



# NORDIC SKATER

## AN INTERVIEW WITH PER SOLLERMAN

**Per- I've been discovering you for a couple of days now, like a good book. With each new page you intrigue and attract me more and more. Everything started with a pair of shoes...Would you share this story with us?**

I choose to buy equipment from suppliers who have long traditions of quality and craftsmanship. Preferably from brands that have an commitment to produce stuff that can work in various situations. On a mountain wall, ski trip, hike (and in my case, definitely on the ice) or at a cafe. Yvon Chouinard's Patagonia was my first preferred brand (in the book Let My People Go Surfing it is a fine quote from him: "The more you know, the less you need.")

30 years ago, it was not easy to find Patagonia products here in Scandinavia, so I ordered catalogs from the USA. When you had gone through it from cover to cover and decided what you wanted, you had to find a way to get the stuff to Norway. Maybe it was a friend who was going to the USA who got the list of stuff that you wanted (and if I should be completely honest, a product that no one else had) Or you had to call customer service in California and order .. But you wanted to know more about the picture that Lundhags shared on Instagram.

32 years ago I met my wife and my in-laws. My father-in-law had a couple of beautiful boots hanging on a nail out in his carpenter's workshop / hobby room. He used them for the annual 1 week hike and fishing trip in Lapland/ northern Sweden He had done that for many years and it was important to him. The first time I got to join him it felt like I had been fully accepted as son-in-law:) I remember by that time I had a couple of really bad boots with Gore Tex's membrane ( everything had to be Gore at that time ...) We always walked many miles, in wet land, often in the rain. I got blisters and always wet feet. But he in his one-layer leather boots was always dry. After each fishing trip they were carefully cleaned and greased. He is deceased since many years and now my brother-in-law has inherited them. He uses them much more often and they are still just fine, but they probably need to be sent up to Urban, Lundhag's shoemaker in Järpen (Near Åre) And speaking of Urban, I sent an email to him with the picture of the boots and the story of them. He replied that he had been involved in manufacturing these kind of shoes about 1985, but that unfortunately they have stopped making them a long time ago.

It took a couple of years before I got Lundhag products myself. But once you have started, there is no way back. For me, Lundhags is just like Patagonia!

Lundhags started in 1932 by people who know what it is like to be out on a hike or other outdoor activities, and the shoes are handmade. I have followed my father-in-law's advice with one-layer leather boots, and use them all year round, in all kind of activity... and yes! at the cafe too! But now is the time to get them to the shoemaker since the front of the soles has become worn. I thought I had to change the soles completely. But when I called and talked to Urban / Lundhags, he was quite determined that it only had to be fixed on the worn parts of the soles and not completely replaced.

Okay, clearly I could take them to a shoemaker here in Norway and get them fixed. But I have previously sent 2 pairs of boots, 1 for a minor repair and 1 to change the soles ( those where 15 years and they had completely worn out soles) to Järpen.

These shoes are my wife's. She is a gardener and uses these in the job, everyday, all year around and in leisure activities. Urban (which I have never met, but who always wants to talk about skiing and how the weather is in Norway) called me when he had received the shoes in the mail. He said that the newer couple, he could easily repair, but that he couldn't do so much with the older shoes. But since I knew how much they mean to my wife, I asked if he couldn't do anything to save them. He replied that he could save the shafts but everything else he had to be replaced. He had a little conscience because then I've probably had to pay a little more for them.

A couple of weeks later I got both pair of shoes in the mail... both looked like brand new... to the price just a bit over normal shoe repair.... For me, this is the ultimate example of sustainability! So yes, I will continue to send my products for love and care to Lundhags in Järpen in Sweden!

Lundhags is also very knowledgeable on Nordic Ice Skating and makes fantastic skates in Swedish high quality steel, backpacks, clothes and safety equipment of the highest quality. So it is my obvious choice also on the ice.

**For me it's a multi-layered story. It builds a positive image of Lundhags as an outdoor brand lasting for many generations. I like Lundhags. Unfortunately, their products aren't available in Poland. It's also a story of family, rituals, acceptance and passions.**

**In one of the films you reveal innermost corners of your home/introduce us to your home. Home known for its warmth and love. Your wife is a gardener and your personal guide through ecology and sustainable development. How do these two ideas fit into your home, daily life and work?**

In recent years, it has been an important and a well deserved focus on ecology and sustainability. We all long heard these gloomy reports of what we are doing with Mother Earth.

I'm not going to talk about the big questions about this. There are many others who know much more than me. But I am happy to represent the little individual who has come to the realization that it is important that every day, things should be done well and to a greater extent, try to think sustainably than necessarily ecologically. At the present time, one cannot feed the whole world ecologically, but one should definitely aim for it and have it as a final goal.

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Sustainability is, as I see it, the obvious choice. My wife has always focused on this, shared her wisdom and knowledge ... long before it became fashionable. We try to support local farmers who produce food that has these preferences. Yes it costs a little more but like everything else; quality and good products should cost more.

We compost, waste separation, avoid food waste ... and everything else that everyone should think about in home environments ... use of water, power and so on.

