

At 51 degrees south latitude, in the Magellan region, south of the Skyring Sound, is the Isla Riesco. This beautiful peak is on Isla Riesco's west side. It has been admired for many years, mostly from the ocean, but the common adverse weather and the reputation of swamps on the approach have kept climbers from the summit. After spending a month scouting a good route and approach, while persistent wind and snow made it impossible to attempt the peak, we decided to return.

This time we were a group from a NOLS Patagonia mountaineering course: students Jeff



Paine Chico, showing Eol. Tomaz Jakovic

Worken, Andrew Ramsay, Taylor Kettler, Tristan Stetson, Simon Koster, Charlie Parker, Colin O'Brady, Paul Dante, Rick Rudolf, David Olson, Jeff Bulligton, Chip Hayes, David Ferreira, and Sam Tyler; and instructors Phillip Schneider, Galen Dossin, and I. We arrived on two big Zodiacs and got to shore on the far southwest side of the Riesco Island, in a little bay called Puerto Cascade on the map. We were left with a month of food, fuel, and equipment. On day 8 the weather showed signs of improvement, so that night we prepared to attempt the peak in a hard two-day push. The next day we made a high snow camp, 2km northwest of Peak 990m, 0.5 km east of the valley between Peaks 990m and 931m, and 5.5 km southeast of the summit of Ladrillero. The following day, November 10, was clear. We traveled west until reaching the start of the main south ridge of Cerro Ladrillero. From there we traveled up for around half km to a big, snow-glacier-covered plateau, from which we continued pretty much straight north to the summit. After eight hours of straightforward glacier travel, the entire group reached the summit of Cerro Ladrillero (1,722m), a classic rimed formation with a fantastic view. We were already in the company of strong winds. When we arrived back at camp, at 19:30, a new bad weather system had moved in, and the sky was getting dark fast, but we were happy with what we'd done in the two-day weather window. The rest of the month we explored satisfied with having climbed a significant new peak and running another course in an exploratory area.

CHRISTIAN STEIDLE, *Chile*

TIERRA DEL FUEGO

Yorkminster Group, exploration and Monte Vavel attempt. In February Krzysztof Wielicki, Jacek Fluder, Włodzimierz Szczesny, and I, after traveling for 80 hours from Poland, set up base camp in the remote glacier valley of the Cordillera Darwin, Tierra del Fuego. It was a beautiful place, by the shore of the eastern gulf of Bahia Parry, opposite the side of the fjord where the 1971

New Zealand expedition installed their base camp. Berries were plentiful, as well as firewood and running water.

To get there we chartered a boat in Porvenir for \$3,500. We swore that next time we would hire the helicopter to avoid this sailing in madness (and sickness). As we had just two weeks for exploring, we focused only on the unexplored west side of the Darwin Glacier. We intended to climb the 3.5km-long north crest, a logical way to the summit of Monte Vavel, which is west of the main peak of the Yorkminster group.

After a couple of days struggling to the “pass with the view” and after a few more to get to the foot of our goal, we had only two days complete the route. After six hours of easy but tricky climbing (we left 50m of fixed rope on the lower, rocky part of the crest), we were forced to go down because of a storm. We reached the icy col just below the huge rock wall (main difficulties). We left one Piranha tool, pitons, and carabiners.

During our short stay we enjoyed just one full sunny day. The rest was more or less cloudy and windy, with rain and snow. The temperature was 7°–15°C during the day and about minus 5°C at night.

There is a good place to spend a night on the “pass with the view,” even during a hurricane. Go to the south side of the pass and dig a snow cave. During our stay we noticed three condors, the only signs of life in that region. In exploring the area close to the pass, we got to the top of the isolated lower summit of the mountain bordering the pass on the south. We called it Punte Mirador as there is a good view of the entire area of the Darwin Glacier.

Although the mountains in this region are only up to 2,400m high, they rise from the sea. For that reason one should be prepared for at least two days and a couple kilometers of tricky climbing, weather permitting.



Polish expedition approach to Monte Vavel and the highest point reached
ANDRZEJ ŚMIALY