

granite cliffs of Mt. Theodore, and a sea of mountains all the way to Deception Island. Beyond them all stretched the Drake Passage, across which, after a day's rest, we would return to Argentina.

PHIL WICKENS, *Alpine Club, UK*

*Various ski descents.* We demanded a lot from Stephen Wilkins, Australian owner and skipper of the yacht *Xplore*, which delivered us to the Peninsula. It was not just the quantities of food and drink we consumed, but also the number of drop-offs and pick-ups we requested. The weather proved so good that we had several days with multiple ski objectives.

The "we" were Dave Baldwin, Trevor Craig, Steve Day, and Martin Vince from England, Bethan Davies from Wales, Scott Stephenson from the U.S., and IFMGA guides Gary Kuehn, an American living in New Zealand, and me, a Scot living in France.

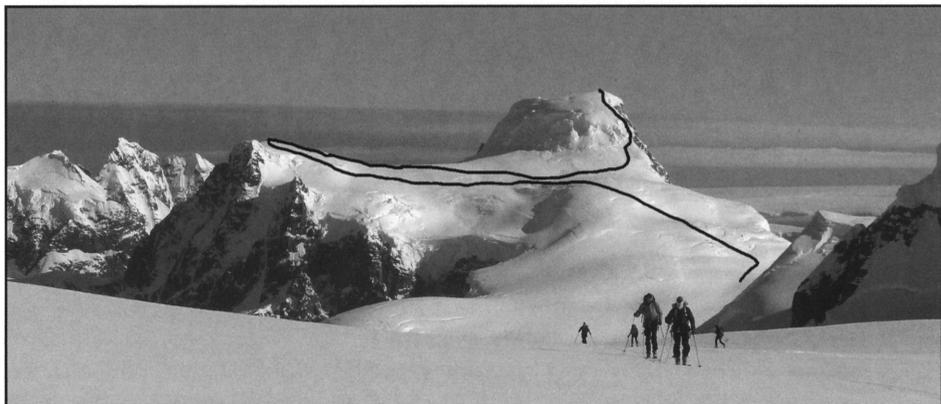
I mention the people first, as our experience in Antarctica was above all a human one; an experience shared by a group of exceptional people. The memories we took with us are as much about our friends as the place itself. We set off with no fixed objectives, and little idea as to what we wanted to do. Our idea was to discover the place with our own eyes and ski what was good. We couldn't have had it better.

Our first tracks were made just after New Year on Wiencke Island in the murk. We then made a 26km approach to establish base camp for an attempt on Mt. Français (2,825m) over Mt. Agamemnon, a superb ski mountaineering objective. Our high point was around 1,100m on Agamemnon. We turned back because the weather was slowly deteriorating and we were "only another six-eight hours from the top." Striking camp, we returned along our tracks in a whiteout. Reaching Français over Agamemnon is long. Parties should count on 30km each way with pulks, a rest day, and then will need one or preferably two more days of good weather. We saw no crevassing after we left the shore.

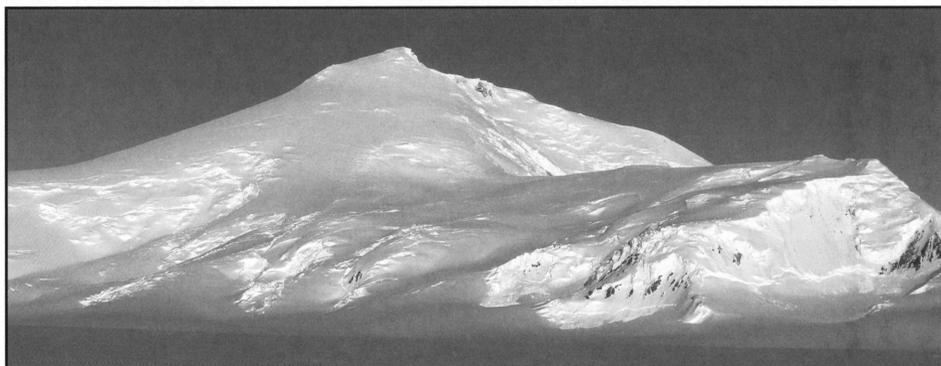
From January 9 until we left on the 20th, the weather was generally sunny with clear skies and no wind. So many people have since commented on our luck. We skied lines on Booth Island, Mt. Scott in 30cm of fresh powder, and False Shackleton three times (and to both summits; 1,354m and



Gary Kuehn skiing Demaria, with Mt. Peary in the background. *Jim Blyth*



On the approach to Mt. Shackleton, with Mt. Cloos behind. Marked is the route followed to both south and main summits by the Alpine Club party a month prior to this photo being taken. *Jim Blyth*



Southwest face of Agamemnon. Skiing this face would need care, but descending the left skyline ridge would be easier and safer. *Jim Blyth*

1,336m. Measured heights in this report were taken from an altimeter set at sea level. BAS map height of False Shackleton is 1,300m). The highlight of the trip was arguably Demaria, followed by a traverse of Hovgaard Island. Sailing close to Bruce Island (320m) we simply had to ski it, and from the summit spotted that afternoon's fun: an ascent of 675m Mt. Banck. We later skied Rojas Peak (670m) on Lemaire Island, and a wonderful short run in the evening light on the south side of the main peak. Champagne on deck rounded off the day nicely.

The west summit of Mt. Hoegh (603m) gave a great run in rather flat light, and Nansen Island provided a nice little trip after a day motoring around looking for suitable objectives. There were lots of them; we just couldn't find acceptable drop-off points. Mt. Harris (1,030m) took three and a half hours to ascend and eight and a half minutes to ski. We then called *Xplore* for beers, which were delivered onshore by Zodiac along with two full-sized, home-made pizzas.

Setting foot on our last objective, Emma Island (465m), proved a challenge, as did its north face, ca 150m of 45° on snow that needed care. We set off that evening for home, with the Southern Ocean like a millpond, and whales putting on one final show. I am planning to return. If you would like details, visit [jimbyth.com](http://jimbyth.com)

JIM BLYTH, *France*