

weather window on December 8. We reached the summit around 6 p.m. and rappelled in a storm. It was a high experience for us. We were forced to make a light bivy at the base of the route because of storm. Hasta luego, Patagonia!

LAURENCE MONNOYEUR and BRUNO SOURZAC, France

Argentine Patagonia, Various Activity. We stayed in Patagonia from December 2, 1998, to February 16, 1999. In this time we climbed the following peaks: Cerro Solo, December 8; Aguja Guillaumet, *Via Amy*, December 20, in seven hours from Paso Superior and back, on our second attempt; Fitz Roy, Franco-Argentine Route, January 10, 1999, in 19 hours from Paso Superior and back, on our third attempt (we descended in a storm); Poincenot, via the Whillans Route, on January 14, in about 12 hours from Paso Superior and back, on our third attempt; Mermoz, via *Vela y Viento*, the new route by Kurt Albert and Bernd Arnold on the Red Pillar, on January 16 on our first attempt, a wonderful climb and an excellent line. We also made two attempts to the Shoulder/Ice Cave of Cerro Torre between January 27–February 10.

The weather conditions this season was very unstable, so we are really glad that we were able to climb so many peaks without any accidents. We enjoyed our stay and will come back soon.

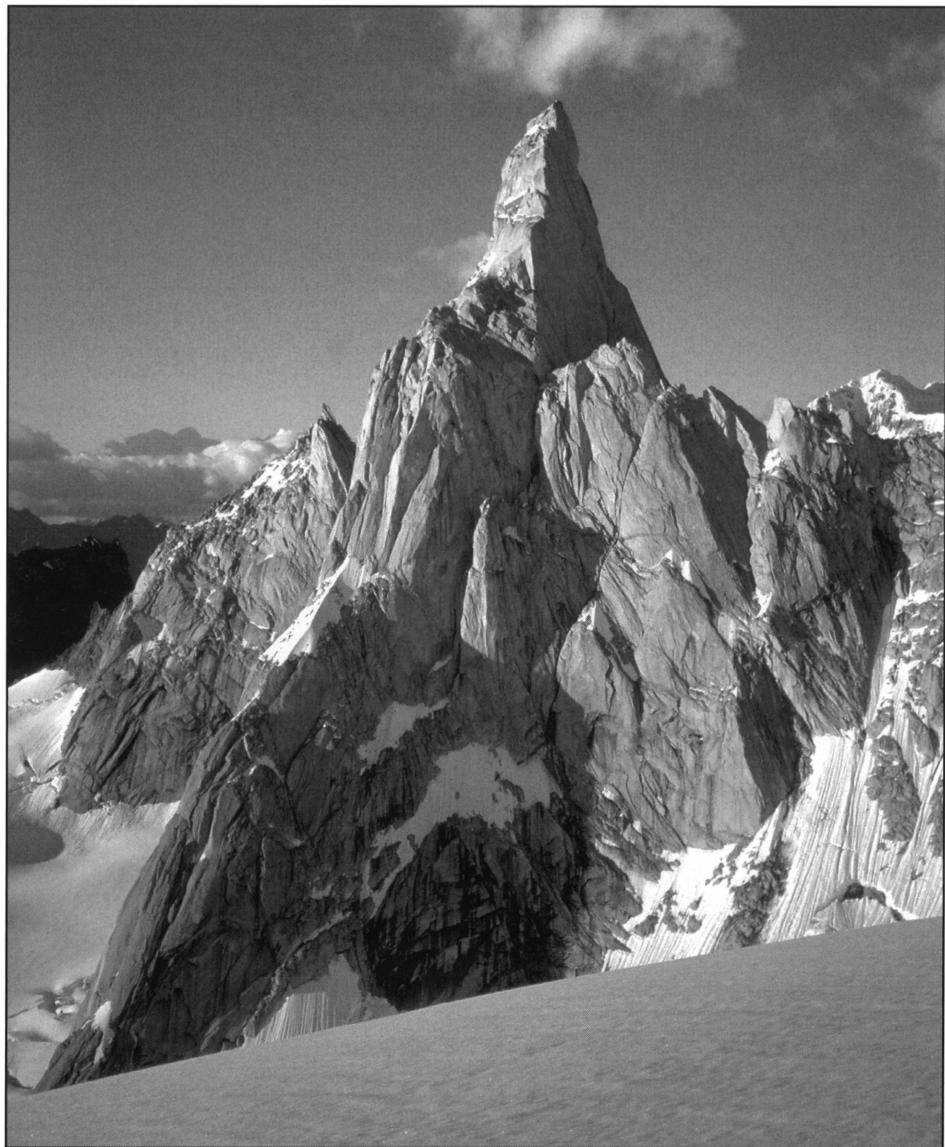
ANDY MAAG and ILONA BLEULER, Switzerland

Argentine Patagonia, Various Activity. Charlie Fowler (U.S.) was in the area from late November until mid-February. With various partners, he climbed the following. Right French Couloir (TD-5.9 60° ice mixed, 400m) on Guillaumet, December 5, 1998, with Steph Davis; the Argentinian Route (TD, 5.10-, 500m) on the west face/north ridge of Aguja Mermoz, December 21, 1998, solo; a variation to the Pippo Frasson (line to the left of the French Gully, TD, 300m, 80° ice, mixed) on Guillaumet, January 2, 1999, solo; *Bienvenidos a Patagonia* (5.11b, mixed, 550 meters) on the north face of St. Exupery, January 10, 1999, with Nathan Martin; the Whillans Route (5.8 mixed, ca. 650m) on Poincenot, January 21, with Nathan Martin, in January, 1999, with Nathan Martin; *Vela y Viento* (5.12 A0, 500 meters, third ascent, with new variant) on Mermoz, February 10, 1999, with Nathan Martin. A full account of his productive stay appears earlier in this journal.

