

**Jean Claude Killy**

# Skiing for fun again

*"Being a sex symbol opens a few doors..."*

feature by Harald Kuckertz

Twenty-four hours before the first snow reminded Edmontonians that the winter is here to stay, former French ski superstar Jean Claude Killy "snowed" into town to serve notice that the skiing season is near.

Killy, 32, has been one of the most successful skiers of all time. A member of the French National team from 1959 until 1968, he won consecutive world cups in 1967 and 1968, the professional world championship in 1972-1973, and three gold medals at the 1968 Winter Olympics at Grenoble.

Looking back at his past triumphs, Jean Claude Killy regards the 10 days in Grenoble as his greatest success.

"I think it was more difficult to win the Olympic Games than the World Cup. In the World Cup you can be sick one day and still stay in the lead. Winning three gold medals in 10 days, that's quite difficult to do."

Despite his success, Killy has certain reservations about the Olympics.

"I'd like to see the Olympic Games not as big as they are now. For example when we had the world championship in Portillo in 1966, it was just among ourselves. It was much better for the relationship between athletes and also for the sport itself not having all the big commercialism around it.

The former champion has completely retired from competitive skiing this year. Asked for a reason he points at his business interests.

"I've got business to take care of and I don't have as much time as I need to be able to win it again. So I just decided to retire."

"I've been doing so much of it. My first race was in 1953. I'm now 32 and I'm not looking too much toward a competitive life anymore."

Killy's business primarily centers around promotion work, also the reason for his Edmonton visit at the Skiers Sportshop. The "fantastic fame" and the mystique of the word Killy are slowly



Jean-Claude Killy, Olympic triple gold medalist, professional ski racing world champion

fading because "you can't stay on top" but the skier maintains that his business is "better and better". His promotion work takes up approximately four months a year, and the remaining time he spends racing bicycle and skiing for fun.

Killy says that after more than 15 years of competitive skiing he has had to learn skiing for fun again but he still feels that it is a "fantastic sport". He believes that the world-wide increase in skiing will continue but on a smaller level.

"It is increasing more than hardly any other sport but it is not like ten or fifteen

years ago when we had 30 per cent, 40 per cent more skiers every year. Now it is 8, 10 or 12 percent every year."

In Killy's opinion the great upsurge in cross-country skiing will not negatively affect Alpine skiing.

Although the former champion is not interested in coaching a ski team because this would be a full-time job, he still follows today's competitive skiing closely. Of his successors on the slopes he rates Italy's Gustavo Thoeni and Austria's Steiner as skiing better today than anyone at his own time in the sixties.



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