

report. "On January 16, we climbed nine pitches on the south ridge until being blocked by a steep and compact section just under the first (lower) summit. The grade of this route is about 5.7/5.8, with a very nice seventh pitch through a crack. We named the route *Game Over, Man!* The second route was climbed on January 20, a perfect day with no wind. Leaving Campamento Britanico at 4 a.m., we walked around the west face until arriving at steepening slabs above a glacier. From this point the two summits can be seen (and seem really close). Not having crampons, we did four traversing pitches toward the northeast above the glacier to arrive at the starting point. We started climbing this traverse, which had good rock but little protection, at 7:30 a.m. The next 12 pitches went straight to the summit. The first of these was especially beautiful on slabs with fine cracks. The last four pitches to the summit are steeper on better rock, though still with little protection. A very nice line then leads straight to the top. We arrived on the summit at 2:30 p.m. We rappelled the west face from 3 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. and arrived at Campamento Britanico at 12:30 a.m. We named the route *Pa' la Casa* (5.8, 16 pitches)."

HERNAN JOFRE, *Amerindia Concept, Chile*

*Escudo, North Face, Bukowski Route.* Our original goal was the striking north pillar of Escudo. In 30 days, Jack Lewis and I managed only seven pitches on the pillar because of continual bad weather. High winds cut through one of our fixed ropes and damaged a second fixed rope. On February 21, 1999, we abandoned the north pillar with the hopes of getting one climbing day in before we had to leave.

On March 1, we climbed a new route in 14 hours round-trip on the north face of Cerro Escudo. Our route ascended 200 feet of low-angle rock slabs at the base of the north face to a large ledge. This ledge was followed up and left on scree and snow to the base of an ice couloir, which we called the *Bukowski Couloir*. This was climbed for 1,000 feet to the northeast ridge. A 60-foot rock pitch (5.10a A0) put us on easy ground. Scree and snow climbing up the ridge took us to the upper ice slopes. Ice climbing over and around black sedimentary rock towers on the upper ridge took us to the summit. We are sure the *Bukowski Couloir* (IV 5.10a A12) is the easiest route up Cerro Escudo. The upper mountain was socked in, but winds were light with occasional snow showers.

TOM BAUMAN

*Cuerno Principal, South Face, Attempt.* From January 24 to February 2, 1999, Corrado Pipolo and Mauro Florit (Italy) climbed four new pitches (510d A1) on the south face of Cuerno Principal in the Valle del Frances before poor weather conditions forced them to go down.

HERNAN JOFRE, *Amerindia Concept, Chile*

*Cerro Mascara, The Magic Carpet Ride.* During the months of January and February, 1999, Conny Amelunxen and I completed the first ascent of the 800-meter east face of The Mummer (Cerro Mascara) in the Bader Valley of Torres del Paine in Chile. This major Patagonian prize had been attempted at least three times previously with no success.

RIGHT: Conny Amelunxen on the approach to the east face of La Mascara (a.k.a. The Mummer) in the Bader Valley, with The Magic Carpet Ride marked. SEAN ISAAC



We arrived in Chile on January 7. After sorting out permits and buying food in Puerto Natales, we left for Torres del Paine National Park to arrange horses to carry the majority of our equipment to Campo Welsh, 45 minutes shy of Base Camp. The next two weeks involved humping all of our gear from there to Base Camp and eventually onto an advanced high camp at the edge of the glacier an hour from the face. In between carries, we managed to fix the first four pitches. With two weeks of hard work (and one rest day) behind us, we committed to the face capsule-style on January 27 in typical unsettled Patagonian weather, armed with three haul bags full of the necessities required to live on a wall for two weeks.

The route primarily involved direct aid with very little free climbing. Due to the difficulty and our long pitches, we operated on a pitch-a-day speed until we neared the top, where more free climbing opportunities presented themselves. The wall took 14 days to climb and descend; however, four of these were stuck in our portaledge as continuous storms caused serious slough avalanches and dangerous ice bombardments. Spontaneous rock fall occurred frequently to our right in the scooped face, but our pillar was somewhat protected. It was the wind that caused the most anxiety, as it threatened to shred our portaledge fly and cut our ropes. The cold temperatures that we experienced wreaked havoc on our bodies: our fingertips cracked painfully, our feet suffered from trenchfoot and we were always wet and cold at night due to the constant decline of our sleeping bags as they became more and more soaked from the endless condensation and puddles in the portaledge.

On February 6, we switched plastic boots for cold, tight rock shoes and cruised the last five pitches to a point three meters below the actual summit. These last moves we left unclimbed because they involved a 45° slab carpeted in a layer of thick, black lichen, which was surprising, since there had been no vegetation on the entire route until the summit ridge. Now that we were on the ridge, exposed to the 100-kilometer-per-hour westerly winds blowing off the ice cap, the final moves seemed too sketchy, so we called it good and began the rappels back to our portaledge. That night, yet another snow storm blew in, keeping us trapped in our hanging tent for two days before we could safely descend the rest of the route to the ground.

We named our route *La Alfombra Magica* (“*The Magic Carpet Ride*,” VI 5.10 A3+) after one particularly scary episode on the wall in which the tie-down that secured the bottom of the portaledge came undone, causing us to hover and bounce violently in the air for what seemed like an eternity. Of the route’s 17 pitches, only one was particularly loose, with the rest ascending beautiful straight-in cracks and perfect corners on solid granite. We rapped the route off bomber anchors: piton/nut anchors higher on the mountain, then mainly two-bolt (3/8”) stations. This was the third new route on the mountain after Dave Cheesemond/Phil Dawson’s first ascent in 1976 and John Merriam/Jonathon Copp’s one-day ascent of *Duncan’s Dihedral* last year. Acres of unclimbed granite remain on The Mummer as well as on the other equally impressive formations of this rarely explored valley.

SEAN ISAAC, *Canada*

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*Valle Bader, Note on Naming.* There has been some confusion in the past few years regarding the naming of two distinct valleys within the Torres del Paine National Park, both of which have been called Pingo (“wild horse”) Valley. The original valley to carry this name is at the southern end of the Park and separates the Grey Glacier from the Tyndall Glacier and