

We spent the few hours of darkness on the lichen ledge, pretending to sleep, before rappelling the remainder of the route in a light rain.

RICH LUDWIG, AAC



The backside of the Vampire Spire, showing the end of The Dark Side. *Doug La Farge*

*Vampire Spire, The Coffin and The Dark Side.* On July 17 Pat Goodman and I began what seems to have become our annual journey to the Vampire region of Canada's Northwest Territories. A blown alternator left us stranded in Fort St. John, B.C., for three days, stretching the 70-hour drive into five days. This delay worked out to our advantage, allowing us to rendezvous with Doug La Farge, Rich Ludwig, and John Sedelmeyer at Warren LaFave's Inconnu Fishing Lodge and share the cost of the flight into the climbing area.

When we arrived, the weather was shaping up to be a repeat of the previous year. But after a week it cleared, allowing us to go climbing. Doug, Rich, and John began work on an aid route up the south face of Vampire Spire [Nosferatu, see above] that Pat and I had attempted last season. The following day Pat and I completed our new route, The Coffin (V 5.11 C1), which follows a striking large crack

feature splitting the southwest face of the Vamp. To our dismay this route didn't go free, due to an eternally seeping roof.

Earlier, while circumnavigating the Spire, we saw what we believed could be a free route up the northwest face. On August 17 we completed a wandering climb on the northwest face following splitter dihedrals, overhanging fist cracks, and several moderate pitches, to establish The Dark Side (IV 5.11). We believe that ascent to be the first free and only one-day ascent of the formation.

HANK JONES

## COAST MOUNTAINS

*Coast Mountains, remote areas summary.* 2004 was an astonishing year in the Coast Mountains, especially the Waddington Range. The new Waddington Guide was felt dramatically, with perhaps triple the usual number of climbers entering the range. Moreover, there was a shift in

focus: with better information available, climbers chose objectives better suited to their talents and interests, rather than all lining up for the Bravo Glacier route on Mt. Waddington. More moderate mountaineers went to the Franklin, Upper Tellot, and Radiant Glaciers, while the “harder lads” settled in at Sunny Knob, Waddington-Combatant Col, and the upper Dais. The result was an outburst of climbing, the likes of which had never been seen in the Range.

At the moderate end of the spectrum, about a dozen people from the BC Mountaineering Club enjoyed numerous ascents on the Upper Tellot and around the Plummer Hut. A five-person Alpine Club of Canada party later did likewise. A 15-member party from Korea perhaps lacked glacier-travel skills necessary for the undertaking, and their stay was fairly short, but one wonders if their visit indicates a trend toward more foreign visitors. A four-man party from Britain spent a productive time at Rainy Knob, before a slip on snow on the South Ridge of Serra 2 resulted in an injured climber and the first helicopter long-line evacuation the Range has seen. One hopes this is not indicative of another trend. Finally, Chris Barner and Paul Rydeen from Vancouver Island made their annual foray into the Range, accompanied by four friends, the result being first ascents of both Couplet Towers and numerous other climbs in and around the Radiant cirque.

Hard repeat ascents abounded:

- Skywalk (600m, ED1 5.9) on Combatant was climbed three times, as was Kshatrya (735m, D+ 5.8).
- The Wiessner-House (770m, TD+ 5.8 60°) on Waddington had its eighth ascent (Jim Daubert, Bill Enger, Nick Ranicar, and Colin Wooldridge) and the Risse Route (800m, TD+ 5.8 snow/ice to 50°) its third (Jake Larson, Enger, Ranicar, Wooldridge).
- The South Ridge of Serra 2 (1,500m, TD 5.9 45°) almost turned into a trade route, with four or five ascents, two in a day.
- Serra 5 (1,450m, TD 5.8 mixed) received its fifth and sixth ascents (Doug Artman and Tom Reid; Mark Bunker and Colin Haley).
- Sundog (525m, ED1 5.11a) on the Blade (Justin Cassels and Ari Menitove) was repeated.
- And, in a seven-day tour de force, the complete Waddington Traverse (4,000m of ascent, 10km of travel, ED+ to 5.9 to 60°) got its first repeat, by Bunker and Haley. There were also new routes, some relatively minor and not described here, but many of which were hard rock routes done in excellent style and sometimes astonishing speed.
- Janez Ales and Jia Condon established two new routes on the right side of the east face of Dragonback, the first being five pitches to 5.11, the second two pitches on a subsidiary righthand pillar at 5.11+.
- Andrew Boyd and Derek Flett established a route, with 300m of scrambling and simul-climbing, then six pitches to 5.10+, up crack systems on the west face of Denti form's West Peak. Later, in a fast day-trip from Sunny Knob and return to a bivvy at the base, the pair climbed the rounded arête in the center of the west face of the Blade (11 pitches to 5.11 on good rock), with descent via Sundog.
- Justin Cassels, Ari Menitove, and John Simms climbed a new line, Drag Queen, on the southwest pillar of Stiletto, up a striking dihedral right of the existing line. [See report below.] Cassels and Menitove previously climbed the west face of Bicuspid Tower via a good six-pitch 5.11 line.
- Jeff Phillippe and Bret Sarnquist did a new four-pitch 5.10c route on the northeast

