

*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

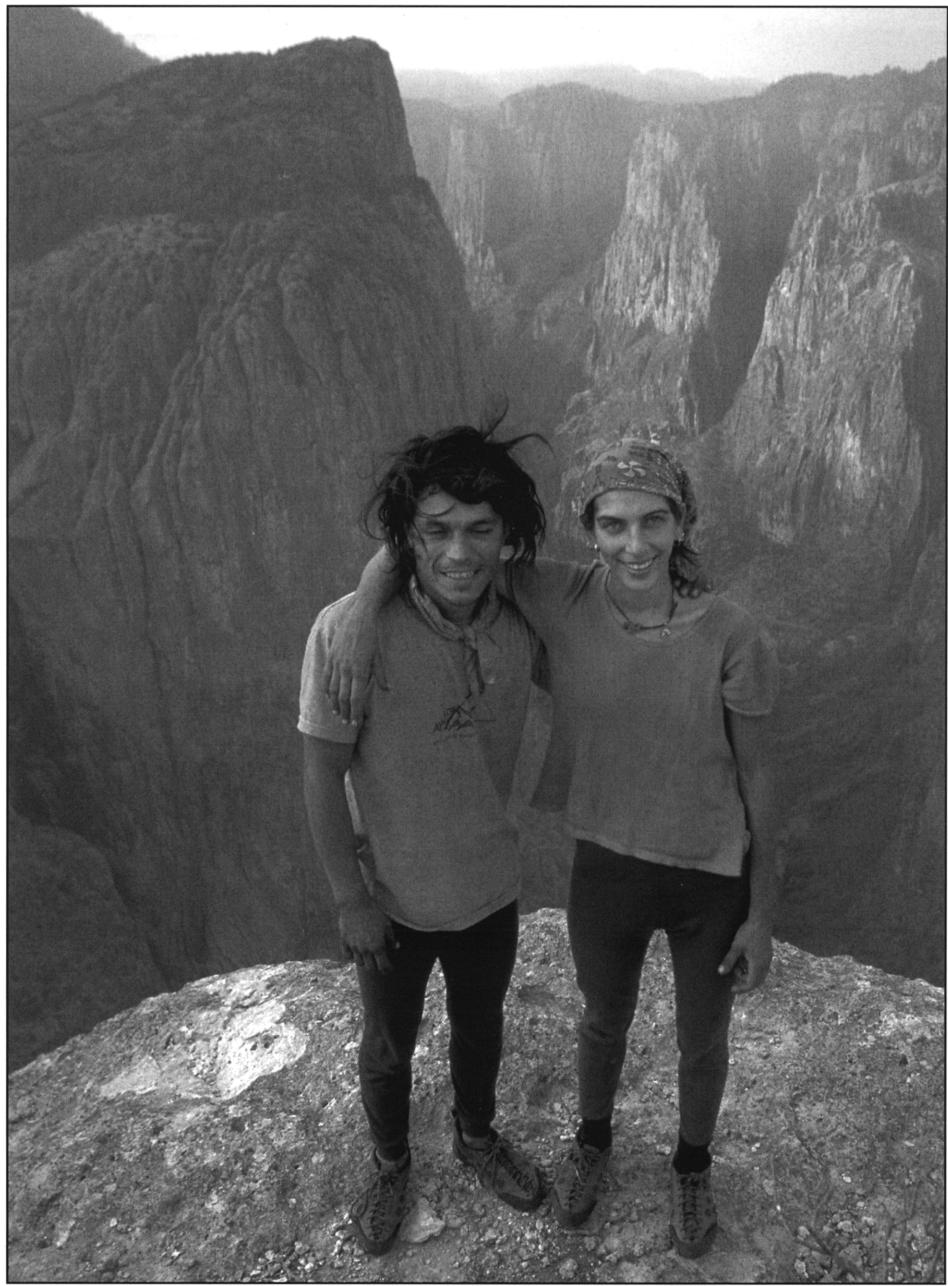
### Basaseachic Waterfall National Park

*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 Sinfosora, 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 Sinfosora, 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, scoping 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 instants 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."



*Carlos Garcia and Cecilia Buil atop El Gigante after the first ascent of Yawira Batú, with the walls of Basaseachic Waterfall National Park behind them. CHRIS GILES*

This note is based on a report written in Spanish by Cecilia Buil. Translated and adapted by Christian Oberli. No specific grading of the route is indicated in the original report.