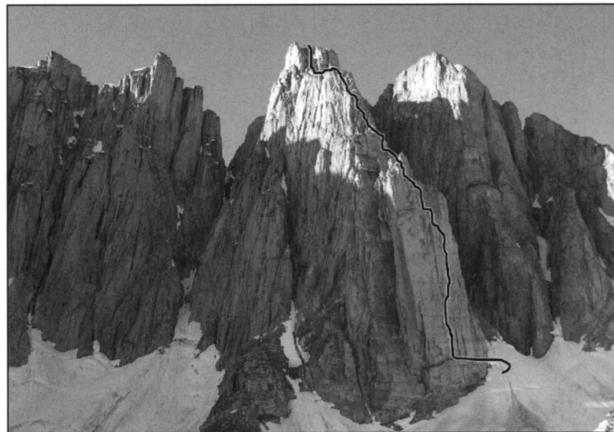


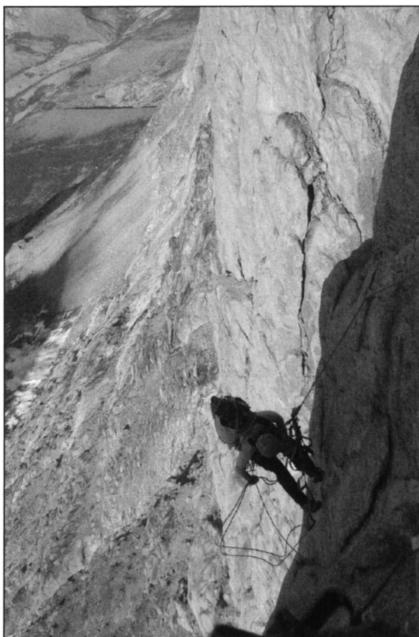
*Fox Jaw Cirque, new routes.* On July 18 Jessica Lundin and I arrived in Kulusuk, thrilled to be attempting new routes in the Arctic. We spent a week in Tasiilaq stocking up on provisions, scrambling up a few mountain ridges, and watching arch-shaped icebergs drift by. Anxious to get our hands on some granite, we were dropped off at the head of the Tasiilaq Fjord on July 25 and, schlepping three loads each, made a beeline for base camp.

The Milk Tooth Spire (1,100m) was our first climbing objective. On August 4 we began simul-climbing through 4th-class grassy and rock ledges, stopping occasionally to belay for short mid-5th class sections. We aimed for where the route steepened 500m above us. Eight pitches of clean rock put us on the summit, 24 hours after beginning the ca 900m, broad ridge. Our route, Doublemint Direct (III 5.8), follows the western skyline ridge of the most westerly peak in the cirque.

Feasting on wild blueberries for a few days, we rested and scouted our next objective, the unclimbed Right Rabbit Ear (RRE). On August 14 we picked our way across 780m of 5th-class slabs, stopping to pick up gear we had cached earlier that week. At first light we left our bivy site below the towers and started up the face of the RRE. Finishing with a two-pitch, splitter 5" crack, we reached the top of the tower at dusk on the second day. By mid-August the fabled midnight sun had given way to six-hour nights, so we waited before rappelling into the gully between the two Rabbit Ears. Early next morning we traversed to the Left Rabbit Ear and then climbed a few pitches to the summit of the Fang, which connects the two towers. We rappelled through the night, eventually reaching our bivouac gear for a much-needed snooze in the rain, before retracing our path across the slabs on August 19. The next day the storm moved back in, dusting our new 16-pitch route, Straight up Now Tell Me (V 5.9 A2), with snow. We are grateful for the grants provided by the AAC and Mountain Hardwear for making this trip possible.



The righthand (eastern) end of the Fox Jaw Cirque showing the line of Natural Mystic on Snaggletooth. This formation lies to the right of an area dubbed the Land of Towers by the 2007 American-Canadian team. *Josh Beckner*



Jessica Lundin jumaring during the first ascent of Straight up Now Tell Me. *Erin Whorton*

*General information:* We flew via Reykjavik, Iceland, to Kulusuk, an island village of 300 people. Reversing this route is an excellent option, as thermal pools throughout Iceland offer a relaxing end to an Arctic trip. Icelanders especially love dirty climbers wading through their pristine pools in underwear that has been worn for six weeks. Kulusuk is a small fishing town, and food supplies are better obtained in nearby Tasiilaq, a town of 1,500 people and now the major center of the East Coast. Tasiilaq (also called by the Danish name Ammassalik) boasts two grocery stores, a hospital, a café, an Inuit history museum, and a lot of sled dogs. Although most Inuit are subsistence hunters, a variety of Danish food can be bought for modest prices at the grocery stores, depending on the time of year. Goods for the whole year are delivered in a huge cargo ship each summer, the timing determined by when the almost impenetrable shell of the sea ice breaks apart. Barren shelves greet the visitor who arrives before the ship. This year the cargo arrived in early July, and we had our choice of cheese, smoked meats, and many packets of dried sauce. A few kilos of butter proved a choice addition to the arsenal.

Many visitors intent on ski-mountaineering in Schweizerland arrive in April and May, while rock climbers are better served by the more stable weather patterns of June, July, and August, when the temperature is 40–50°F. In early summer the night is the gentle alpenglow of a 24-hour day, but by late August the six-hour nights are dark enough to prohibit climbing, and it is rather colder.

Once at Tasiilaq, the easiest way to get around is by motorboat. Dines Mikaelson, the mayor's son, operates Mikaelson Tours, and he gave us a lift to the head of the Tasiilaq Fjord, 60 miles to the north. Hotel Red House also organizes boat drop-offs and hosts a campground, where visitors can stay while organizing supplies. Many steep granite walls line the fjord and tempted us to change our plans. Beware these sirens' call. From the drop-off point we hiked eight miles northeast to establish base camp in the flat expanse between the chossy peaks that line the valley. A few sound pieces of rock poke out of the surrounding glaciers: the peaks of the Fox Jaw Cirque and the massive walls of Trillingerne and Storebror.

*History of climbing in the Fox Jaw Cirque:* In 1998 Dave Briggs and Mike Lipecki opened up climbing on these spires, which they named after the pesky arctic fox that stole their food and because the spires looked like a row of teeth. During this expedition, Briggs and Lipecki established the 465m route Lovin' All the Right Places (IV 5.10 A2+) on the Molar. Lipecki returned alone in 2001 to establish the 550m Tears in Paradise (V 5.11 A1) on the Incisor. During the same summer another team, Katy Holm, Andrea Kortello, Karen McNeill, and Dave Thomson, arrived in style. Approaching by sailboat, they established two new routes on the Trillingerne Peaks and attempted the Left Rabbit Ear in the Fox Jaw. Meanwhile, the previous year, a Swiss party had climbed Cavity Ridge to the right of the Incisor, while Matthias Leitner and Wolfgang Schöls (Austria), on their way out to the fjord from the Tupalik Group, put up a direct route on the 350m south face of the Milk Tooth (Baby Molar): Gute Zeiten, Schlechte Zeiten (5.8). An American-Canadian team arrived in 2007; as reported above, this rock-star team made six first ascents in the Cirque and surrounding region during their month-long reign in the valley.

These ascents were on the Fox Jaw spires. For years many climbers have sought adventure on ski throughout the Schweizerland Mountains, and have found refuge in the Tasiilaq Mountain Hut, a fine structure built by Hans Christian Florian-Sorenson, a Danish physician and climber resident in Tasiilaq.