

Bugaboo Spire, Divine Intervention; Snowpatch Spire, Bugaburl; Pigeon Spire, FFA of Cleopatra's Alley. On August 1 I joined Chris Brazeau for a trip to the Bugaboos. Our first objective was an incomplete aid line to the right of the Midnight Route, in the obvious corner system between that route and the Harvey-Roach on the east face of Bugaboo Spire. Stepping onto the face at noon, Chris quickly established us on the terrace below the impressive stepped corner system. The first corner proved to be an amazing pitch with sustained stemming and laybacking enlivened with several roof cruxes. Chris rocked up with his gap-tooth grin, utterly stoked, then I encouraged him to follow the line of weakness which just dragged us toward the Harvey-Roach. Chris reversed a few moves and cranked out an intimidating undercling, getting us back on the plumb line. A few joyful whoops escaped Chris's usually reticent lips as he discovered a perfect golden finger splitter that led to a comfy belay perch.

The next pitch proved key to the route, and from the belay things didn't look promising. It was getting late, 5:00 p.m., so I tentatively started up, figuring I would just be checking it out for our next attempt. I worked through a section of incipient seams by welding a couple of blades, which we left in place for future ascents. Regaining the main corner, we started to question our crack-of-noon strategy, but with several cruxes below us, it would be a shame to retreat now. The rest of the climb went quickly, with sustained 5.10 leading to a high point on the Northeast Ridge route. We took a minute to shake hands, give a bro hug, and languish in the endorphin shower that comes from such an intense experience. We couldn't believe that we'd left camp at 11:30 and somehow established a 300m+ 5.11 classic with no falls or A0 bullshit. A close call on the descent involved me and a large block that barely missed shearing Chris off the wall. This inspired the route's name, Divine Intervention. Its excellent sustained climbing, close proximity to camp, and sunny exposure will hopefully make it a popular classic. We experienced no loose rock or the legendary stonefall that has tarnished the east face's reputation, probably because we weren't directly below the famed Northeast Ridge with its climber-induced hazards.

The next day we woke late and had a leisurely breakfast. I was a little sore from the tumble, but my psyche wasn't the slightest bit sore, and Chris is perpetually psyched. So after our second cup, we racked up with the intent of a new line on the west face of Snowpatch: the screamingly obvious corner system between the North Summit Direct and the Tower Arête. Our late start put us at the base of the wall just before noon. After a couple of surprisingly tricky pitches on the visionary Gibson-Rohn line we veered off. Above was an unappealing, wet, 5.9ish chimney sort of thing, to the left an intimidating right-leaning corner reminiscent of Astroman's fabled Enduro Corner. The rock climber I truly am won out over the alpinist I'm truly not, so up the corner I went. The overhanging, leaning nature of the corner, coupled with body-pumping technicalities, made me oblivious to the fact that it had started snowing. I set up a hanging belay sheltered from the storm and cunningly short of a mean-looking offwidth. It was obvious that we had to go down, as the storm was full-on, the Howsers had vanished, and everything was soaked. But rapping and cleaning the pitch looked more involved than Chris seconding. By the time Chris was halfway it had stopped snowing, and by the time he reached the anchor it was sunny and the rock had dried. No reason to bail now. After three more big 5.11 pitches, Chris pulled onto the summit ridge in the last scrap of twilight, leaving me to clean by headlamp. As we traversed the ridge under the stars, looking down the east face, the lights of camp seemed far away. Our methodical descent saw us sipping Scotch in camp at 2 a.m. We dubbed the route Bugaburl (6 big pitches, 5.11d) due to the burly Yosemite-style crack climbing.

Determined to get an alpine start, we actually walked out of camp around 5 a.m. Our inadequate footwear made for an exciting steep snow slope leading to the base of the 12-pitch route Cleopatra's Alley on the east face of Pigeon. The lower portion of the face had some of the best moderate rock climbing we have ever experienced, zigzagging finger and hand cracks on perfect white granite. The headwall finally stopped our dreamy simul-climb, and Chris confidently eliminated the pendulum of the first aid section with some committing face moves. The next aid pitch was mine, and after some aiding and gardening, I pulled the rope and barely squeaked-out the redpoint of this amazing tips splitter. The remaining four pitches were excellent, and the 60m "alley pitch" seemed particularly undergraded at 5.10. I belayed Chris up the final knife-edge to Pigeon's summit, completing the FFA (5.12a). The warm evening sun, benevolent high winds, and classic position made this perhaps the defining sublime moment of my climbing career. Chris was also stoked. Descending the west ridge gave us the bonus of an east-to-west traverse of the peak. A perfect day.

The rest of our trip was less successful but included a valiant attempt at freeing the west face of Central Howser, a four-day "rest day" in Golden, the good company of a couple of ex-Lake Louise millwright skids, and an official noise complaint filed against us and our offensive music. For me this trip was a dream come true.

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CANADIAN ROCKIES

Summary. [Note: In addition to mention in this summary, several of the bigger routes have individual reports, below—Ed.] Following a string of hot, dry summers, routes that were once climbable year-round in the Canadian Rockies have been increasingly reduced to unattractive and frequently dangerous chutes of dry slabs and rubble. The upside is that, perhaps as a consequence of milder winters, seasonal ice occasionally forms and resuscitates them. While many of what used to be classic summer alpine adventures can no longer be recommended in that season, they can still offer excellent climbing, but now in winter and spring.

In May, having found surprisingly excellent ice conditions on Shooting Gallery and the Andromeda Strain in the weeks prior, Scott Semple and Raphael Slawinski climbed a new route on the northeast face of Mt. Andromeda. The Doctor, The Tourist, His Crampon, and Their Banana (V M7) follows a faint crease some 100m left of the Andromeda Strain, but with significantly more difficult and sustained climbing than that route.

In the summer Chris Brazeau soloed the well iced-up Grand Central Couloir (V WI5). Over the years the GCC had seen a number of solo ascents, but Brazeau upped the ante by climbing the route without rope or harness. Later the same month he soloed the rock buttress of the Greenwood-Jones (V 5.9) on the north face of Mt. Temple in the same style. Risky? Perhaps, but climbing does not get much purer.

In early September Brazeau teamed with Jon Walsh to provide the highlight of the season, when the two, on their first try, created a new route (VI 5.11 M6) on the north face of Mt. Alberta. To put their achievement in perspective, until last summer the 1972 Lowe-Glidden route was the only route on the north face, and it has likely not been repeated in the past 15 years.

Another George Lowe route, the Lowe-Hannibal (VI 5.11a) on the north face of Mt. Geikie, saw two ascents the past summer, making it a trade route by Canadian Rockies