

Variable stone quality, a couple of whippers, and some heart-pounding rock fall kept the descent interesting. We returned to camp 64 hours after leaving.

JON ALLEN

*Mt. Barille, Feeling Randy.* On April 22 Sean Easton, Dave Marra, and I flew into the Ruth Gorge with aspirations to climb new routes. We decided to “warm up” on the southeast buttress of Mt. Barille. Two days after landing I started up the first pitch, quickly discovering that we were on our way up an enormous pile of gravel. Sean climbed the second pitch to confirm it, and Dave the third. Had it not been for the arrival of our first storm we would have surely abandoned the route. We pushed on in foul weather, because we were on the only safe line in the Gorge.

We spent 11 nights on the wall, but for 4 days we were stormbound in the portaledge. The route was climbed in 15 pitches, primarily aid climbing. Most of the rock was horrible; in places we aided off pitons placed, snow-picket fashion, at the back of a hole dug with hammers. At one point we removed a 3/8-inch bolt by hand, after hauling on it. At other times we couldn't even get bolts in, as the rock disintegrated as we pounded them.

We started the route at an obvious notch 200 feet above the 'schrund, then climbed a short offwidth to face climbing that led to the left side of a large roof. Traversing under the roof we passed it at its apex, then entered a left-facing corner. The corner led to a snow patch 1,000 feet up. We then worked left to another chimney/groove system for 300 feet. Then back right onto the headwall and a straight-in crack for 300 feet. Straight up till we reached a small ridge that took us to the summit.

We named the 850-meter new route Feeling Randy, in honor of our pilot from K2 Aviation. Randy saw us returning from the climb and tipped his wings. An hour later he landed in front of our tent and handed us a pizza. We rated the route Rockies 5.9 A2 [*a Canadian sandbag rating for hard routes with loose rock—editor*]. However, the rating will probably change as our bolts erode out over the next few months.

We attempted a couple of other routes but found similar or worse rock and poor snow and ice conditions. We flew out on May 17.

CONNOR AMELUNXEN, *Canada*

## LITTLE SWITZERLAND

*Dragon's Spine, Apocryphal Arête.* I went to Little Switzerland for the first two weeks of June. There Adam George, Ben Lamm, and I climbed the Dragon's Spine. We climbed the south-facing slab to the left of the major dihedral that splits the wall. We named the route the Apocryphal Arête and rated it 5.10cR WI0-. Our route, unfortunately, didn't top out. We got to a small platform 30 feet below the actual top of the formation, but were stopped by snow, lack of balls, and fatigue. I say lack of balls because we could have gone up a steep slab that was clear of snow but opted not to chance a big fall. “I know I've done boulder problems that high and harder than that,” I told Ben and Adam, “but there's no way I'd go up that here.” Ben tried to traverse around to the north side, but that's where he encountered the snow. Oh, well. Then began our hellish descent. “I love alpine climbing, except for the going-down part,” Ben kept saying. He was getting dehydrated, and kept repeating himself, and eventually started mumbling incoherently to himself. The next two tent-

bound days did nothing to improve his sanity. He patrolled our campsite, on the hour, looking for yetis. “They’ll get us if we’re not careful!” he said. “If I hadn’t killed that one that stole my harness, we’d be fine. But they’re a revenge-minded lot!” After a few weeks back in civilization Ben got a bit saner, but then he bought a motorcycle, and it’s been downhill since.

Route description: Begin by hiking up a steep grassy gully for 200 feet to a chimney with old pitons. Rope up. Climb the chimney to a small roof. Traverse right (5.10). Rope drag gets bad, so belay at a bad stance (125 feet). Climb up and then out left onto shitty rock, continuing up until you find a good stance. There aren’t any, really. This is the only bad-quality pitch (175-200 feet). The next pitch begins on the same bad stuff but ends on a nice ledge (200 feet). Climb a wide chimney (175 feet). Climb up and left into an offwidth (100-125 feet, 5.9+). Belay where the crack splits. Climb up and right in the narrowing, increasingly flared crack (5.10R); finish on a ledge (190 feet). Climb up and right in a right-facing dihedral (200 feet). Climb to a large ledge and begin up a right-facing dihedral. Belay on a pillar below a left-facing, overhanging dihedral (200 feet). Climb up and left in the dihedral to a small roof. Pull the roof (5.10), then scramble up and belay (100 feet). Climb mostly fourth class towards what looks like the top. Eventually you get to a right-facing dihedral. Climb it to a ledge, keep going up, and pull over left to the top of the pillar where we stopped. It’s only 20 or 30 more feet, but without a bolt it would be a V2 highball friction-slab problem. Rappel to the left.

BRIAN SOHN

*Middle Troll, south face; The Throne, Smaug’s Hoard.* Eric Sullivan and I flew to Pika Glacier on August 9 and glassed The Throne’s south face. We skied to the base and found a start for our line: a left-facing, right-leaning dihedral system toward the west side of the face. The snow apex at the left edge of the face is the base of the first pitch.

Our second day was a whiteout until late afternoon, when we climbed the first pitch on aid, past hanging moss gardens, and fixed a rope. The 11th dawned clear, and we climbed the south face of Middle Troll (IV/V 5.8). Immaculate dark granite for 1,200 feet led to the summit—a spectacular diving board jutting from the apex of the west face.

On the next day, after we jumared The Throne’s first pitch, Eric attempted a hook traverse on aid but took a short fall and skinned his knuckles. I took the lead and pendulumed to a crack to the left. I climbed a slab to an overhang and pulled over (5.10). Above was 30 feet of thin face climbing on flakes, with no protection. Forty feet above my last piece and looking down at a huge ramp, I traversed right to a ledge and pounded in pins. Eric put a nasty core shot in the rope jumaring the pitch, so we called it a day.

The 13th dawned clear, so we hustled to The Throne. I led the third pitch free (5.9+), over a thin slab to a huge, bomb-bay chimney. The fourth pitch entered an overhanging dihedral system that continued for two pitches, through three large roofs. Eric led next, freeing a rotten offwidth, then aiding through a mess of loose blocks on leapfrogged cams and grinding nut placements (A3) to relative security, traversing a 20-foot horizontal roof to a spectacular hanging belay on the rightmost corner of the roof. We fixed a rope and headed home.

It then stormed incessantly for days—rain, snow, and tent-rocking wind. The only respite was downing Southern Comfort in a cold horizontal rain while taking sled runs.

On the afternoon of the 18th it suddenly cleared. We had to get our gear regardless, so we