

# The First NYAC Member in Space

Vanessa O'Brien has climbed Mount Everest and dived to the bottom of the Earth's deepest ocean. What could be next? A trip into space seemed like a logical step.

**T**he New York Athletic Club is no stranger to breaking barriers, be they in the competitive arena or in other areas of human endeavor. Since its founding in 1868, the Club has frequently celebrated the record breaking feats of its many members, among them Lincoln Ellsworth, the famed polar explorer of the 1920s and '30s.



Club member Vanessa O'Brien, exploring the limits.

Kármán line, the internationally recognized boundary of space. There, the passengers hovered beyond gravity's grasp for approximately five minutes, absorbing the view from 66 miles above Texas.

In making this trip, O'Brien became the second person, and first woman, to complete the Explorer's Extreme Trifecta: summiting Mount Everest, diving to the deepest part of the ocean - the Challenger Deep in the Mariana

While Ellsworth set his sights on the top and bottom of the world, 100 years later Club member (since 2016) Vanessa O'Brien is going still further, continuing the explorers' tradition, but taking it to literal heights - and depths - of which Ellsworth could hardly have conceived.

On the morning of August 4th this year, O'Brien and five other crew members from around the world were launched into sub-orbital space aboard New Shepard, the rocket developed by Blue Origin, the aerospace company owned by Amazon founder, Jeff Bezos. The spacecraft traveled at more than 1600 miles per hour, crossing the

Trench - and being launched into space. O'Brien achieved the first two segments of the Trifecta in 2012 and 2020, respectively, scaling 29,032 feet to the top of Mount Everest and descending 35,843 feet to the Challenger Deep. The only other person to match this feat is Victor Vescovo, who accompanied O'Brien to the Challenger Deep.

More details of this remarkable Club member's accomplishments may be found at [www.vobonline.com](http://www.vobonline.com), and you can scan the QR code to hear her speak about her trip into space. - *Ellen Rethwisch*



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