In our summer house we grow our own vegetables, we get old chickens from a friend who is organic farmer who gets to spend the summer with us against us getting the eggs and eat them in the fall. In short, we try to do the best we can. I work multidisciplinary with photo, as a producer and together with my wife at the organic farm. When it comes to work on the farm, there is no other way except the sustainable and ecological since the farm is ecologically certified. As a producer I have been involved in a project for a number of years, working with information on sustainability and knowledge about ecology in the main household where everything is summarized in the Food Prize Matprisen, which is a prize ceremony where we celebrate all the chefs, farmers, restaurants and writers who work for sustainability and ecology. Regarding the photo part, unfortunately I can't think of anything extraordinary. But I try to explain on my website, why I love food photography:

Photographing food is more than shooting a dish served on a plate. It's the heroes and products that behind the scenes, make it happen, a documentary made magic. So all the chefs, farmers, producers and products are the stars in front of my camera!

In outdoor activities I have already described what is important to me ... or to say it in another way, I do not buy so much Gore Tex anymore.

And also, natural fabric like wool and (organic) windproof cotton, is often best choice on the ice!

**You're a photographer. In your portfolio I found many delicious looking culinary photos, beautiful interiors, reporters' and sports photos. Sports photos lead us to one of your biggest passions – nordic skating on ice. What made you feel so passionate about Nordic Skating?**

I have been doing diving, parachuting, skiing, cycling, climbing, sea kayaking and nowadays skating. In all these activities, one is dependent on one or more elements to practice the sport. It is probably the kayak and the mountain that made the strongest impact on me before I discovered the ice and skates. I have always been curious about activities where you start with the safety aspect and get to know the risks. My philosophy has always been that when you know it, you can start exploring and stretching boundaries. In photography you usually say that you have to know the rules of photography in order to break them. The same applies here. I do not mean that you should be a dare devil but you should feel comfortable meeting challenges. Nordic Ice Skating has so many variations that you need to have a certain form of control. The ice changes constantly, it settles at different times depending on depth, temperature, wind or for example clear sky. Once the ice is there, there are different areas that you have to be extra careful about such as under bridges, around headlands, shallow lots and so on. And on the salty sea ice, you have even more things to think about. Ice is perishable and we are constantly looking for the perfect ice.

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We call it black ice. It is around 4-7 cm and has not yet started to crack ... it is just completely smooth, clear and mostly friction-free.

The freedom on the ice, speed, friends, warm days and freezy ones, the feeling of master thin ice, the bonfire with a nice talk with your companions...all of this makes me wanna skate as often as possible. Usually I start thinking of ice in late july, start making plans for the season, checking equipment and the feeling that I know that we will have ice around mid november. From then I skate usually to the end of march ( sometimes longer)

And it's spectacular! Early mornings with sunrise, late afternoons with red sky, thin ice that sometimes leads to an involuntary bath, but most often carry you.

It is difficult to explain to someone who has never tried it. But I recommend all these to look at my insta profile or Vimeo page to get an idea of how it can be.

#### **Is it a sport for everyone?**

Yes absolutely, Thats the good part! You have as much joy as beginners or as a experienced skater. You can only adjust the ambitions to the tour and I like to go with beginners to guide and instruct. It is unsettlingly rewarding to see their smiles and how committed they become!

I One day I go with my wife who likes to skate slowly and maybe not more than 20 km, the next day I go with others who want to go fast, thin and far (preferably 60-90 km)

#### **Is it an expensive sport? What type of equipment should people buy?**

Of course skates. These are available in different combinations, for example, where you can either use your hiking boots in a kind of snowboard binding, or you attach a Rottefella BC or NNN binding to the skates and then you use ski shoes that you otherwise use for cross-country skiing. ( thats my favourite) Skates cost between 120-250 Euro and ski shoes / boots about the same. Then you need to have ice spikes around your neck as an aid to be able to get back up if falling through thin ice.

A backpack with waterproof bag in which you have a complete change of clothes if you get wet. You should also have a throw line on the bag that you can throw to a companion if falling through the thin ice. Perhaps the most important thing., a couple of ice rods. These rods are not ski poles, but these have a much harder tip that we cut into the ice to test the thickness. We usually say that these rods are our eyes, and without these we

cannot read the ice. All this costs about 350-600 Euro, but then you have equipment that does not go out of fashion or that you need to replace for many years..

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**To sum up, could you give us any valuable advice to make this sport safe?**

First of all, this article is by no means a quick fix or guide on how to behave on the ice. What I have described is the rough picture of going Nordic Ice Skating as a kind of teaser. Before thinking about going out on the ice: If you are inexperienced you should join a group with other experienced and preferably no less than 3 people. You should have taken an ice safety course or join an intro course arranged by experienced. Other important thing to remember is that there are no safe ice, only safe skaters. It is only your own judgment that determines how safe you travel on the ice. You should have the minimum safety equipment I described above.

Once out on the ice you should listen to the experienced ones you have with you. And always remember that ice is perishable, the ice you were out on yesterday can be quite different today .. Ice under 10 - 7 cm is for experienced skaters only or in companion with a group of such as. And above all, when you have control of all this: get out on the ice and enjoy!

**In your films I rediscovered nature by looking from a different perspective. On a daily basis I walk in the woods and go mountain climbing. You suggest looking at the same nature from the level of water. The images are beautiful, as is the silence, disturbed only by the gliding on black ice. I think I found a new passion. What a pity that winter is coming to an end.**

Check out:

A Nordic Skater at Vimeo

<https://vimeo.com/297673643>

NordicSkater at Instagram

<https://vimeo.com/persollerman>

<https://www.facebook.com/turskoytegruppen/>

[www.persollerman.com](http://www.persollerman.com)

<https://medium.com/@sondresommerfelt/the-great-skate-escape-8dda7d498469>

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