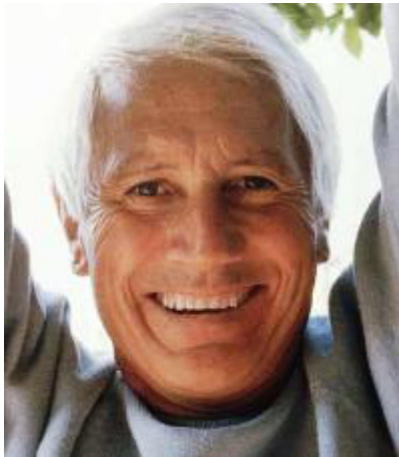


## Mountaineer and scientist: the Italian Alpine Club and Insubria remember Bonatti

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**A day dedicated to Walter Bonatti**, the legendary mountaineer and point of reference for the science and history of the mountains. The initiative organised by Varese's Insubria University and by the Varese section of the Italian Alpine Club is planned for **Wednesday 29 February**. There will be two meetings, the first, from 3.30 p.m. to 7 p.m., in the Great Hall in Via Ravasi (broadcast, via videoconferencing, to the Como site of Insubria University, in Via S. Abbondio No. 12, Como), and the second, also in the Great Hall, from 8.45 p.m. to 10.30 p.m.

The aim of the day is to remember the great mountaineer, who died on 13 September 2011, to whom the university awarded an honorary specialist degree in Environmental Sciences, in March 2005. During the afternoon conference, Walter Bonatti will be presented by academics from a variety of disciplines, not only in his better known role as the great mountaineer, but also in his role as an explorer and man of culture, writer and communicator of the values of the mountain. In order to highlight the relationship between Bonatti and scientific research in the mountain areas, a number of topics will be discussed, particularly in the fields of medicine and the environment, with historical contributions, and the reflections and memories of those who shared experiences and interests with Bonatti. During the evening meeting, a debate / round table discussion involving a number of representatives of contemporary mountaineering will present personal experiences in the "world" of the great mountaineer/explorer.

**Walter Bonatti** was born in Bergamo, in 1930, and took his first steps in mountaineering at a very early age. During his life, he climbed the most important peaks in the Alps, the Andes and the Himalayas, and took part, at the age of only 23, in the first Italian expedition to K2. In 1965, after climbing the Matterhorn solo, for which he received the Gold Medal for Athletic Valour from the Italian President, at the age of only 35, Bonatti withdrew from extreme mountaineering and began to devote himself to exploring the most inaccessible regions of the planet, as a photojournalist for the weekly magazine "Epoca". His journeys, which were often adventurous, took him to Kilimanjaro, to the Orinoco River, to the source of the Amazon River, to Cape Horn, to Patagonia, to New Guinea, to the Antarctic and to many other fascinating

places. In his reports and his extremely popular books, Walter Bonatti recounted his unique experiences for the benefit of his readers. In 2005, Insubria University awarded him an honorary specialist degree in Environmental Sciences. After a brief illness, he died during the night between 13 and 14 September 2011, at the age of 81.

### **The programme:**

The conference will be opened by Prof. Carlo Dossi, a lecturer in Analytical Chemistry in the Science Faculty (Como site) of Insubria University, the chairman of the degree course in "Sciences of the Environment and Nature", and a mountaineer and researcher of the mountain environment.

There will then be welcome addresses by the Chancellor of Insubria University, Prof. Renzo Dionigi, by the chairman of the Varese branch of the Italian Alpine Club, Luigi Zanetti, by the Chairman of the Alpine group "Ragni di Lecco", Daniele Bernasconi, and by Walter Bonatti's partner, Rossana Podestà.

