



Trono Blanco from the southwest, showing Hoja de Rosa. On the left is Cerro Mellizo Oeste, on the right Aleta de Tiburon. *Rolando Garibotti*

route of choice. We summited on February 24 and first down-climbed along the west ridge, then rappelled the line of ascent. It should be possible to climb the route in one day from a bivy near the base. The climb took three days: one day to explore the east couloir and fix two ropes on the headwall, a second day to find the alternate access to the col from the west and fix a few more pitches on the headwall, and a third day to climb to the summit and descend. We had fairly unstable weather

throughout those days, with strong winds. We named our route Hoja de Rosa (1,000m, ED-).

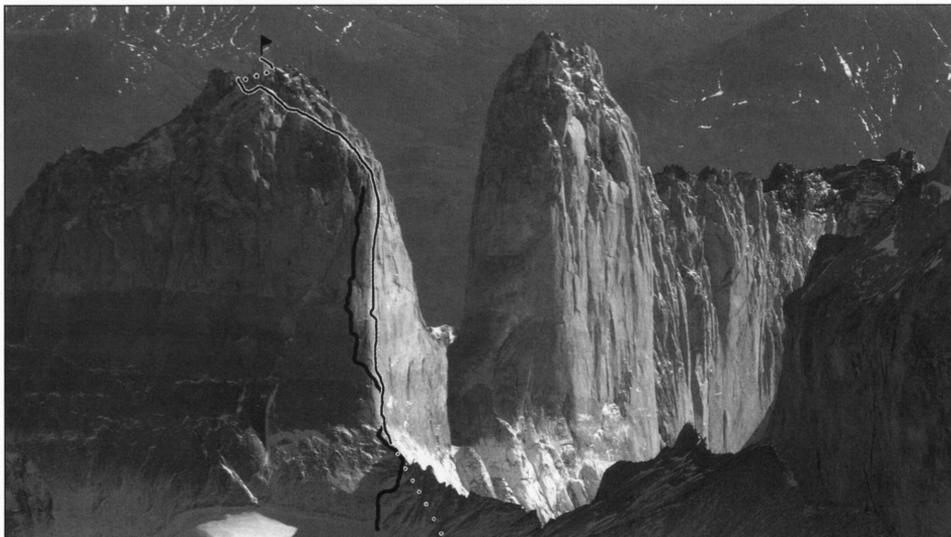
Between March 1 and 9 Clément Mounier, Jehan-Roland Guillot, Rémi Vignon, Julien Dusserre, and I opened Dentelle de Roche on Cuerno Norte's northwest face, just right of Cave-man, which was the only route on this side of the mountain. We climbed 14 pitches (700m) up to 7a, with a few short sections of A1 and A2. Most of the pitches are enjoyable, with high-quality climbing, except pitch 11, which follows a series of big flakes and is quite runout. The face is directly exposed to the wind, which on some days blew 100mph. In light of this we used fixed ropes. We stopped upon reaching the schist band up high and did not continue to the summit.

On the east face of Cerro Catedral, Jean Burgun, Victor Estrangin, Pierre Labbre, Erwan Madoré, and Jérôme Para made the second ascent of La Escoba de Dios (Catto-Fowler-Gallagher-Kendall, 1992). This 24 pitch, 950m route has difficulties up to 6b and A4. It took six days to fix ropes up to pitch 13, after which they rested for six days due to bad weather. After jumaring the 500m of fixed ropes, they installed a portaledge camp, but bad weather forced them to return to the ground after fixing just three more pitches. After two more days of forced rest they regained their high point, and the following day all five climbers climbed the remaining seven pitches and reached the summit. During the descent they spent one more night, taking the time to retrieve the ropes and all other gear. They describe the route as being magnificent, complex, and demanding but with a lot of enjoyable, beautiful climbing.

FREDERIC SALLE, *ENJA*, Pyrenees, France (translated by Rolando Garibotti)

*Torre Sur, southeast buttress, attempt.* It was Stuart McAleese and my 15th day climbing on the face. The December winds regularly gusted 100mph. The climbing, 800m above the glacier, was becoming markedly easier. Our summit was tantalizingly close. One good day and only 300m of 35° snow led to the summit, and a month's hard effort would be worth it.

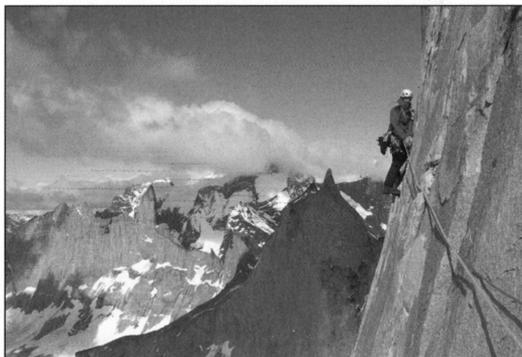
[Editor's note: The McAleese-Turner highpoint is in a prominent diagonal dike below the intersection with the route Hoth (Amelunxen-Easton, 2000). From where Hoth enters the dike above, Hoth climbs two pitches of mostly rock (5.8 WI3), then bulletproof snow and ice, then two more pitches of rock (5.9 and 5.6) to gain the summit. McAleese and Turner called their efforts "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly,"