face of Phantom Tower. They previously made the second ascent of the Flavelle-Lane Couloir (980m, TD+ 5.8 55° [minor 90°]) on the Northwest Summit of Waddington and continued to the Main Summit by making the second ascent of the loose Northwest Ridge (220m, D 5.7). They also climbed the 630m, D+ South Face of Tiedemann Tower, with a beautiful 5.10c splitter variation on the middle pillar.

- Chris Atkinson and Kevin McLane established Line of Fire on the Northwest Peak of Combatant. This 14-pitch, stonefall-threatened ice line climbs a couloir immediately right of the Skywalk pillar, with bulges to 90° on pitches 11–14. Four pitches of rock to 5.9 then reach the summit.
- John Furneaux and Matt Maddaloni's new route on the southeast side of the Incisor was the highlight of the summer. See individual report below.

It was the most productive season in the Waddington Range since the days when the “old-timers” were knocking off first ascents.

Elsewhere in the Coast Mountains, the finest route of the summer was the Northeast Ridge of Mt. Talchako (3,037m), east of Ape Lake. [See individual report below.]

Chris Barner and Paul Rydeen climbed among the peaks at the head of Gillman Creek. This area south of Doran Creek had only previously been visited by John Clarke, who did several first ascents in 1974. Barner and Rydeen found excellent rock and fine lines, including one nine-pitch 5.9 that they likened to the East Ridge of Bugaboo Spire.

Jordan Peters, Andrew Rennie, and Don Serl walked into the Falls River valley. The highlight of the trip was the third ascent of the fine, and underestimated, 1964 National Pillar on Mt. Winstone (D+, scrambling plus 14 pitches to 5.8). Rennie and Serl later climbed a short but enjoyable rock route on the steep, crack-riddled granite of the southwest face of the Beehive.

In May, Gord Betenia, Drew Brayshaw, and Don Serl made yet another spring foray into the Niut Range. Basing themselves on a lovely 1,950m bench about 3.5km east of Quartz Peak (2,942m), they made a couple of ascents of 2,600m+ summits to the northwest of camp, then tackled Quartz. About 450m of 45°–55° neve on the east face led to a notch on the northeast ridge. This encompassed about 10 ropelengths of entertaining mixed snow and rock, with a few significant slab avalanches being kicked out of pockets on the right (lee) flank. Direct descent back into the access valley not being possible, they made a long descent involving 2.5km of ridge traverse southeast, a short rappel, 1,000m of descent east over another 2.5km to the lake at the head of Whitesaddle Creek, and finally a 350m ascent northwest back to camp. The outing consumed 22 hours (650m, D+ 5.8 M4 45°–55°).

DON SERL, *Alpine Club of Canada, AAC*

*Southwest British Columbia (southern Coast Mountains and Canadian Cascades) summary.* Although it was a great year for new routes in the Coast Mountains as a whole, 2004 was not particularly newsworthy in the southwest BC region, probably because the good weather took climbers further afield.

The Powell River and Vancouver Island regions were quiet, with some alpine activity ongoing but not much with respect to long routes or new alpine climbs. Squamish saw quite a lot of activity, which is being compiled by Kevin McLane for the latest edition of his guidebook, which should come out in spring 2005.