jeff Neagle, Ski Essentials**

"The Pugski posse is a rare community of skiers that brands like ours can actually rely on for factual testimonies." - **Matt Sterbenz, founder and brand director, 4FRNT Skis**

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"As far as I'm concerned, Pugski.com fully inherits the legacy of EpicSki.... This place looks fantastic!" - **AC, founder, Epicski.com**

"There is something unique in today's world about Pugski.com: everyone from beginners to experts, along with retailers and manufacturers, can contribute toward and participate in the dialogue." - **Marshal Olson, DPS**

Pugski.com is the brainchild of Phil and Tricia Pugliese, two of the industry's most respected and read reviewers and product testers. Since its launch in 2015, Pugski.com has become one of the internet's most authoritative websites on skiing.