Torre Sur, home to only four complete routes. Its highly sought, unclimbed south face is left of the sun/shade south-east buttress, which shows the 2006 Turner-McAleese attempt and Hoth (Amelunxen-Easton, 2000). Other strong attempts on the storied buttress include a ca 1998 Swiss team that survived a major epic (blown hook, big whipper, torn-off finger, broken femur) and a 1980s attempt by a South African team (Andre Vercueil and partners) that also endured a memorable retreat after climbing to just above the prominent roof halfway up Hoth. To the right En el Ojo del Huaracán (Piola-Sprungli, 1992) and Self Right to Suicide (Belczynski-Kowalski-Wiwatowski, 2004) climb the sunlit east face. The standard North Ridge (Aiazzi-Aste-Casati-Nusdeo-Taldo, 1963) climbs just beyond the tower's right skyline, and the Southwest Buttress (Bagattoli-Cagol-Espen-Leoni, 1987) roughly follows the left skyline. Torre Central, the tower to the right, has more than a dozen routes. *Rodrigo Diaz*

*and several sources, including Turner's website, referred to it as a new route. We asked Turner's opinion on whether they consider it an attempt or a new route: "On the route which we claimed as not complete..."*]

Stuart clipped into the top belay and looked down. The weather had worsened. It was time to bail to our bivy 500m below. As we descended, the funneled winds between the South Tower (Torre Sur) and Paine Chico gusted to 150mph. We hung like puppets, swinging horizontally in the gusts. During the short respite between gusts, rappelling was only possible by pulling ourselves down the iced-up ropes. Every two minutes our eyelashes would weld together. Breathing into the wind was difficult, we had to look away. Finally we reached the bottom of our ropes, 100m from our bivy kit. A simple snow climb now was a terrifying crawl. Eventually we swung off our anchors inside a bag of Gore-Tex, covered in snow; we now knew we would survive.



Stuart McAleese enjoying a refreshing moment in the sun on Torre Sur. *Twid Turner*

The southeast face of the South Tower of Paine is still unclimbed. The kilometer-wide

and at least kilometer-high wall has no obvious linking lines leading to the summit. A 200m grey belt of compact granite halfway up the face truncates cracks. Our chosen line wandered up the right-hand side of the face, left of the excellent Canadian route Hoth. It linked hanging grooves and cracks, providing hard aid, mostly on hooks. During our climb (800m, E2 A3+) we encountered only eight hours of good weather in four weeks. It was constantly windy and often snowing. We resigned ourselves to aid climbing, as exposing flesh and wearing rock boots would bring certain frostbite. Every day on the face we clad ourselves in every stitch of clothing we had. It was like Scotland in winter, we kept repeating, so we had to keep going!

Climbing capsule-style, we had stretched our ropes 600m up from our bivy, 200m above the glacier. Our climbing equipment remained high above. Stuck in our bivy we had no choice but to wait for four days during a massive storm. The fifth day was our last chance to descend; otherwise we would miss our flights home. We had no choice but to battle back up to our kit at the top of the lines, rescue sufficient gear and ropes, and make our escape. (We ended up leaving 150m of static rope but returned 200m of rope borrowed from local climbers and brought home the rest. We also took out all trash, including rubbish gathered in a full day's work at Bader Camp.) Descending to a hanging snowpatch I triggered a sizable avalanche. Back on the glacier we waded out to our advanced camp and started home. We had barely survived the mountain and Patagonia weather. We were happy with our efforts but saddened not to summit. The route in perfect weather would go free, but its location generally means cold and wind.

MIKE "TWID" TURNER, U.K.

*Torre Central, Golazo, second ascent, and first BASE jump.* Tim Akhmedkhanov, Igor Pekhterev, and leader Arkadiy Seregin (all from Russia), with Sergiy Kovalov from the Ukraine, arrived in Puerto Natales on January 9, 2007, and five days later started fixing the initial pitches of Golazo (1,200m, VI 5.10 A4+, Schneider, 1999 [with Christian Santelices to pitch 12]).

On January 20 they reached the big ledge atop pitch nine and established two portaledges. After fixing pitch 10 (A3+) the following day, they were forced down by a storm. On January 24 they were back on the wall with 150 liters of water. They also took 12 ropes and fixed them all. It took six days to climb the next three pitches. Pitches 14-21 were A2 or A2+ and were climbed somewhat faster. While the first 15 pitches had two bolts at each belay, above there was only one, so the team added a second bolt to all higher stances. On February 2 Akhmedkhanov and Pekhterev led pitches 20 and 21, and then Kovalov and Seregin joined them and continued to the summit. By 8 p.m. it was snowing but the climbing was relatively straightforward, despite icy rock. At 11:20 p.m. all four stood triumphantly on the summit. By 6 a.m. on February 3 they had regained the portaledges. A big storm began two hours later as they were descending the lower part of the wall, but by 4 p.m. all were safely on the glacier. Seregin feels that this route is definitely harder than Reticent Wall on El Capitan and that Schneider is a real hero. "He did a hard job. I'm going to send him a bottle of our good Russian vodka."

Other recent activity on the Central Tower includes the area's first BASE jump, a 1400m flight down the east face (plus some tracking out) by Russian Valery Rozov on February 24. To reach the top he climbed the Bonington-Whillans route (700m, V 5.11 A2) in two days with Russian Big Walls Project hardmen Odintsov, Ruchkin, Provalov, and Kachkov.

*Adapted from* WWW.ALPINIST.COM, *originally by* LINDSAY GRIFFIN