Argentine Patagonia, Attempts and Ascents. My objective was to attempt the unclimbed west face of Torre Egger with two French climbers, David Autheman and Antoine Noury, and a Norwegian climber, Trym Saeland. When Trym and I arrived at Base Camp, David and Antoine were already there. They had used two days of good weather to start fixing a route on a sub-pillar of Cerro Stanhardt (see description of their efforts above). This took the west face of Torre Egger out of our plans, because they had used a number of bolts on fixing the sub-pillar. With the bolts we had left, we felt Torre Egger's west face would be impossible.

After another four weeks of waiting out bad weather, Trym and I decided to attempt the route *Todo o Nada* (5.9 AI WI5X) on El Mocho during a marginal weather day. The formation was sheltered and low enough that we were able to summit. The climbing was scary because it had been warm and we were often on vertical snow, not ice.

After climbing El Mocho, Trym and I attempted a continuous push on Cerro Torre that was stopped in the middle of the night as bad weather moved in. We descended to our advanced



St. Exupery, with the north face, location of Bienvenidos a Patagonia, in shadow. CHARLIE FOWLER

base camp of the Norwegian Bivy the next morning and rested all day and night. With the next day came a half day of good weather, which allowed us to reach pitch 12 of the *Compressor Route* on Cerro Torre. By that time we were in a very bad storm and ended up having to bivy without bivy gear when our rappel ropes got stuck. I made one failed attempt at *Exocet* on Cerro Stanhardt with Charlie Fowler during another too-brief half-day spell of good weather. On January 10, 1999, I began my return journey to Seattle. Trym Saeland

stayed on and was rewarded with an ascent of the *Compressor Route* on Cerro Torre with Warren Hollinger and Russ Mitrovich.

My sincere thanks to the Mountaineering Fellowship Fund Grant Committee for the grant that helped finance this trip to Argentine Patagonia.

MILES SMART

South Patagonia Ice Cap, Traverse Attempt. From December 5, 1998-January 5, 1999, Karl Feaux, Rob Weber, Bart Matthews and Kyle Bohnenstiehl (leader), attempted a partial traverse of the South Patagonia Ice Cap. This remote area, also known as the Campo de Hielo Sur or the Hielo Patagonia Sur (HPI), is the largest icecap outside the polar regions and the third largest ice mass in the world. Stretching nearly 325 kilometers in length and averaging 35 kilometers wide, the Ice Cap contains 48 distinct glacial outflows and covers an area of 13,000 square kilometers, which includes 15 distinct mountain ranges, at least one active volcano (Cerro Lautaro) and numerous unclimbed peaks near 3000 meters. After a five-hour boat trip from Tortel onboard the *San Juan*, we landed at Don Juan Nahuel's cabin near the Glacier Jorge Montt at the northern terminus of the Ice Cap with 700 pounds of equipment. According to Chilean authorities, our expedition was the first American team to go up this route. Camp II was established on the glacier at 500 meters after a difficult approach through rivers and thick brush that followed Eric Shipton's 1962 route (AAJ, 1962). We were disappointed by the dryer-than-normal winter and were unable to ski until Camp V, which we reached after ferrying loads for 12 days across difficult crevasses that would normally have been snow bridges. 1998, like 1997, was an especially bad year for ascending onto the Campo de Hielo. We gained the altiplano at Camp VIII and, after abandoning our principle objective, Cerro Lautaro (3380m), we aimed to climb Cerro Wonni (2498m). Strong winds and heavy snow trapped us at Camp IX for three days, and we were forced to return to the boat landing, as we were out of time.

The Glacier Jorge Montt is actively retreating, making this approach route onto the Ice Cap very time-consuming and difficult. Previous parties attempting the traverse encountered significant difficulty navigating, especially during foul weather. We used GPS, RADARSAT and LANDSAT data for navigation; all were useful to us, particularly during storms. Users of Iridium phones, take note: fuses in the 12-volt charger can burn out and accounts cannot be re-established over the phone. Complete details of our trip can be found at www.nagis.com

Note: In the 1997 AAJ (p. 256), the Arved Fuchs expedition, which made the longest unsupported north-south traverse yet, mistakenly noted that they had made the first crossing of the "Mayo Fall" on foot. In 1994, Americans John Schutt and Mark Houston crossed this difficult section under their own power (1995 AAJ, p. 207).

KYLE BOHNENSTIEHL

Southern Ice Cap, Integral Crossing. From November 1, 1998, to January 30, 1999, four Chileans (Pablo Besser, Rodrigo Fica, Mauricio Rojas, Jose Montt) made the first integral crossing of the Southern Ice Cap. Further information is lacking.

HERNAN JOFRE, Amerindia Concept, Chile