

bolts; one slab was drilled like a sport climb. However, as a free climbing project it was beginning to look impossible. It was November, and the temperature was -30°C . We were forced to climb in big boots and gloves, while using a mixture of free and aid, fixing ropes at first, hoping December would bring warmer temperatures and give us a chance to free the pitches. However, after storms lowered daytime temperatures to -43°C , we realized our dream was not on, and abandoned fixing. We hauled up a portaledge and continued in capsule style to the summit. The rock was indeed poor but our new route, Ice Age, was beautiful, giving 24 pitches up to 5.10+ A4. This was the third ascent of Holtanna, which was first climbed in 2000.

A week later, in warmer temperatures and on an almost perfect, windless day, we made the fourth ascent of the same peak and its first free ascent, via the stunning north pillar. Our 450m, 10-pitch route climbed a beautiful arête at 5.10-. We called it Skywalk.

The weather deteriorated again, but toward the end of our stay Karl Gabel of the weather center in Innsbruck forecasted two days of good weather: little wind, -28°C , minor snowfall in the afternoon. Not ideal, but something we could live with. On December 11 and 12 we made the first ascent of Ulvetanna's 800m northwest buttress, a ca 20-pitch route at 5.11- A2 60° snow. We named it The Sound of Silence. It was the third ascent of Ulvetanna and proved to be the cherry on the cake.

From information supplied by THOMAS HUBER, Germany

Orvin Fjella Mountains, Holstind (2,577m), north face, Pilier de Choudens-Renard; Ulvetanna (2,931m), southwest ridge, attempt; Clara Peak; Klevetind; Little Klevetind; Unnamed Pillar. Flying via Cape Town and the Russian base of Novolazarevskaya, Lionel Albrieux, Didier Jourdain, Dimitry Munoz, Sébastien Ratel, François Savary, and I, all members of the French High Mountain Military Team (GMHM) in Chamonix, arrived in Queen Maud Land on November 8. We landed in an area named the Wolf's Jaw, first explored by mountaineers in 1994, when a Norwegian expedition, led by Ivar Tollefsen, made a number of outstanding first ascents.

Our first project was to open an aid route, and we started up the north face of Holstind, where we found bolts on the pedestal from a previous attempt. After fixing the initial section,

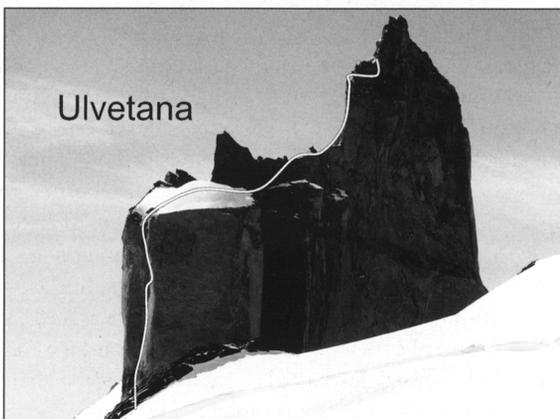


Holstind (left) and Holtanna from the Fenristunga Glacier to the north-northwest. (1) Pilier de Choudens-Renard. (2) Skywalk. (3) Ice Age.
Thomas Faucheur

we set off in capsule style, and on November 27, after four nights spent on the wall in portaledges, all six of us reached the summit. We followed a logical crack system; the rock was poor on the surface, but the cracks were fine. We climbed 19 pitches with maximum difficulties of A2/A3 to complete the 650m route, which we named Pilier de Choudans-Renard, after our two friends and fellow GMHM members killed on Xixabangma in 2003.

We now had two weeks left and split into two teams. Jourdain, Munoz, and Ratel made a fine attempt on the unclimbed south-

west ridge of Ulvetanna. They fixed ropes on the first 300m (the “Bottle”), which was climbed with aid. Bolts from a previous attempt stopped below the top of this formation. After a rest day at base camp, they set off for a continuous push, jumaring the “Bottle” and following the continuation ridge, which was narrow and loose. The next rock pillar they climbed direct, after which they traversed a ledge on the east face and eventually stopped at a notch on the ridge, estimated to be five pitches below the summit. Due to incoming bad weather and fatigue, they retreated and arrived in base camp 36 hours after setting out.



Ulvetanna showing the French attempt on the southwest ridge. The 1,200m east face to the right is unclimbed. It is probably the biggest of its type on the continent. *Thomas Faucheur*

Meanwhile Albrieux, Savary, and I skied 25km west to the Kvitklevn Glacier in the Filchnerfjella, a part of this range that we think had not previously been explored. We climbed four peaks, all of which we believe were virgin. The first we named Clara Peak; it is the summit just east of Klevekampen, and we climbed it by the southeast ridge—mixed, with snow to the top. Two days later we climbed Klevetind, from a col to the east, and also Little Klevetind, which rose from the opposite side of the col. Finally, we climbed an unnamed pillar on the south side of the Kvitklevn Glacier. It gave seven pitches of perfect rock. We later started toward Rakekniven but gave up due to weather. [Editor’s Note: the Kvitklevn is on the eastern side of the Filchner Mountains. The western end was visited in 1996-97 by Americans, who made the first ascent of the spectacular 2,365m Rakekniven.]

On December 18 we left the mountains. For the entire expedition we were located next door to the Huber brothers, Stephan Siegrist, and Max Reichel. We had different projects, but it was great to share base camp with them.

THOMAS FAUCHEUR, *France*



Looking southwest into the Filchnerfjella: (1) Unnamed Tower, (2) Clara, (3) Klevegadden, (4) Klevetind, (5) Little Klevetind. *Thomas Faucheur*