

good-weather period, temperatures above normal led to accidents, including one in which two Argentines fell 200 feet when their anchors pulled while descending from Fitz Roy's Franco-Argentine route. They suffered injuries that required the help of many climbers, as well as helicopter evacuation—a service usually not available since the closest helicopter is based 400 miles away. Another unfortunate event was a big fire caused by a careless smoker on the trail leading to Campo De Agostini; the fire burned many acres of native forest.

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*Punta Herron, Spigolo dei Bimbi, second ascent.* On the evening of October 30 David Fasel, Ueli Steck, Ralph Weber, and I, all Swiss, set up base camp at the Campo De Agostini. It snowed like it was winter. The weather had apparently been nothing but snow and rain for the past three weeks. In the following three days we carried our climbing equipment to the Norwegian Camp, a bivy under the Medialuna Glacier, which was to be the starting point of our attempts. Due to bad weather the following few days were spent bouldering near base camp and near Chalten.

On November 9 the pressure rose and the weather improved, so we headed back up to the Norwegian camp. At 12:30 a.m. we set off to attempt the Cerro Standhardt–Punta Herron–Torre Egger traverse, but after hearing rumbling noises in the snow slope leading to Standhardt we judged the avalanche danger too high and postponed the project. We descended a bit and attempted the Titanic route on Torre Egger instead. By 6:00 p.m. we had climbed eight pitches, but, realizing that we were too late for an alpine-style attempt, we descended.

The weather was still great, so the next morning we discussed what to do next. We decided to attempt Punta Herron the following night. David was unsure, so he decided to go down. At midnight, November 12, it was time to get up again. We made good progress and with first light traversed the middle ramps of Cerro Standhardt, at the end of which we traversed west, then rappelled into the Colle dei Sogni between Standhardt and Herron. Out of this col, in 1991, Ermanno Salvaterra and partners climbed a line that they christened Spigolo dei Bimbi, ascending Punta Herron's north face. It was this line that we intended to follow. Although the cracks were full of ice, the next six pitches were a fantastic rock climb. Two uncomfortable pitches up the rime ice of the snow mushroom followed. At 5:30 p.m. we reached the beautiful summit of the Punta Herron. Ours was the second ascent of the Spigolo dei Bimbi route and the third ascent of Punta Herron. We planned to rappel one and a half pitches and then climb Torre Egger in just four pitches. But a talk with David at base camp over the radio gave us something to worry about. The pressure had fallen two millibars in two hours. The first signs of bad weather were noticeable on the inland ice. We were so near Torre Egger, but couldn't risk the long descent in a storm. If we had done the rappels, the climb over Egger would have been compulsory, because, due to objective dangers we were unwilling to descend the dihedral between Herron and Egger. Therefore, we did not continue. We rappelled back to the Colle dei Sogni and from there into unknown territory on the east face, between Herron and Standhardt. At 8:30 p.m., when our headlamp died, we decided to spend the night not far from the Norwegian Camp, which we reached the next morning by 10 a.m. In all we made 28 rappels. The storm was already of considerable strength, so we were glad we had decided to descend from Herron. We continued to Campo De Agostini, where David was waiting with a fantastic meal.

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