



Stefan Glowacz and Robert Jasper approaching the north side of Cerro Murallon. (1) Ferrari Route (VI 5.10 A2/3 80°, Aldè-Ferrari-Vitali, 1984), (2) The Lost World (1,000m, M8, Fengler-Glowacz-Jasper, 2003). Both routes closely follow the ridges as seen in this photo. *Klaus Fengler*

Blue sky, and not a cloud to be seen; it was our day. Robert got to work and lead for the first three rope lengths. Stefan cleaned the pitches and I jumared to the belays. The terrain became difficult. Robert was able to push his way up the cracks with his crampons on. After three lengths it was Stefan's turn, who preferred rock shoes. Stefan faltered during a traverse, where the protection was scant. To make matters worse he was moving into mixed terrain. Cursing and with great strain he got through this rope rope-length and was able to fix the next belay.

In good granite one can build super belays. Even the protection was easy to fix. The steep parts were behind us. Stefan and Robert alternately lead. As soon as the fissures were full of ice Robert continued climbing in a mixed style. About 5 p.m. we climbed out of the rock terrain. Over snow mushrooms and steep high expanses we reached the summit of Cerro Murallon. Our



Robert Jasper drytooling on The Lost World. *Klaus Fengler*

joy was immense. In the distance we could see the Lago Argentino and Fitz Roy. Robert planned the descent on a northeasterly direction over the glacier. In this direction we could get to the glacier that lay between Cerro Murallon and Cerro Don Bosco quite easily.

However already on the descent we encountered tremendous cloudbanks on the Chilean side. The wind picked up and soon we were more and more shrouded in icy fog. We had already descended one flank, however we could no longer find the way down. We waited and hoped the clouds would clear enough that we could find a safe way down. It became critical. Should we wait and look for a place to bivouac, or should we return to the summit and rappel via our ascent route? We decided to rappel. On the summit and to the north the visibility was still very good.

After a final rest and preparation we descended via our ascent route. Robert looked out for safe belays and then we rappelled in mammoth fashion into known territory. We needed the whole night for the rappel. Three times the rope got caught up in the rocks as we pulled them down. We needed to cut off a good 30 meters of rope, as we couldn't get the ropes free.

The new day had already arrived as we reached to our base camp exhausted after nearly 27 hours. In our new route "The Lost World" (1,000m, M8) we left behind a good rappel route. That same afternoon our cameraman Sebastian and I hiked out 14 hours from base camp to the "Rifugio Pascale" via the inland ice glacier. We slept there briefly and then hiked a further five hours back to the Estancia Christina. Sebastian reached his return trip on time and I had two days to wait until Stefan and Robert also returned safely.

KLAUS FENGLER, *Switzerland*

*Editor's note: Fengler, Glowacz, and Jasper reached the west summit of Cerro Murallon, but did not reach its main summit. The main summit is the east summit, which is 60 meters higher and one kilometer east of the west summit, along a broad glaciated ridge. Murallon's main summit has had only two ascents to date (Ferrari and partners, 1984; Karo and partner, 2003). On some maps the west summit of Murallon is incorrectly marked as the highest point of the mountain.*

## SOUTHERN PATAGONIA, CHILE

### TORRES DEL PAINE NATIONAL PARK

*Cerro Almirante Nieto, various attempts; various other ascents.* Grega Lacen and I, Slovenes, came to the park on December 1. The next day's weather was great, so we went up to try the beautiful, unclimbed northwest pillar of Almirante. It was harder than we expected. That day we did 350m of climbing up to 5.11-, on less-than-perfect rock. We then came to a blank section where we would need aid-climbing equipment or bolts. This gear was still in our bags, which had yet to be ferried to base camp, so we were forced to retreat. The weather then turned bad, with constant rain. On December 14 the weather showed a slight improvement, so we started from base camp at 6 a.m. and did the Bonington Route on the Central Tower in 24 hours round trip in bad conditions, cracks full of snow and ice. We climbed in big boots and mostly aided. We next tried the easier-looking southwest ridge of Cerro Almirante Nieto, which is unclimbed. I made nine attempts but was driven back by bad weather every time. After Grega left I tried with Nejc Bevk, also a Slovene. Our highest point was 120m below the top of the ridge. We did 11 long, free rock

itches (up to 5.10d) and around 300m of a snow-and-ice ramp (up to 60°). On our last attempt Nejc injured his hand from stonefall and was unable to climb for a week.

Later in January and in early February I went to the Chalten Massif, where I climbed *Aguja De L'S* via the Josh Aike Route (450m, 6a) with Slovenes Mojca Zerjav and Nastja Davidov, the Benitiers Route on El Mocho (500m, 6c A2) with Mojca, and the Franco-Argentine route on Fitz Roy with Israeli Jhonatan Ben Noshe. So that was my three-month trip to Patagonia: full of bad luck and not as I expected, but fine anyway.

TOMAZ JAKOFCIC, *Slovenia*

*Central Tower of Paine, South African Route.* A team of six Mountain Club of South Africa members—Alard Hufner, Mark Seuring, Michael Mason, Dermot Brogan, Marianne Pretorius, and Voitec Modrzewski—spent December 2003 and January 2004 climbing the South African Route on the Central Tower of Paine. The east face of the Central Tower was first climbed in 1973/74 by a South African team of Paul Fatti, Mike Scott, Art McGarr, Mervyn Prior, Roger Fuggle, and Richard Smithers. At the time it was one of the largest rock faces ever climbed and a milestone in big-wall climbing. This route stayed unrepeated for 30 years. The route follows the obvious corner just right of the center of the tower, and is graded 5.10 A3. We free climbed the slabs of the first 400m and then aided most of the way to the shoulder, where we could free climb again.

Our first day on the rock was December 15, and we reached the summit ridge on January 13. During this period 15 days were spent actually climbing and the rest of the time was spent hauling gear and food or waiting for better weather.

We fixed lines most of the way, to about 250m below the summit of the 1.2km-high face. Ropes were cleaned on descent, but sections snagged on flakes, so we had to cut and leave them. It was fascinating to find sections of iced-up rope and old gear left by the pioneers 30 years ago. Mark, Marianne, Voitec, and I topped out on the summit ridge of the Central Tower. Dermot and Mike were unable to be with us, due to injuries and early flights home. Marianne was the first woman to climb the east face of the Central Tower. We reached the summit ridge at 19:00 in howling winds, gusting mist, and light snowfall. Due to these conditions and the long way back to the portaledges, we decided it was not safe to continue to the summit [only a few easy pitches remained to reach the summit—Ed.]. The joy of finally standing on the top of the South African Route was overwhelming. For 20 minutes we savored our excitement, as wind would clear the mist, revealing breathtaking views of beautiful scenery below.

ALARD HUFNER, *The Mountain Club of South Africa*

*South Tower of Paine, east face, Self Right to Suicide.* In January and February 2004 Boguslaw Kowalski, Wojtek Wiwatowski, and I found ourselves in deserted Torres del Paine. Since we had heard much about bad weather in the area, we came ready for hard conditions. Either the reports are exaggerated, or we were lucky. With so much rock and nobody in sight, we had numerous options. We decided on the South Tower, since it has the highest summit and is the most remote of three towers. Besides, it hosted only three routes and a number of unfinished projects, compared to tens of routes on the other towers. At first we wanted to climb on the