

means wizard. This is the first formation anywhere in Paine to have a native-tongue name. We placed one bolt and one pin at each belay. The rock quality was not particularly good.

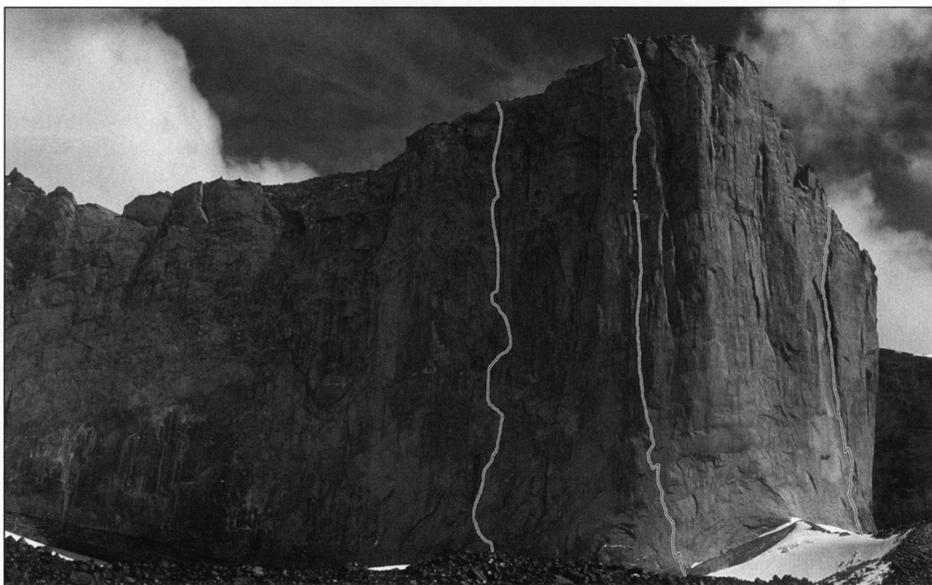
Tomas hurt his knee and had to go back to Punta Arenas. Jaime and I then climbed a steep, pointy tower just left of Aguja Walicho. On March 14 we bivied one hour from the base, and the next day we climbed an easy but exposed snow couloir on the left side of the west face for about 1,000' (50-65°). After seven pitches, near the end of the couloir, we climbed onto the granite and climbed a further three pitches to the summit (450m, III 5.10). We named this second tower Aguja Kenko.

ANDRE DE LA BARCA, *Puerto Natales, Chile* (translated by Rolando Garibotti)

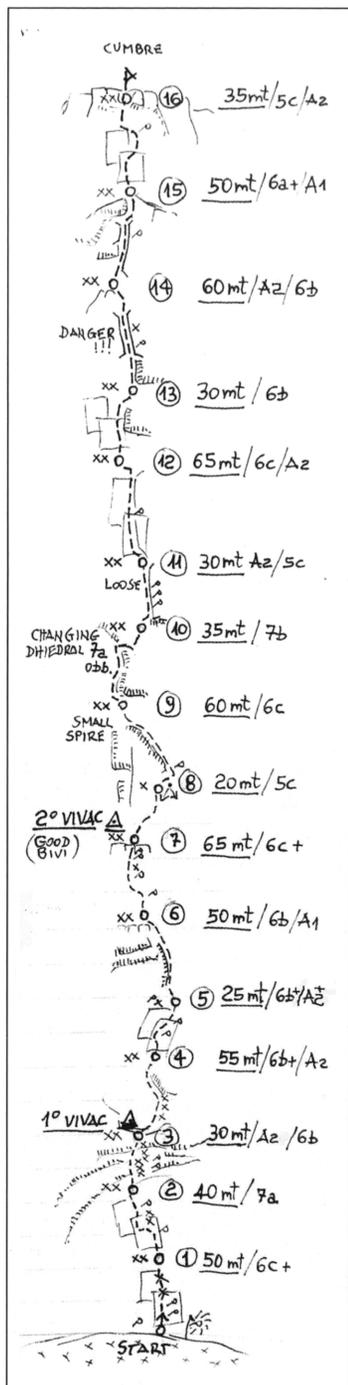
*Cerro Cota 2000, Osa ma non Troppo.* It's the same old story...an evening with friends, a couple of photos, a few beers, and then, while driving home, talk about those photos. The next day the four of us were talking about it. Why not go for it?

So in less than two days we're in Patagonia. In our thoughts, at least. The woman behind the counter at the travel agency reminds us of our age and suggests more exotic destinations. All of us have reached 40 and one of us 50. A quick glance at the brochure with sun-blessed beaches and curves and...we remain faithful to our belief. The roaring 40's are off: Michele Cagol, Rolando Larcher, Elio Orlandi, and I.

How things change. We were preoccupied with the rock faces, about what awaited us, about the cold and the storms. But now the true difficulties are about leaving home and families, partners, and children, who must wait out our self-centeredness and vertical projects. But we're lucky: they understand, and we depart serene and highly charged.



The east face of Cerro Cota 2000, from left to right: Osa ma non Troppo (700m, 7b A2+, Cagol-Larcher-Leoni-Orlandi, 2007), The Keyhole Route (700m, VI 5.10 A4, Heaton-Reichert, 1997), Italian Route (500m to base of shale band, 6b A3, Canzan-Moreolo-Pancierre-Raccamello-Valmassoi, 1993). Rolando Garibotti



Osa ma non Troppo topo. Elio Orlandi

And how Patagonia has changed! No more never-ending approach walks, several days with oxen or horses transporting everything to base camp. Now there are porters, and in less than a day we're at the head of our dream valley, in the heart of the French Valley.

