

we stood on a pass between Mocho and Cerro Fierro (perhaps the first to do so). During the next two days we struggled with blizzards and gravity on steep snow slopes, ice and rock cliffs, making seven rappels en route. When we set foot on the flat surface of a glacier, we called our newly opened route down from the Hielo "Desperado Pass."

A week-long trek back to human settlements led us through the rough and hazardous terrain of the Fierro and Leon river valleys. We crawled over house-sized rocks, through the green hell of Patagonian bush and across the Rio Leon at the end. Berries are common there, and we fed ourselves on them during the last days when our expedition food was gone. We spent 35 days on this walk (from Laguna San Rafael to El Pedregal farm) instead of the 26 we had planned.

ANDRZEJ SMIALY, *Polish Alpine Club*

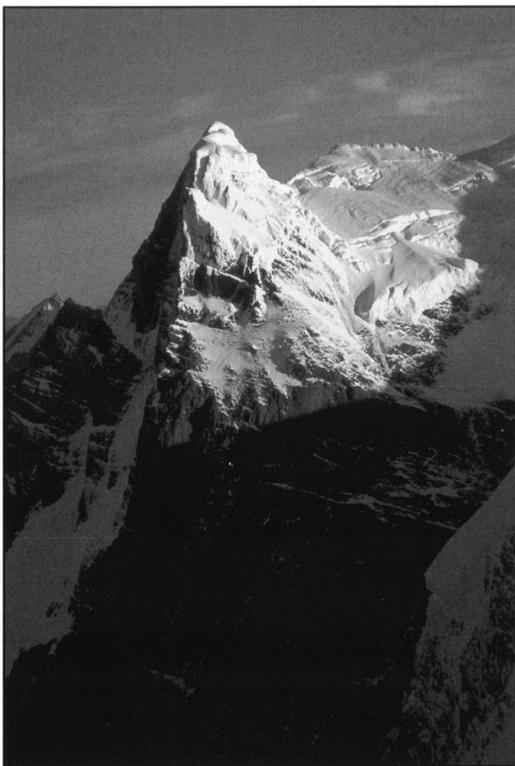
Hielo Patagonico Sur, North to South Traverse. Mostly unknown territory, the Hielo Patagonico Sur, 400 kilometers long by 80 kilometers wide, is the third-biggest ice plateau in the world. Its weather is the worst in the world and in the middle lies the infamous Reichert Fault.

Many have tried to cross it from north to south, but all met with failure due to the complex logistics, the extreme conditions and the commitment of walking 400 lonely kilometers. The most noteworthy attempts have been that of the Spanish team in 1992 and Arved Fuchs

et al (German) in 1995. In 1996, Pablo Besser and I made an unsupported attempt with Jorge Crossley (Chile) but failed due to inexperience. After climbing down the Reichert Fault, we left the Ice after 54 expedition days.

On October 24, 1998, Pablo Besser (expedition leader), Mauricio Rojas, José Pedro Montt and I stood at the starting point of the Ice Cap, the Jorge Montt Glacier. Without mechanical help or human contact, we began an almost-unsupported expedition (we had one cache in the middle) walking day by day, carrying 100 kilos each, combating humidity, crevasses, storms, wind and a stark landscape.

Fifty days later we arrived at the Reichert Fault, the most important obstacle in the traverse. We down-climbed to the bottom of the Fault, took our loads and made the first (and obligatory) ascent of East Bastion, climbing it because it stood in our way. Near the summit, we spent nine terrible days in a snow cave waiting for good weather. Finally we were able to rappel 620 meters (150 overhanging)



The north face of the unclimbed Paredon Peak (2256m) as seen from East Bastion.

RODRIGO FICA PÉREZ

down the virgin south face. We were the first humans to cross the Reichert Fault, which in itself took 30 days.

Low on rations and really weak, we walked the last 160 kilometers across broken glaciers in 21 days to finish on January 30, 1999, at Seno Ultima Esperanza, the Pacific Ocean, after 98 days on the Ice Cap.

RODRIGO FICA PÉREZ, *Chile*

Torres del Paine National Park

Escudo, North Ridge, Previously Unreported. Ralph Thäusing and I climbed the North Ridge of Escudo in March, 1993. It had already been climbed by Jerry Gore and Andy Perkins three months before (see 1993 AAJ, p. 197); however, we didn't know this. We climbed to the col as for the existing route, then, on the second day, went right where they went left to finish below the summit on the schist band (as they did). Bad weather was coming in, so we went down. Our variant was 6b A3.

ANDY PARKIN, *United Kingdom*

Almirante Nieto, East Face. Chad Peele and Jeff Brandner attempted a route on the east face of Almirante Nieto. The pair reported poor rock with no protection; the snow crossing was fine. From Las Torres Camp (820'), it took them 17 hours to reach 7,200 feet. They did not summit.

SERGIO ECHEVERRIA and HERNAN JOFRE, *Chile*

Cuerno Norte, West Face, Nacimientos. On February 13, Andre Labarca, Claudio Retamal and Luis Ortiz (Chile) finished a new route on the west face of Cuerno Norte. *Nacimientos* (V 5.10 A1, 15 pitches) was climbed in 18 hours from Advanced Base Camp. (Base Camp was in the Valle del Frances, 15 minutes from the British Camp; ABC was a three-person cave, 20 minutes from the base of the wall and a one-and-a-half hour hike up toward Cuerno Norte.) The route goes straight to the col between Cuerno Norte and Mascara (a.k.a. the Mummer) on easy slabs in seven pitches (5.5). They climbed this section unroped. From the col, the southwest edge of Cuerno Norte was climbed on excellent granite in eight pitches, at which point they reached sedimentary rock. All the granite was climbed clean except pitch 7, where Andre made the only aid move (A1) of the route. Once on the sedimentary rock, they hiked to Cuerno Norte's principal summit in 20 minutes. They rapped the route of ascent, using pitons for the anchors. The party reported no sign of another route on this ridge.

A UIAA report of a 1998 route by Andre Labarca and Claudio Retamal on the southwest face of Cuerno Principal was incorrect. Though attempted, the route was not finished.

SERGIO ECHEVERRIA and HERNAN JOFRE, *Chile*

Mascara, East Face, Attempt, Cuerno Este and Cuerno Chico, New Routes. We were in Paine National Park from December 11-January 21. The aim of our stay with Robert Tanner (Germany) was to climb Cerro Mascara from the Bader Valley. The Welsh Camp, which is in perfect condition, was the chosen starting point. Depending on loads and snow conditions, it takes between two to four hours to hike to Mascara. Out of the 15 days that we hiked to the