



Mermoz, showing, (1) Padre Viento, 2001, Donahue-Ogden; (2) Andy Parkins solo; (3) Tiempo Ensueños, 1983, Donahue-Harvey (no bolts); (4) Albert-Arnold 5.12; (5) The Gambler on Guillaumet, 2001, Donahue-Ogden. *Topher Donahue*

On February 4 we returned to snow and cold in Seattle. This seemed ironic after three weeks of perfect weather in Patagonia. I thank the American Alpine Club for awarding me a Mountaineering Fellowship Grant and their continued support of climbing youth.

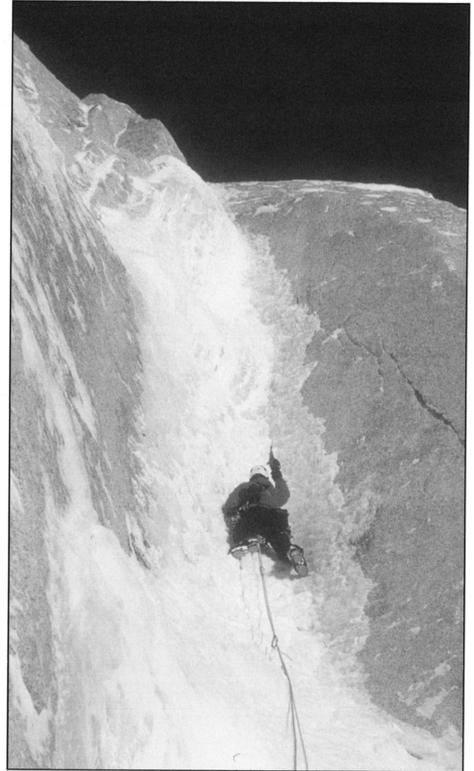
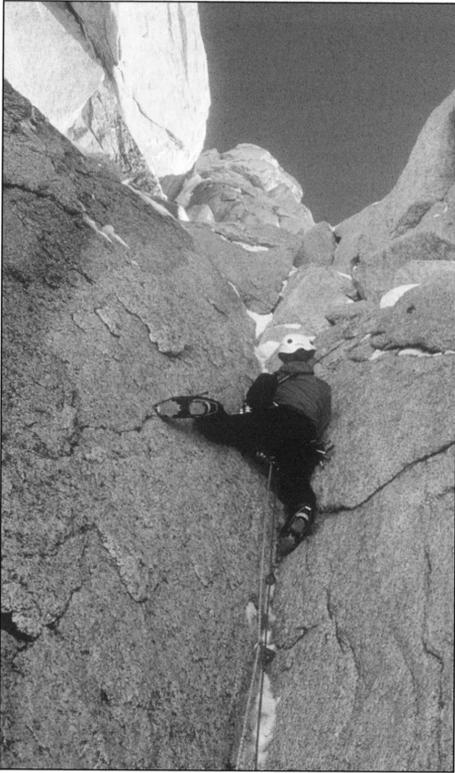
MICHAEL SCHAEFER, AAC, *The Cascade Trad Klan*

*Aguja Mermoz, northwest crest.* On October 21 Vasja Kouta, David Pehnc, and I arrive at base camp, Piedra del Fraile. The weather is bad. First we attempt Supercanaleta on Fitz Roy but turn back a few pitches above the block. Later, conditions on that route are still not good, and we change the plan. The weather is Patagonian.

On November 9 the weather becomes good. We are a little late, but we leave Piedra del Fraile anyway. At midday we are at the base of the northwest crest of the Mermoz. The first few pitches are in a great crack. After that we arrive at a snow gully, which leads to the top of the first tower. In the evening the weather becomes worse, so we fix a rope on the left side of the slope and descend to base camp. For the next few days the weather is still bad.

We have had enough waiting, and early in the morning on November 13, despite strange weather, we leave base camp. It is quite cold with a little snow and the wind is getting stronger. After just a few pitches in icy cracks, ending at the top of the next tower, we descend to base camp again. In the next 10 days the weather is befitting to Patagonia, with a lot of precipitation. We even have snow in base camp. Our expedition is coming to an end, and we have just a few days.

We try again on November 23. Today we are only Vasja and me. David has leg problems.



Jared Ogden on the first ascent of The Gambler on Guillaumet. *Topher Donahue*

Because of the recent snow, cracks are snowy and icy, and we move slowly. In the afternoon it becomes colder. We reach the summit ridge by nightfall. The wind is getting stronger, so we retreat from that point. We rappel almost all night. Early in the morning we are in base camp. (*Editor's note: This summit ridge has several blank gendarmes and might not be climbable without heavy drilling.*) The Northwest Crest of Mermoz is over 1,000 meters high, and we graded it VI+ A0 V-IV 70-degree snow/ice.

ZLATKO KOREN, *Slovenia*

*Mermoz, Padre Viento; Guillaumet, The Gambler; St. Exupery, east pillar variation.* Jared Ogden and I arrived in the Fitz Roy region on December 1 and found several unclimbed ice lines in condition. On the east face of the Mermoz we did the first ascent of Padre Viento (1,800', M6 WI5+), to the left of the Red Pillar. On the left side of the east face of the Guillaumet, we found The Gambler (1,800', M7 WI6+). With overhanging ice and five pitches of M7 mixed climbing, it could be the hardest mixed climb in the area. Both routes end on heavily gendarmed ridges, and neither reaches a true summit, just the top of a wall. On St. Exupery's east pillar we climbed a new four-pitch M6 start to the 2,500-foot Regular Route and free climbed the rest of the 5.11 A1 route at very wet 5.11+.