

# The History of **SWIX** Late 70's

In 1976 the first glide wax system was launched for cross country skis.



Starting in 1978, AB Astra's management decided that they wanted to focus on pharmaceuticals. Swix was for sale and several serious buyers expressed interest. Johnson Wax in the USA was very close to running off with the prize, but the interested

parties only wanted to purchase the ski wax part, not poles and textiles. Luckily, Astra wanted to avoid a break up of the brand and a Norwegian buyer entered the scene. In an interview in 1978, the investor Johan Henrik Andresen

indicated that "active leisure" was his area of focus. Astra's boss in Norway, Christian Fredrik Kaltenborn, read about this and called Andresen and asked if Andresen was interested in purchasing Swix? And Mr. Andresen replied, "Well, yes, that was not unthinkable." This was the way it all started that eventually led to the purchase of Swix in November 1978 by Tiedimanns.

The Andresen family was and still is one of Norway's most solid industrial families, Swix could not have found a better suited owner.







Starting in 1982, the brand name Swix appeared on all the poles from Liljedahl's factory – in order to take advantage of the strength and simplicity of a common brand name for wax, poles and textiles. At this time, the textiles most in demand were hats and gloves. Liljedahl's strong market position was strengthened and

new technology was acquired in order to improve the ski poles for elite skiers.

At the 1982 World Championships in Oslo the first SWIX composite poles were used.

The World Championships in skiing were held in Oslo in 1982. On the last stage of the

race during the relay race, the Soviet skier Alexander Zavjalov crashed into Oddvar Brå's ski pole in a battle that ended with a shared victory. One of ski history's most famous "broken pole fracture" took place with a Swix pole. Swix was now one of the world's two leading ski pole brands in the world.

The Swix building lease for the Astra factory in Skårer expired in 1986. The facilities were too small, and an expansion was impossible. In 1986, wax production was moved to Lillehammer. Included in the move was the management staff. It was the first time Swix was brought together under the same roof.





## Cera F

The genius Professor Gambarette at the University of Padova had made several important discoveries. He had been studying the synthesis of fluoride compounds and worked closely with the chemical factory Rimar. At the same time, Rimar was bought up by Enichem, the major Italian oil company. On 11 July 1984 they submitted a patent application for a white powder with exceptionally good friction-reducing properties. That's when some creative geniuses thought of using this material to make ski wax, even though it was extremely expensive. Alpine skiers tested the power without any particular success, but the Italian cross-country team saw the potential in the winter of 1985. The Italians understood that they could not keep the substance to themselves. Competition rules stipulate that all competitors must have access to the same equipment. Swix was offered exclusivity to further develop the product, as well as the sales and distribution. Even though it was very ex-

pensive, the product was a tremendous success. The launch of Cera F in the winter 1987-1988 opened up new windows of opportunity for Swix, not least of all in the field of alpine skiing. When the powder first came onto the market it captured only a modest share of the alpine market, but ever since, the market share has grown and grown. Cera F came right after the introduction of the skating technique in cross-country skiing, which led to more aggressive marketing on the part of several wax producers, and Swix was able to take the lead in this race.



In 1986 the first skating glide waxes were introduced by Swix.

## Ever since 1988

Swix have had an agreement with the Norwegian Ski Federation for provision of apparel for all cross-country teams.

