



the dream catchers

Frozen Dreams was born when two Dutch businessmen turned explorers planned an expedition to the South Pole. Now they are filming their experiences and inviting others to share their dreams with them.
Pippa Considine reports

Frozen Dreams is the story of two Dutch businessmen turned explorers – Paul Kamphuis and Jan Fokke Oosterhof – realising and sharing their dream. After a training trip to the icy wasteland of the Greenland Icecap earlier this year, they plan to mount an expedition to the South Pole to fulfil a long-held dream. But not content with living that dream, they have set up a website, (www.frozendreams.nl), where anyone can share their own dreams and they have pledged to take many of those ambitions with them to read out at the South Pole, with their adventures and messages caught on camera.

“We want to get dreams from all over the world and take those dreams to the South Pole, so that other people can listen and exchange dreams,” says Kamphuis. The project aims to involve children everywhere in the concept and is raising money for a children’s cancer charity.

Frozen Dreams began in the summer of 2006 and has since become a high-profile event, attracting much attention in the Dutch press. The first challenge in a series of training expeditions was to climb Mont Blanc. The pair realised that filming their endeavours was critical to the idea reaching a wider audience. “We wanted to share our dreams,” says Kamphuis, “so we started filming with a small Sony Handycam.”

Before setting out for Greenland they



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RECORDING WITH THE HVR-V1E IN SUB ZERO TEMPERATURES

approached Sony, through Netherlands broadcast equipment supplier Vocas, and asked for help. “We needed HD cameras for two reasons: one, for sending images of HD quality to broadcast companies; and then later, because we want to make a film about our experience,” he says.

The Polar expedition was a fitting challenge for the HVR-V1E professional HDV camcorder. Vocas provided the explorers with the camcorder, batteries, grips, a power adaptor and a charger to work with two solar panels. They added a Polar Bear shield to protect the camera against the cold and moisture, something that would prove to be particularly useful. The supplier also made sure that they received thorough technical training.

ICE STORM

Kamphuis and Oosterhof set off in mid-April this year, with a plan to spend just under a month on the icecap and with a target of covering 700 kilometres on skis, pulling their sledges behind them. But within days of landing on the edge of the Greenland Icecap by helicopter, they were in the middle of a Pitoracq, a Polar storm. For four days, high winds kept them in one place, tent-bound and having to dig themselves out of the snow every one and a half hours. That was followed by three days of white out, which meant that they had no visibility whatsoever and were still stuck.

Through all this, they filmed every day, venturing outside the tent when possible, but also shooting inside the tent, while they waited. “In those conditions, with temperatures of minus 40 degrees Celsius, you would think that cold might be the

problem for the camera,” says Kamphuis. “But we didn’t experience any problem.” They were most worried about the moisture, especially in the tent, where making stews created a lot of steam in the icy temperatures. However, the Polar Bear shield around the camera did a great job, preventing moisture from becoming an issue.

Although the storm meant that they couldn’t cover the distance that they had planned, the pair were determined to return to the original helicopter landing point. They kept going, filming as they went and sending images to broadcasters in Holland and in Iceland. They edited and sent images via a laptop, and then used a Broadband Global Area Network BGAN via Inmarsat to connect with Dutch national broadcaster, SBS 6, and the regional Dutch channel, TV West.

Several of these feeds were picked up and shown by the Dutch broadcasters, including shots of Oosterhof skiing with the sunset through his open legs. Some of the expedition footage made the news on Iceland’s TV 1.

FINAL PUSH TO THE SOUTH POLE

Much of the footage was of one or the other of them talking to camera, even when their morale hit rock bottom. But they managed to fit the camcorder to a sledge so that they could get pictures of both of them together. There was also an opportunity for filming an Inuit expedition with dogs and sledges that they encountered en route. And an action sequence as they left, with shots of the helicopter landing, creating a blizzard of snow.

Using the camcorder in such extreme weather

conditions was an ordeal. “You have to think about filming in the context of the Polar Icecap. You are always thinking, ‘Do I film? Do I take off my gloves and freeze my fingertips in exchange for the footage?’ It’s really challenging,” says Kamphuis. Just keeping the camera steady up-wind was difficult and the filming process had to be kept as simple as possible. They fixed the sound switches on the camcorder with wooden sticks and duct tape, using just one setting.

The Sony video tapes ran as normal, despite the harsh conditions and they clocked up ten hours of footage. They are now beginning to edit the material for their film, The quest for the Polar Icecap, using the HVR-V1E’s 25P progressive scan mode, which will give it a more film-like look.

As they plan for the final push to the South Pole later this year, both men now have, as they put it, “one hundred per cent confidence” in the Sony HVR -V1E. Not only was it up to the challenge, easy to use and kept working day in day out, the quality of the footage came up to the necessary high standard. “In Holland, the broadcasters are less interested in whether footage is live or not, quality is more important,” explains Kamphuis. “If we hadn’t had the Sony HD to deliver, they would have said that the footage wasn’t good enough and would not have used it.”

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