

Life on Mars? Dutch company to offer one-way trips to the Red Planet

January 10 2013, by Patrick Kevin Day

In 1990's "Total Recall," Arnold Schwarzenegger had a simple directive to himself: "Get your ass to Mars." Now a nonprofit Dutch company is promising to help real-world tourists do just that.

Mars One has announced plans to establish a colony on Mars by 2023 and it's about to begin looking for prospective Martian pioneers.

While the requirements for NASA's astronaut program are demanding, assuring only the finest and fittest of humans will ever make it into space, Mars One is casting a wide net. Its requirements are resiliency, adaptability, curiosity, ability to trust, creativity and resourcefulness.

What about the ability to fly a [spaceship](#) or solve unforeseen, unimaginable problems being one of the first humans on an alien planet? Those, evidently, are skills that one picks up with time.

Mars One only asks that applicants be at least 18 years of age (they will be 28 by the time they land on Mars), speak English and don't have any pressing business on Earth - ever. This is a one-way kind of deal.

After submitting themselves to the selection process, the chosen astronauts will then be entered into a full-time training program that will prepare them for their 2022 blast-off date. In the meantime, Mars One plans to send preparatory probes and rovers with supplies to the planet as early as 2016. The first group of four colonists will follow a few years later, with a new team of [colonists](#) arriving every two years after that.

How does this group expect to fund this effort, which would surely cost in the multiple billions of dollars? Reality TV, of course! Mars One plans to televise every aspect of the mission and involve the whole world in the run up to the launch. As [Nobel Prize](#)-winning physicist Gerard 't Hooft says in Mars One's introductory video, "This is going to be a media spectacle. 'Big Brother' will pale in comparison."

So in other words, while NASA astronauts will be walking in the footsteps of [Neil Armstrong](#), potential Mars One astronauts will be walking in the footsteps of Donald Trump.

The Mars One project is the brainchild of co-founders Bas Lansdorp, an entrepreneur who previously founded the wind energy company Ampyx Power; and Arno Wielders, who also works as a payload study manager for the European Space Agency. These two aren't alone, of course. The company's website features a whole roster of international scientists who are serving as advisers.

Though the video introducing the mission makes it seem very simple, there are many complications springing from a manned mission to Mars that science is only beginning to seriously grapple with. As reported in the Los Angeles Times, a recent 17-month simulated Mars mission in Moscow revealed that the sleep habits of crew members would be dramatically affected, as would their output during the months-long trip to the planet.

The Dutch crew members aren't the only private entrepreneurs with their eye on Mars, though. Space X founder Elon Musk has also discussed his plans to establish a [Mars](#) colony in the next few decades.

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