

*Cerro Rincon, correction on second ascent.* Stephan Siegrist reported in the *AAJ 2001*, p. 293, that his team had made the second ascent of Cerro Rincon via a supposed new route. As it turns out, Siegrist, David Göttler, and Michi Wärthl had in fact repeated the first-ascent line climbed by Carlos Comesaña and Ismael Palma in 1971 (*AAJ 1972*, p.180). Also worth noting is that the side peak of Cerro Rincon that Siegrist and Wärthl then traversed to, climbed, and christened "Punta Amigos," thinking it unclimbed, had been climbed by Comesaña and Palma on their 1971 ascent. In short, Siegrist and partners retraced Comesaña and Palma's footsteps.

*Aguja Guillaumet, new route.* Marcin Szczotka and Mariusz Nowak established a new route on the west face of Aguja Guillaumet, to the left of the Padrijo route, just right of Comesaña-Fonrouge. The route was climbed onsite on February 13, 2004, at UIAA VII (5.10d); 11 pitches, plus 3 on the summit ridge, 550-600m in length. They had good conditions (in general, west faces were in better condition), but when they were on the summit ridge, a big rockfall occurred to the left of their route, taking out their gear left at the bottom of the face, including boots, crampons, camera, and rucksack. Determined to get boots at least, they descended the debris during the night searching for the equipment. After a couple of hours, in poor light, they found remnants of their rucksack ... and two pairs of boots. They felt like millionaires, since they would have had only climbing shoes for the two icefields, not to mention the five-hour trek to their tent at Rio Blanco. The camera is still at the bottom of the face.

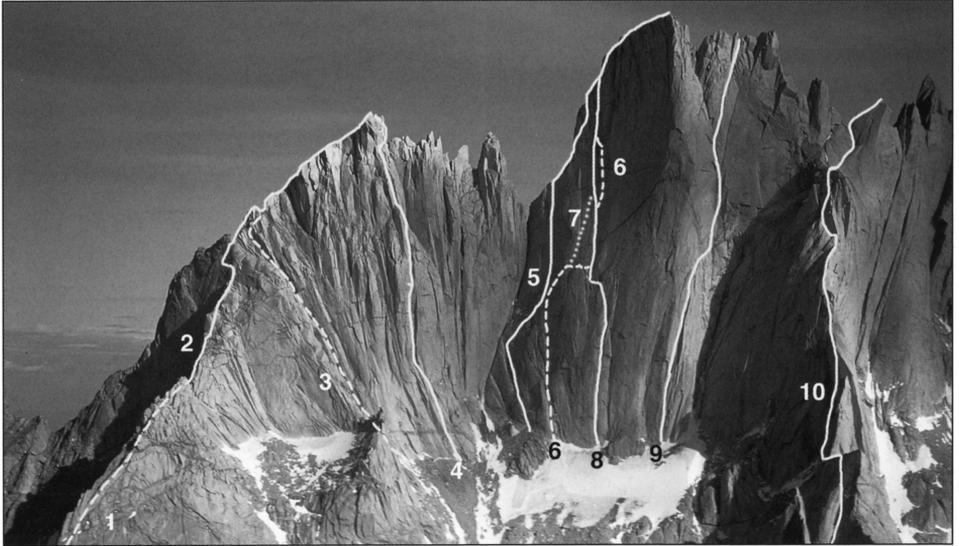
JAKUB RADZIEJOWSKI, *Poland*

*Aguja Mermoz, new variation.* On February 7, 2004, Maciej Ciesielski and I added five new pitches, onsite at VII UIAA (5.10d) with one short tension traverse (new pitches: VII-, VII-/VII, VII-, VI+/A0 and V+), on the west face slabs between Ipermermoz and Cosas Patagonicas. These new pitches are nice but far from perfect: slabs with some rotten holds. We continued by freeing onsite the Ipermermoz route (Giordani-Levitti, 1996, originally VII+ A1), making a total of 14 pitches, plus 3 pitches on the summit ridge, 700m, 9 hours. Ours was the second ascent of Ipermermoz, and the first ascent of the route to the summit. (Giordani and Levitti stopped on the arête.)

