

We named the route Back At Bob's (7 pitches, IV 5.11 A2) in memory of Bob Enagonio of Canmore, Alberta who perished on a ski traverse from Rogers Pass to the Bugaboos in May. Bob's presence will always be felt in the mountains of Canada, especially in his favorite range, the Bugaboos.

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CANADIAN ROCKIES

Canadian Rockies, summary. The big news of the summer of 2004 in the Canadian Rockies was a visit in July by the German soloist Frank Jourdan. He warmed up on the Greenwood-Jones (IV 5.8 A1) and the Supercouloir (IV 5.8) on the north faces of Mts. Temple and Deltaform, respectively, before moving on to the remote Mt. Assiniboine. There, he made the likely second ascent of the Cheesmond-Dick (V 5.9 A2) on the huge east face; a feat made especially bold by the summer heat and resulting intense rockfall.

Rockfall also marked a fine attempt in early August on the unrepeatable Cheesmond-Blanchard a.k.a. the North Pillar (VI 5.10d A2) of North Twin. Chris Brazeau and Ian Welsted bivouacked below the 1,500m face, intent on a one-day ascent. Things did not pan out quite as planned, but by the end of first day they reached the Traverse of the Chickens ledge below the crux headwall, halving the time of the first-ascent team. Owing to a hot, dry summer, rockfall was especially intense, and only four pitches into the second day a falling stone broke Welsted's arm, dictating retreat. A stuck zip line and a chopped lead rope reduced the two to 25m rappels, and they spent another two nights on the mountain, leaving their entire rack before reaching bottom. Prior to heading up North Twin, Welsted had soloed the Emperor Ridge of Mt. Robson in a 33-hour trip car-to-car, including eight hours spent sitting out a whiteout on the summit.

On a more moderate note, in late July Dave Marra, Dana Ruddy, and Tom Schnugg made the first ascent of King's Couloir (III), an aesthetic 600m snow and ice route on the northwest face of Mt. Belanger, in the backcountry of the Fryatt Creek valley. In August Jason Thompson and Colin Woolridge made the first traverse of the three summits of the remote and rarely frequented South Goodsir (III 5.4), Goodsir Centre, and North Goodsir (III 5.4). During the same month, taking advantage of exceptionally dry conditions, Tim Haggerty, Ruddy, and Raphael Slawinski made the first car-to-car one-day ascent of Mt. Alberta, climbing the Japanese route (V 5.5) in 18 hours roundtrip.

On the pure rock climbing front, Shep Steiner recruited Scott Milton to make the first free ascent of Verstiegheit (8 pitches, 5.12c) on Yamnuska. Steiner started the route eight years ago, drilling the bottom four pitches on lead and the top four on rappel. He had made a number of attempts at freeing the route, but until last summer all were repulsed by hard climbing, bad rock, and a high fear factor. Verstiegheit now stands as the most demanding multi-pitch pure rock climb in the range.

A wet fall resulted in never-before-seen smears appearing everywhere, from Kananaskis Country to the Icefields Parkway, precipitating a flurry of first ascents. In November Chris Delworth, Dave Edgar, and Eamonn Walsh climbed The Silmarillion (150m, WI6X) up Storm Creek, linking thin ice and anemic pillars. The tireless Guy Lacelle, accompanied by a variety of partners, climbed two new routes in the cirque between Castle and Protection mountains: the

aptly named *Paradis Perdu* (170 m, WI5), with Audrey Gariepy, Mathieu Audibert, and Heather Slowinski, and *The Wicked Witch of the West* (190m, M6R/X WI6R), with Rich Marshall. Other than *Lacelle*, no one was willing to make the four-to-five-hour approach more than once. Farther north, on Mt. Wilson, Jon Walsh and Paul McSorley attempted the often-looked-at line of ice in a bowl up and right of the popular *Ice Nine*. Climbing four pitches of rock the first day, they left ropes fixed. Returning the next day, they climbed the remainder of the route to establish *Rivers of Babylon* (480m, M6+ WI5+R), one of the finest creations of the season.

Blurring the line between waterfall and alpine climbing, Valeriy Babanov and Slawinski put up two new routes in December. Riders on the *Storm* (500m, WI4+) on the east face Mt. Sarraill in Kananaskis Country ascended a ribbon of snow-ice over three tiers to snowfields below the summit block. Darkness and bad weather prevented the pair from continuing to the summit. This striking but avalanche-prone line had been attempted in the fall of 1995 by Barry Blanchard and Mark Twight, who retreated in a storm after a couple of pitches. Farther north, Babanov and Slawinski established *Aurora* (600m, WI6) on the north face of Mt. Amery. From a camp below the face, classic north face terrain led to a spectacular finish: four pitches of intricate ice climbing up a series of pillars weeping from the edge of the summit seracs. In Slawinski's opinion, the final cascade stands out as one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the Rockies.

In February visiting Swiss climbers Michael Boos and Pierre Darbellay ventured onto the north face of the *White Pyramid*, home of the notorious unrepeatable *Reality Bath*, established by Twight and Randy Rackliff in 1988. Although *Reality Bath* appeared to be formed, the seracs overhanging the route looked, if possible, even more threatening than usual. Instead Boos and Darbellay climbed a new and slightly safer line to the right, *Dread Circus* (500m, WI5+). Of note is the fact that Boos flew into Calgary the evening before dispatching the climb in a 17-hour effort car-to-car.

On the full-on alpine scene, in November Scott Semple, Greg Thaczuk, and Eamonn Walsh made the second ascent of *Striving for the Moon* (1,400m, WI6) on the east face of Mt. Temple, taking over 36 hours in a continuous push car-to-car. Semple and Thaczuk attempted the route earlier in the month, but after climbing through the technical sections, floundered in bottomless snow on the "easier" east ridge. In February a high pressure system descended on the range, spurring further action. Semple, Slawinski and Walsh took advantage of the fine weather and snow conditions to make the first winter ascent of Mt. Alberta. With even steep rock plastered in snow, they settled for the *Japanese Route* which, as a consequence of tactics which resembled unionized labor practices more than single-push alpinism, they climbed with one bivouac on the summit ridge. It was Slawinski's fourth time to the summit in as many years. Later the same week, Rob Owens and Mike Verwey made the third ascent of *The Wild Thing* (VI 5.9 A3 WI4) on the northeast face of Mt. Chephren. The two spent two nights and three full days on the route, finding that even with the full arsenal of new mixed techniques the route remained a serious challenge. In an eerie reenactment of Ward Robinson's misadventure on the first ascent, Owens took a long fall while leading the crux A3 chimney, losing one of his tools.

Unsettled weather and the departure of many of the activists to destinations ranging from Alaska to the Middle East meant a quiet end to the season. Of note was Babanov and Slawinski's first ascent of an often looked at but surprisingly moderate line on Mt. *Andromeda*. M31 (IV M3/4) ascends snowfields to the right of the classic *Andromeda Strain* to gain a hanging snow ramp, topping out on the very summit of the mountain.