

Our dream mountain rose up before us in a 20-kilometer side valley connecting Eglinton Fjord and Sam Ford Fjord. The steep granite tooth towers over a glacial basin, about 1000 meters above sea-level and ten kilometers from our boats.

August 19 was our third day on the mountain, and Stefan, Holger and Gerd started climbing the wall for the first time. On August 23, we all reached the summit via a wonderful free-climbing route. The route, *Odyssey 2000* (5.12b, 12 pitches), goes up the 500-meter-high east face of “Polar Bear Spire” and was climbed in redpoint style. Those wishing to repeat the route will need around 15 quickdraws, two sets of Friends up to size number 3, and a double set of stoppers. The beautiful shape of the tower, the excellent quality of the rock, the technically challenging and complex climbing—and all in a wild, isolated environment—fascinated Holger and moved him to shout spontaneously, “My most beautiful route!”

Although we didn’t think our route would enjoy much tourism, we made it “repeater-friendly.” All belay anchors and climbing cruxes have solid Petzl Long-Life bolts, and even normal pounded-in pitons and dubious protection were replaced by “unnecessary” drilled pitons—so that the eternal complainers will have something to talk about! That is just our climbing style, and it’s incomprehensible to me that again and again one meets people who get excited about these drilled pitons, usually either without ever having climbed the route or having technically “muddled their way up.”

The trip back to Clyde River too was an odyssey in the truest sense of the word. We hauled the boats and our gear for four days along a ca. ten-kilometer-long stretch over a pass to reach Ayr Lake. The Kogalu River begins at the lake’s eastern end, then flows 40 kilometers into the sea. During our 40 kilometers, we shot several sets of rapids up to grade 3 before reaching the mouth of the Kogalu and two Inuit wilderness shelters. Around the last bend in the river there lay before us the infinite expanse of the ocean: more than 70 kilometers of shoreline completely exposed to breakers all the way to Clyde River! After Stefan capsized some 300 meters from the shore in 3°C water, he and Gerd opted for the rocky and painful overland march. They packed their backpacks for lightweight “survival” travel, set the GPS for “Go to Clyde—30 kilometers,” cinched their straps and dragged the empty kayaks behind them. Holger and I once again packed our two-man kayaks full of all the remaining gear and put out to heavy seas. Two days later, our odyssey came to a happy end in Clyde River.

KURT ALBERT, *Germany*

Sam Ford Fjord

Sam Ford Fjord, New Routes and Various Activity. Four Norwegian climbers, Bjarte Bo, Halvor Hagen, Torkel Roisli, and I, visited the Sam Ford Fjord in May and June. Arriving in the fjord in the evening of May 6, we decided on a line that started up the north face of Polar Sun Spire and then took the east pillar to the summit. May 8 to 10 was spent fixing the first four pitches. The ice was left May 11, and the first wall camp was set at some small ledges atop pitch four. The top of the first pillar was reached on the 17th after 15 pitches of challenging climbing. The crux of the climb (A4) was found in this lower part of the route. This was a very loose pitch with many skyhook moves and other thin stuff. The lower pillar was about 700 meters high, with highly variable climbing and rock quality. The line was fairly continuous, with only one pitch of extensive drilling. All but three pitches on this part of the route were overhanging, very much so in parts.

On May 19, the 300-meter section of snow slogging to gain the headwall was done, and we were ready to start climbing on the headwall. May 20-25 was spent climbing to a point two pitches from the summit ridge. The climbing in this upper part was quite a bit easier than in the lower section. At 8 a.m. on May 26, all four summited after climbing the last three pitches from the top of the fixed lines. The same day we were back at the highest portaledge camp (Camp IV), having cleared all ropes on the way. After a night of bad weather, we continued the descent all the way to the fjord, having climbed the Norwegian Route (VII 5.10 A4, 30 roped pitches).

Bo quickly got bored with base camp life, so just a few days after coming off Polar Sun he free soloed the South Ridge of the Beak. This route had climbing up to 5.8. It's not known if it had been climbed before.

After this, Bo and Roisli went on a ski tour into Stewart Valley, while Hagen and I climbed a ten-pitch new route to the south summit of the Turret (which we believe was unclimbed). *Insomnia* (IV 5.10+ A1, 1,500') climbs the south face of the south summit. Most of the route was free climbed, but we wore plastic boots due to the conditions, and all will go free in warmer conditions with rock climbing shoes. The route was climbed in about nine and a half hours. Descent was by rappel just west of the route. This is probably the fourth route on the Turret massif.

Some days later, Bo and Roisli started a new line on Great Cross Pillar in very warm conditions. They climbed 18 pitches, mostly free up to 5.11 in rock boots, with some very good climbing. They called the route *Helluland Revisited* (V 5.11 A1). The pair relaxed for a few hours during the night, but finished the roundtrip in about 36 hours.

At the same time, Hagen and I went to do Broad Peak from the south. This ended up being mostly skiing in quite bad snow conditions due to the warm temperatures. I gave up after skiing to Broad Peak's south col, while Hagen pressed on to the very summit. The route was scree slopes from the south col to the obvious summit snowfield 100 meters below the summit, then hard snow for the final 100 meters. This is probably the easiest way to the summit and was probably first done in the 1970s.

After this, Hagen and I went to find a line on the Walker Citadel. Hoping for a possible free line, we ended up doing a snow gully on the south face. This gully was about 1000 meters long, and was climbed in the night for the best possible snow conditions. On the highest summit we found a cairn, one that wasn't made by any of the big wall expeditions that have been on this complex mountain. Therefore, either the gully line has been done before or there is some other "easy" route to the summit. This route was soloed both up and down. For lines, etc., check out the Baffin section of www.headwall.com.

ODD-ROAR WIIK, *Norway*

The Fin, Earth, Wind, and Choss, New Route. On May 7, Russel Mitrovich, Mike Libeck, and I, plus expedition camera crew Peter Mallamo and John Middendorf, departed from Clyde River on a 120-mile dogsled journey over the frozen Baffin Bay. We hired two native Inuit dogsled guides with Qullikkut Outfitters for team transportation, and we sent a gear cache ahead by skidoo. The original plan was to explore the mountains, valleys, and passes inland from the northeast coast of Baffin Island in hopes of finding an unclimbed big wall jewel, but an unusually cold, dry, and windy winter had swept the earth clean of snow, making conditions poor for land travel with dogs and sleds. Continuing north for five days on the wind-scoured sea ice allowed the team to explore the coast line of Sam Ford Fjord and the