Torres del Paine National Park is one of the world's foremost trekking destinations, resulting in an incredible influx of people: 120,000 during the time we were there, compared to months of complete solitude at the end of the 1980s and start of the 1990s. So what has become of the legendary, austere Patagonia described by so many as a hellish land with a merciless climate? All we need is a bit of imagination and, walking just that little bit farther, we rediscover the treasured austerity. Just off the tourist's beaten track one can still breathe a land of rucksacks and glacial moraines, of yo-yoing up and down due to the harsh climate, of victories and of giving up, of unique moments shared with the best of friends.

Seven days after departing we come to grips with the oceanic granite of Cerro Cota 2000's east face. It resembles El Capitan, but it's almost unknown and been breached by only two other routes. A rock face, a group of friends, and a vertical 700m face. Not even an outline of a terrace or small snow-filled ledge.

On January 21, 2007 we're on the wall with portaledges. We haul food, 40 liters of water, and lots of equipment. Morning sun gives way to afternoon showers, then to storms with lightning—almost unheard of in Patagonia—high winds, and, finally, peace and quiet in the evening. We fall asleep 400m up, snug and content. That night and the next day it rains so hard that, after 24 hours of continuous downpour, it was like sleeping in a swimming pool. Immediate evacuation! We're soaked to the bone and frozen solid, and we need to dry our sleeping bags and clothes. But if tourists walk for hours in this downpour and these high winds, then surely veterans like us shouldn't complain? We shift around here and there, and a day-and-a-half later the sun returns.

The best present ever: two hours of morning sun that dries us out. Then, like true hard men depicted in magazines, we start to climb again. We kick off at 11 a.m., up the first two pitches of the day. They are the best of the line, difficult and beautiful, worth all the sacrifice of the expedition. We relish a superb 50m flake, pitch nine, in just T-shirts and find a tiny but comfortable belay. The

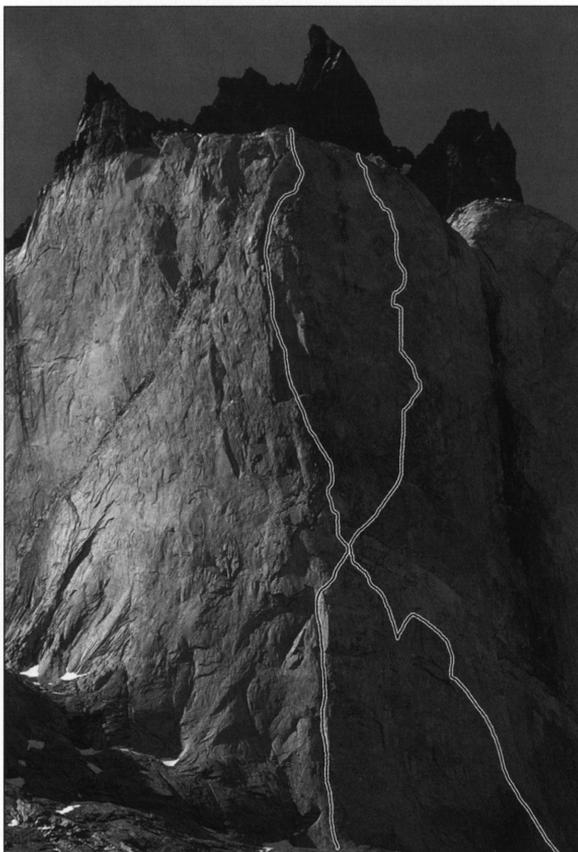
demanding, surprising tenth pitch is the crux. We called it the Changing Dihedral, and it led from a series of corners to a beautiful direct pitch on the right. From below this featureless, overhanging changeover looked like a contender for aid, but we freed it with a bit of courage and hard obligatory climbing. The route then continues up dreamlike granite, and after six days of climbing capsule-style in sun, rain, wind, and mist we reached the top. No conquest, but a sweet taste to savour. A series of hugs and smiles, plenty of photos, the shared success of such a climb. Only the name was missing. We called it Osa ma non Troppo (700m, 7b [7a obl.] A2+), roughly translated as “dare, but don’t exaggerate.”

Recommended gear: one set of wires, two sets of Camalots to #4, triples from 0.5 to 2, two sets of microfrends. We equipped all belays and left all pegs we placed in situ. At the seventh belay two or three people can bivy without a portaledge. We freed 85% of this beautiful, interesting route, which is in the lee of the wind. With lucky weather and drier cracks, we think the route can be climbed free, except for the third pitch. We highly recommend a repeat.

FABIO LEONI, *Italian Alpine Club*

*Trono Blanco, Hoja de Rosa; Cuerno Norte, Dentelle de Roche; Cerro Cathedral, Escoba de Dios, second ascent.* In late February and March 2007 a team from the Equipe National de Jeunes Alpinistes (ENJA) visited the Valle del Frances in the heart of the Paine Massif.

In late February, Julien Dussere, Jehan-Roland Guillot, Rémi Vignon, and I climbed a new route on Trono Blanco (2,170 m), in the northern edge of the cirque. Our route climbs a series of easy slabs (4+) on the west face to reach a col at the base of Trono Blanco’s south face, north of Aleta de Tiburon, from where it tackles a steep granite head-wall (180m, 6c A1), followed by 500m of mixed terrain, to reach the summit (55° M5). On our first attempt we climbed an easy snow couloir (55°) on the east face to reach the col, but this approach, although easier, proved too dangerous (rockfall). Earlier in the season, with more snow, the east couloir should be the approach



Cuerno Norte’s northwest face, from left to right: Caveman (Thomas Turner, 1992; approximate line) and Dentelle de Roche (Dusserre-Guillot-Mounier-Salle-Vignon, 2007). *Rolando Garibotti*