Beginning at 4.40 p.m., six people will present the many sides of Walter Bonatti, with the following talks:

### **Hermann Brugger**

*"The limits of the human body: the history of survival in the cold."*

Hermann Brugger is an associate lecturer at the Medizinische Universität in Innsbruck, and director of the Institute for Emergency Medicine in the Mountain, in EURAC (the European Academy, in Bolzano). He is the author of numerous scientific works and the co-editor of the magazine High Altitude Medicine and Biology. He is an emergency physician, specialised in mountain rescue. His main areas of interest are the consequences of accidents caused by landslides, hypothermia and frostbite, in which he is a top international expert. He teaches at Padua University, and in the international 2nd level Masters in "Mountain Medicine", which was started up by Insubria University in the academic year 2011-2012.

### **Carlo Caccia**

*"Walter Bonatti, mountaineer"*

Carlo Caccia is a journalist and mountaineer, who works for the magazines *Alp*, *Rivista della Montagna* and *Orobic*, for which he writes regular columns. He also collaborates with the *American Alpine Journal*, the prestigious annual publication of the American Alpine Club. He has published *Dilettante Per Professione (Amateur by Profession)* (2003) and, with Roberto Mantovani, *Omaggio alla Montagna (A Tribute to the Mountain)* (2008). He has collaborated with the "Cervino Cinemountain International Festival" and he collaborates with the Trento Film Festival, the most important mountain film festival.

### **Silvia Metzeltin**

*"Walter Bonatti, explorer"*

Silvia Metzeltin is a geologist, writer, journalist and mountaineer with considerable international experience. She has written several books, including *Geologia per Alpinisti* (1986), *Patagonia, Terra Magica per Viaggiatori e Alpinisti* (with Gino Buscaini, 1998), *Polvere nelle Scarpe, Storia di Patagonia* (2002) and *El Macizo del San Lorenzo* (2005). She is

currently a contract lecturer in History and Mountain Resources, for a degree course in Analysis and Management of Natural Resources, at Insubria University.

### **Ezio Vaccari**

*“Walter Bonatti in the history of the mountains”*

Ezio Vaccari is a lecturer in the History of Science and Techniques, in the Science Faculty (Varese site) of Insubria University, where he is also lectures on History and Mountain Resources for the degree course in Analysis and Management of Natural Resources. He deals with the history of earth sciences, with particular attention to the mountain environment, and is the author of over 90 publications, including a number of studies on the “classification” of mountains in the eighteenth century, and the history of geological and naturalistic research in the Alpine area.

### **Roberta Bettinetti**

*“The sciences of the environment and of nature, and Walter Bonatti”*

Roberta Bettinetti is a researcher in Ecology in the Science Faculty (Como site) of Insubria University. The areas that she is concerned with include biolimnology, ecotoxicology, ecology of internal waters (also in the Alpine and pre-Alpine areas) and remote environments. She is the registrar for the degree course in Sciences of the Environment and Nature.

### **Andrea Pozzi**

*“Final notes and end of the conference”*

Andrea Pozzi is an associate lecturer in Analytical Chemistry, in the Science Faculty (Como site) of Insubria University, where he coordinates the off-site teaching activities for courses in the environmental sector, in particular, the course “Safety in the Mountains”. He also collaborates with the Italian Alpine Club’s School of Mountaineering, Valmadrera branch.

During the Walter Bonatti evening organised by the Varese branch of the Italian Alpine Club, there will be a round table discussion, chaired and coordinated by Silvia Metzeltin, in which the following will take part:

**Mario Bramanti**, a member of the Italian Academic Alpine Club, and cofounder, in 1958, of the “Remo and Renzo Minazzi” School of Mountaineering and Ski Touring, in Varese.

**Fausto De Stefani**, who has climbed all of the world’s 14 peaks that exceed 8000m; he is a naturalist, photographer and explorer.

**Marco Albino Ferrari**, a journalist, mountaineer, and author of the book “Frêne 1961. Un viaggio senza fine” (*Frêne 1961. An endless journey*, 1996).

**Ragni di Lecco**, the historic group of mountain climbers, of which Walter Bonatti was a member.

**Matteo Della Bordella**, a member of the Italian Academic Alpine Club, Ragni di Lecco, and a leading representative of the modern form of mountaineering called Trad Climbing.

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