

COAST MOUNTAINS

Coast Mountains, remote areas summary. It was a reasonable summer in the remote sections of the Coast Mountains, but not as many “big” routes were done as in 2002. The most productive group were 10 people from the ACC Vancouver Section who enjoyed mostly hot sunny weather on the Upper Tellot Glacier in the Waddington Range in late July and early August. Many established routes were climbed, with the biggest undertaking being the 1,500m TD South Ridge of Serra Two. This got both a complete ascent from Sunny Knob, by Ade Miller and Rob Nugent, and a variation of its 500m upper portion, reached by a traverse across the southeast faces of Serras One and Two, by Janez Ales and Graham Rowbotham. Ales and Rowbotham also made three attempts to climb the Grand Cappuccino, none of which were successful.

Several new routes and variations were completed:

Stiletto Needle, variation direct start to Abrons–Milliken (2 pitches, 5.10); Ales, Rowbotham.

The Blade, left variation start to the East Buttress (2 pitches, 5.9); Miller, Nugent.

Tellot Spire #1, southeast face: Triple Crescent (4 pitches, D+ 5.11- A1); Ales, Luca Bellin, Rowbotham.

Dragonback East Peak, South Spur (3 pitches, AD+ 5.8); Toby Froschauer, Jeff Hunt, Jesse Mason.

Serra Two, east ridge, O Sole Mio (7 pitches, D+ 5.10+); Bellin, Serl.

Serra One, north face, Armonia (4 pitches, D+ WI3+ M4/5); Bellin, Serl.

In September Soren Svinth and Kasper Berkowitz climbed about 120m of mixed ground linking the start of the Northeast Face of Stiletto Peak to the upper part of the Chilton–Must, producing Academic Exercise. Climbing was mostly on 60° snow and ice with rock protection, with short 75° sections and one short vertical step.

Chris Barner and Paul Rydeen, of the Vancouver Island-based Heathens climbing club, had a prolific summer, roaming several sections of the Coast Mountains. In the Reliance Glacier area they repeated the 1,000m Southeast Ridge of Reliance, then climbed the following routes, likely new:

The 200m Northeast Rib on the Swan’s Tail (south of Silver Swan Peak, earlier called “Lyn Peak”).

The Southeast Face (200m, 50°) and Northeast Ridge (300m, 5.6/5.7) of Furrowed Peak, immediately southeast of Determination Mountain.

The Northeast Ridge of Oriana (3-4 pitches, 5.7).

They then joined their friends Alana Theroret and Darren Wilman at the Plummer Hut in the Waddington Range, where they climbed the 100m Southwest Face to the upper West Ridge of Athos Spire. They also managed two pitches of 5.9 climbing on the south face of Harvard Spire before abandoning the attempt, finding the rock much poorer than a certain recently published guidebook indicates. They finished their summer with a few days on Royal Glacier in the southern Niut Range. Here they did the possible first ascent of the NTS 8,530'/TRIM 2,602m peak at the head of Royal Glacier and climbed the Northeast Face (250m, ice) of Royal Peak.

Fred Beckey lured Ray Borbon, Dave Parker, Matt Perkins, and Bill Pilling onto the

Monarch Icefield in August. The latter four climbed the fine Northeast Buttress of Princess Mountain (350m, AD/AD+), descending the original 1953 Atkinson-Broda-Dudra-Rode Northwest Ridge and finding it surprisingly long and complicated—perhaps no surprise after all, considering the strength of the earlier party. They also did the nontechnical probable first ascent of a 9,100' peak (“Turtlehead”) between Princess and Page, via its south rib.

Perhaps the outstanding ascent of the season was the solo of the 700m slanting couloir on the north face of Blackhorn in the northern Niut Range, in late September, by Colin Haley. He flew in with Dan Aylward and Don Serl, but a warm night (+4°C at 4 a.m.) and occasional clattering stones convinced the latter two to wander up onto the north ridge. Undeterred, Colin sped up the 50°–60° route in 2-1/2 hours, encountering strenuously brittle ice but almost no rockfall. The walkout took the afternoon of the climbing day and the morning of the next, but was not as bushy and tangled as feared and, at times, verged on enjoyable.

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Southwest British Columbia (southern Coast Mountains and Canadian Cascades) summary. For a variety of reasons 2003 was not as busy as 2002. Some of the activists were elsewhere, otherwise occupied, or injured. Fires burning throughout the backcountry from July through September also curtailed activity. Nonetheless, it was a fairly productive year.

First, however, a few routes completed in 2002 but not mentioned in last year’s summary should be noted for the sake of completeness, especially as they are fairly significant. In Cathedral Park, just north of the American border on the eastern side of the Cascades, Mike Crapo and Jordan Struthers established Goats Go To Heaven, Sheep Go To Hell (10 pitches, TD- IV 5.11a V2) on the rock pillar between the south face of Mt. Grimface and the 1994 Beckey-Condon-Must route on Macabre Tower. The route is reportedly sustained at 5.10; the V2 refers to an unprotected boulder problem forming one of the cruxes. Meanwhile, at the other end of southwestern B.C., on the impressively deep fjord of Princess Louisa Inlet northwest of Powell River, Peter Rowat and John Brodie established PLI Trail (17 pitches, ED1/2 V 5.10+) on the lower part of the immense Princess Louisa Wall. They had begun attempts on this 1,400m wall back in 1986. The route, as presently defined, reaches a prominent pinnacle about halfway up the wall. It is felt by the first-ascent party to offer a completed route in its own right. The remaining 700m appears to require aid and is an ongoing project. The PLI Wall was noted as a potential “biggest wall in Canada” as early as 1971 by the climbers of the day, but PLI Trail appears to be the first actual route on the wall. A nearby peak sports an even more impressive, Trango Tower-like feature: a 1,000m slab leading to the base of a 1,200m overhanging headwall. Sadly, the rock quality on this feature is said to be poor.

In the Squamish area, 2003 saw numerous significant ascents, new routes, and crowds. Perhaps the hardest new long route was Yukon Gold (III 5.12+A0) on the Zodiac Wall, by Matt Maddaloni and Mateo Antonelli. However, the route that is likely to see the most traffic emerged once again from under the jumars, gardening implements, and wire brush of local guide Kris Wild. The Millennium Falcon (IV 5.11a/b) is a completely new 14-pitch line in the Western Dihedrals area, running from base to summit, and offers a great alternative to the classic Grand Wall for parties competent at the grade.

In the Powell River area, 2003 was fairly quiet on the new routes front. Thanks to the new guidebook, there was a marked increase in the number of visitors, but the main activists were