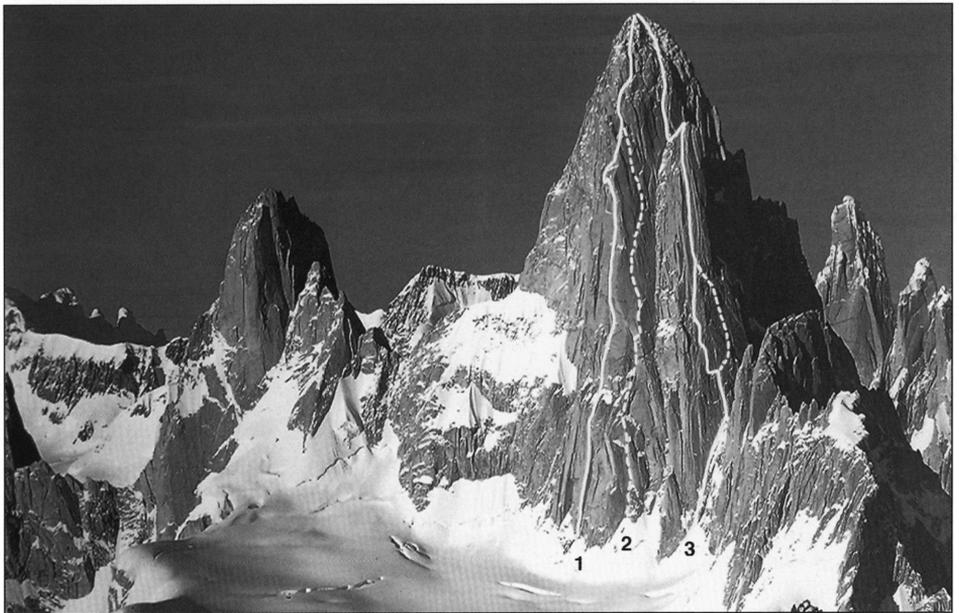
JAKUB RADZIEJOWSKI, *Poland*

*Fitz Roy, Linea de Eleganza (Elegant Line).* True alpinism isn't solely the discovery of new walls, of new lines, of difficulties to overcome, but more than anything it involves the willingness to have open eyes and an open mind in order to reach the fringes of one's own imagination. Dreams often are never realized, but when I looked into Horacio's and Luca's joyful eyes, as they scrambled up the last easy slopes to Fitz Roy's summit, I understood that we had accomplished the dream of a lifetime, one that for them had even been impossible to fathom. Watching them, I saw them experiencing sensations and emotions far larger than the heart can contain, until the wind took my own thoughts away.

How time goes by! It had been 20 years since I had been up there, though for the last three years part of my brain had been occupied by Fitz Roy's northeast face. In 2001 Fabio Leoni, Rolando Larcher, and I had tricked ourselves into believing in the good will of fate, when we ventured 500 meters onto the steep flanks of the lower northeast face. However, after six



Aguja Guillaumef's west face: (1) Giordani Variation (Giordani, 1990); (2) Fonrouge-Comesaña (Fonrouge-Comesaña, 1965); (3) Polish route (Nowak-Szczotka, 2004); (4) Padrijo (Gatt-Gatt, 1993). Aguja Mermoz's west and northwest face: (5) Original Route (Cuiñas-Olaechea-Vieiro, 1974); (6) Ipermermoz (Giordani-Levitti, 1996); (7) Polish Variation (6c, Ciesielski-Radziejowski, 2004); (8) Cosas Patagonicas (Colombo-Canfaloniere-Corbetta-Galbiati-Maggioni-Spinelli-Tazzi, 1989); (9) Barriga Patagonica (Koren-Mali, 2000); (10) Northwest Ridge (Koren-Kouta, 2001). *Rolando Garibotti*



Cerro Fitz Roy's east face and north pillar: (1) Linea de Eleganza (Codo-Fava-Orlandi, 2004); (2) El Corazon (Ochsner-Pitelka, 1992); (3) Casarotto route (Casarotto, 1979) and Variation (Kearney-Knight, 1984). The major summits in the background: Aguja Poincenot (left), Cerro Torre and Torre Egger (right). *Elio Orlandi*

long, painful nights in our portaledge, hanging onto our hope, we endured the inevitable “fracaso” (failure) of our “Todo o Nada” (all or nothing) approach. We were chased away by avalanches in one of the most brutal storms that I can remember.

After the attempt with Fabio and Rolly, I returned to the northeast face twice before returning yet again in December 2003, convinced that such a strong call could not be a mistake. This time I was accompanied by the joyful enthusiasm of Fabio “Giac” Giacomelli’s first time in Patagonia, and by Horacio Codò and Lucas Fava, both of whom had done minor ascents in the area. Horacio and Lucas live in Chalten, where Fitz Roy is their myth and an ever-present postcard in their daily lives.

Weather during the second half of December and most of January did not allow much progress, but in spite of the winter-like conditions, we surmounted the lower 600 meters, climbing cracks and dihedrals filled with ice, as well as difficult verglassed slabs. Because of the conditions, and mostly for safety, we fixed ropes up to a comfortable ledge half way: the “Gran Hotel Patagonicus.” This ledge was a godsend, for it allowed us to equip the crucial slabs of the upper half of the route without returning to the ground.

In early January Giac’s vacation time ended, and, heartbroken, he had to return to Italy. With Horacio and Luca we went back to the “cueva de hielo” (snow cave) in Paso Superior, where we waited patiently for a few more days. The wind rarely subsides, but I think that after we had waited so long, he understood our simplicity and took pity. Under a dreamy blue sky we walked incredulous toward the wall, tiptoeing as if not to disturb the stillness.

It is said that in every work of genius one finds again thoughts previously discarded. Climbing the elusive, never-ending slabs of the upper section, each day we felt discarded thoughts being reborn, transforming themselves into a beautiful and elegant line. At the end of every day we returned to the Gran Hotel Patagonicus, under the auspices of a moon that every day grew bigger.

Then, as in all stories with a happy ending, after six nights on the wall, including a very cold one near the summit, and seven days immersed in a dream, we woke suddenly, holding our breath as we watched Patagonia from above, from Fitz Roy’s summit. Our only sorrow was a solitary falling stone that broke my hand the morning after we descended to our comfortable ledge, while we were retrieving ropes.

As I descended toward the glacier, I could not help but cringe upon seeing the dry rock, free of snow and ice after eight days of perfect weather. During our entire ascent we had found difficult conditions: snow on the lower wall, cracks filled with ice during our first four days on the upper portion, avalanches while the wall cleaned itself off. Looking at the clean granite, I wished I could redo our climb free, but my good luck had tricked me, sending me home with a bitter souvenir.

Linea di Eleganza (1,250m, VI 6c A3 90°/M7) follows an obvious line between El Corazon and Devils Dihedral. We reached the summit on February 7, 2004. We believe that in better conditions it would be possible to climb this route free.

ELIO ORLANDI, *Italy (translated by ROLANDO GARIBOTTI)*

*Fitz Roy, Slovak Route, third ascent and first free ascent; Desmochada, El Facón.* Patagonian weather seemed like it was never going to let up this season for any long spell. Does it ever? December brought more snow than all of most winters. In one night in late December the