



*The east and north faces of El Gran Trono Blanco. WERNER R. LANDRY*

over a small overhang. Friction traverse left (5.11b), then up to a good stance. Eleven bolts protect this crux pitch and an extra 3/8" hole was drilled for those needing to aid and tension traverse. Pitch 7 (5.10c friction) also has 11 bolts and leads to a crack and sheltered flat ledges. Traverse right 60 feet, then up (5.6) to a tunnel on the left. Here the route meets up with the original Southeast Buttress route for the next three pitches. Pitch 9 enters the tunnel and exits onto a steep face (5.10b) to a semi-hanging belay below a 5.11 (or A1) roof. Ascend the roof to a strenuous 5.10 squeeze chimney where tying off natural chockstones provides additional protection. After traversing left to a large right-facing dihedral, continue up (5.9) to brushy ledges. Third-class 200 feet to a gully on the *Happy Hooker* route. Traverse left across the gully on a fourth-class ledge to its end at a 5.5 crack, staying left of the gully weakness. From the small ledge atop the crack, the new exit pitches (13 and 14) follow bolts up 5.8 friction to lower-angle friction above. The May 22 ascent took nine hours. The third-class descent and return to the vehicle required another hour. Belay anchors have a minimum of two 3/8" x 4" stainless steel bolts with rappel rings, and most belays have good ledges. The tops of pitches 5, 7 and 11 have flat bivouac sites for parties choosing to overnight. For leaders who opt out of the 5.11 crux, adding a 3/8" removable bolt and a cheater stick to the gear rack provides the option to lead at 5.10c A1. Bring nuts and cams from small wires to four inches, one tube chock (Big Bro) and 11 quickdraws. Climbers who assisted with developing *The Millennium* were Andreas Met, Shaun Standley and Monte Swann.

JOHN SMALLWOOD, *unaffiliated*

*El Gran Trono Blanco, Leaving On A Jet Plane.* Mark Richards and I finished a new route,

*Leaving On A Jet Plane* (VI A3+ 5.10, 13 pitches), between the *Giraffe* and *Pan Am* in early October. The route is non-stop exposure with a big-wall feel all the way. Lots of hooking, thin placements in seams and even some good crack and face climbing characterize the route. It meets *Giraffe* at Poncho Villa ledge and goes right across blank face (hooks and bolts) to a big ledge, then follows a crack system to the top.

The climbing and the views make for a great wilderness experience. Plan for three days on the route; bring portaledges and stick to small gear (the route is mostly clean, but bring some knifeblades and baby angles).

WERNER R. LANDRY

## CHIHUAHUA

### Basaseachic Waterfall National Park

*El Gigante, Yawira Batú.* During the first days of May, Cecilia Buil (Spain) and Carlos Garcia (Mexico) made the second ascent of El Gigante in Chihuahua, Mexico. Their initial plan was to attempt a first ascent in the canyon of La Sinforosa, located in the same region as El Gigante. They had heard that even higher walls than those of El Gigante could be found in La Sinforosa, but an aerial reconnaissance showed that although 1800 meters high, the walls were not as steep and challenging as those of El Gigante (1300 meters). For this reason the team turned its interest to a corn-yellow vertical strip they spotted the year before on El Gigante, when they made the first ascent of the wall. (American photographer Chris Giles accompanied the team, scouting the route from the base of El Gigante with them, then going to the top on his own, guessing the approximate location of their route and rappelling down to photograph their ascent. He fixed lines to the bottom, but Buil and Garcia did not use any of his anchors or gear.)

The yellow strip was reached by a traverse to the right for several pitches. On that section, the rock quality varied from good (pitches 1 and 2) to bad (3 to 6). Large, loose blocks were frequent and the terrain was consistently overhanging from pitch 3 on. The fourth pitch required heavy aid climbing and took almost a whole day. After fixing pitch 5, the team had to leave the wall due to problems with the drill. After a quick trip to Chihuahua, the lower end of the yellow strip was finally reached by passing a big roof on pitch 6. The change of color also brought better rock.

Pitches 7, 8 and 9 were characterized by dirty cracks populated by lots of plants. A diving mask proved to be a useful weapon to fight against the dirt blown into the eyes by the wind while cleaning the cracks to place protection. Between pitches 7 and 13 the average advance per day was two pitches. By pitch 13 the work of prior days called for an "evening off duty." The day was still not over, though. A weak link on the belay setup suddenly broke, and instantly later climbers and gear were hanging all messed up a couple of meters further down. Fortunately, the incident had no major consequences.

The next day, pitch 14 followed a left-facing roof to a cave, close to which the belay was established, and pitch 15 was the best one of the whole route. Pitch 16 followed an overhanging crack to the right. Although it appeared to be an offwidth, the V-shaped crack allowed for the use of small protection inside. The last bivouac was established on the following belay, just one rope length below the top. After a somewhat technical final pitch, the climbers topped off the wall by noon. The route was named *Yawira Batú*, which is Tarahumara for "the rising corn."