

Thaddeus describes our situation: “With a dwindling food and fuel supply our concerns mounted when we were pinned in a whiteout for 18 hours, just below the summit. As we melted snow the following morning, the increasing light revealed that the storm had passed, and we were able to continue. We reached the summit of Pucahirca Norte I (6,047m) at 8:25 a.m. on July 27, mentally and physically exhausted, but proud of our accomplishment.”

At first we believed we could descend the opposite side of Pucahirca, and therefore we wasted four hours exploring this possibility. But 200m down we found the glacier crumbling into a complex icefall and decided to drag ourselves back up to the summit slopes for plan B, descending our route. For the remainder of that day and all of the next we rappelled, using many Abalakov threads and buried stuff sacks filled with snow as anchors. On July 28 we reached BC to find our cook Mauro waiting patiently with a fabulous meal. We spent the next two days fishing in Lake Sajuna with hooks and line we’d bought in Huaraz and worms the locals dug up. When our vehicle and driver didn’t arrive, we made the arduous 40km hike to Pomabamba and soaked in the hot springs to relieve leg cramps. Thaddeus named the route The Power of Perspective (1,000m, TD+), in response to this game of alpine climbing.

CARLOS BUHLER, AAC

*Nevado Alpamayo, tragedies.* Alpamayo (5,947m), once selected as the world’s most beautiful mountain, sees many ascents, but, in the last years, also many accidents. On July 21, 2003 an avalanche swept away a group 150m short of the summit ridge. Eight mountaineers (four Germans, two Israelis, an Argentine, and a Dutch) were killed, and others injured. The accident occurred on the Franco-Vasque Canal [“canal” is ice fluting] route on the southwest face. In June a Japanese climber died from high altitude illness, and in July 2002 three of eight members of a European team died in an avalanche.

MARCELO SCANU, *Argentina*

*Nevado Quitaraju, south face, clarification.* The Bullock-Powell Route (AAJ 2002, p. 295-6) begins to the right of the Slovenian Route, but after continuing near that line for several pitches, diverges left to attain the arête very close to the summit.

ANTONIO GÓMEZ BOHÓRQUEZ, *Spain*

*La Esfinge, Welcome to the Slabs of Koricancha.* On June 18, Slovaks Dusan Beranek, Rado Staruch, and I reached the top of La Esfinge (5,325m), having climbed a new route, Welcome to the Slabs of Koricancha (650m, 13 pitches, V 5.13b), via the largest slabs on the east face. We spent 10 days on this amazing granite tower in the Parón Valley and named the route in honor of the Incan sun temple in Cuzco. The route starts at 4,650m at the base of the east face, next to Ganxets Glacé (VI 5.9 A2, Ortuño-Salvadó, 1996). Ganxets Glacé leads to a ledge in the middle of the wall and continues to the right through an impressive chimney. Welcome To the Slabs connects with Ganxets Glacé at the ledge, via a direct line, and continues left and up through the slabs between two distinct black water streaks to the route Here Comes the Sun (VI 5.11 A3, Bigger-Regan, 2000).

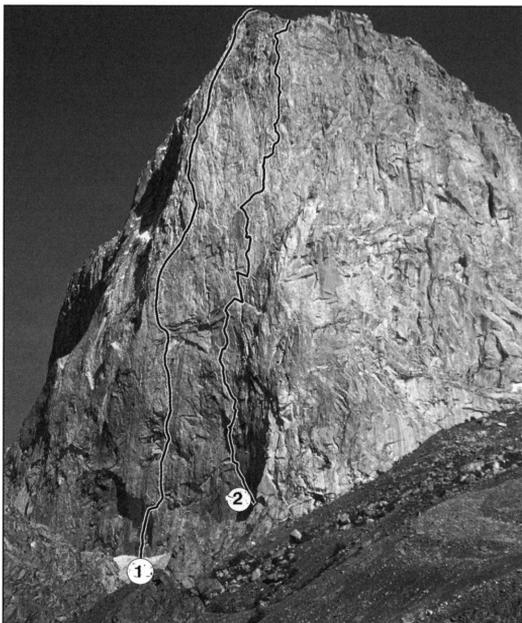
We first climbed the route using aid at 7b+ (5.12c) A1, but with an all-free line in our

minds. We placed 29 bolts at belays and 68 on the pitches, using a power drill and delicate hooking. We fixed the route to the ledge in the middle of the wall and set up portaledges. From there we climbed three difficult slab pitches between the black water streaks and four easier pitches directly to the top of The Sphinx. On June 23 Dusan, belayed by me, succeeded in free-climbing the route in one day in redpoint style. On June 25 and 26 Rado Staruch and I also climbed the route free, with Rado onsighting the crux sixth pitch (5.13b).

VLADO LINEK, SLOVAKIA, *adapted from Alpinist #5*

*La Esfinge, southeast face, The Furious Gods.* On January 1, 2003 Jeff Beaulieu and Vincent Légaré, of Quebec, Canada, reached the summit of La Esfinge (The Sphinx) by a new route. The Furious Gods (La Colera de los Dioses) (800m, VII 5.10 A4) took 17 days to climb. They placed no bolts on the pitches but 19 at belays. In the topo they left in the Casa de Guías they wrote, "Lots of rockfall. Bring lots of heads and small pitons. Don't forget a full double set of hooks." They also wrote, "1st route on the South Face," but their route is technically on the southeast face. Also, it is the second route on that face (in contrast to the extremely popular east face), with the existing route (ca 800m, UIAA-VI+ A4) established in August 1988 by Antonio Gómez Bohórquez and Iñaki San Vicente.

*Compiled with information from the CASA DE GUÍAS and ANTONIO GÓMEZ BOHÓRQUEZ, Spain*



The southeast face of La Esfinge: (1) The Furious Gods (Beaulieu-Légaré, 2003), (2) Bohórquez-San Vicente (1988). Route lines and photo: Antonio Gómez Bohórquez, author of *Cordillera Blanca, Escaladas* (ISBN 84-607-7937-8)

*La Esfinge, El Diente de la Esfinge.* In March 2003 Boud Docter (Holland), Geoff Hall (Australia), and Dave Lucas (U.K.) established a five-pitch alternative start to Cruz del Sur. The variation starts to the right with a first-pitch 7a crux. It then slants up to join the parent route. The first three pitches of Cruz del Sur were also climbed onsight and found surprisingly reasonable. However, due to constantly unsettled weather, no routes were completed.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *High Mountain INFO*

*Chacaraju Este, En el Alto, el Viento sera Nuestra Recompensa, to summit ridge.* Aymeric Clouet and I took two days to reach a camp under the face between the moraine and the glacier. This year the right moraine from Laguna 69 was the only safe access to routes on Chacaraju East