

climb the final ice mushroom because of approaching bad weather.

Also on December 30, following the steps of Manel and Hugo, two parties (Nacho Orviz, Francisco Blanco and Mikel Berasaluce from Spain, and Italians Giovanni Ongaro and Lorenzo Lanfranchione) reached the Col of Patience. They fixed some 100 meters of rope that evening. On the 31st, running before the storm, they managed to reach the summit a little before midnight. Caught by the storm on the descent, they bivouacked for two days at the Col of Patience before finally reaching base camp.

The very fine route *Claro de Luna* on Saint Exupéry was climbed by the Italians Giovanni Ongaro and Lorenzo Lanfranchione in early season. This pair also climbed El Mocho via the Piola-Anker route.

Another good summit, Aguja Bífida, was climbed on January 31 to February 1 by Agustín Rodríguez from Spain and Andorran-based Belgian Fran Van Herreweghe. Van Herreweghe also climbed Cerro Tore via the Maestri route with Spanish big waller Cristóbal Díaz in mid-December.

MANEL DE LA MATTA, *Spain*

*Argentine Patagonia, Slovenian Activity.* On Aguja Guillaumet, Damjan Kočar and Peter Subic climbed the left couloir (V+ 65°, 300m) on February 12. Klemen Mali and Monika Kambič (female) climbed it on February 17. Mali and Kambič then added a new start to the Swiss route on the East Arête (VII- A2, 230 m) on February 19-20; their high point rejoined the Swiss route. On Aguja della S, Klemen Mali and Monika Kambič climbed the Austrian route with a variation (VI+ 55°, 450m) in five hours on March 1. On Poincenot, Janez Skok and his wife Ines Bozic attempted the second ascent of Piola's route *Patagonicos Desperados* (6c A3+, 600m) on February 17-18. They bivouacked after the seventh pitch. The next day, they climbed the major difficulties, but then retreated because of ice-choked cracks and lack of time. On Cerro Torre, Grega Lačen and Dani Vezovnik wanted to climb a new route in the central part of the east face. They arrived at base camp at the beginning of December, but because of an injury Vezovnik returned home around Christmas. Lačen joined forces with Carlos Suarez (Spain), but by the end of February, they had climbed only 250 meters to the icefield in the lower part of the wall.

MIHA PETERNEL, *Planinska zveza Slovenije*

*Aguja Saint Exupery, Buscaini Route, Variation.* The early part of March, 1997, witnessed a spell of ten days of good weather. Diego Magaldi and Jorge Kozulj climbed Aguja Saint Exupery during this window, following for the most part the Buscaini route on the east face and putting up a four-pitch variation to it (6a+ A2).

FACUNDO JOSE, *Club Andino Bariloche*

*Aguja Saint Exupery, Chiaro de Luna, Techada Negro, Attempt, and Shady Wilson Spire, House of Cards.* Chad Garner and I made an ascent of *Chiaro de Luna* (5.11, 25 pitches) on Aguja Saint Exupery. The route takes a line near an indistinct prow on the west face. We climbed the route in 15 hours and 35 minutes from base to summit and took about three hours to approach via an easy ramp and a wide snow couloir. Due to cold temperatures in the morning and no training because of months of rain and holiday gluttony back in North Carolina, we found the crux third pitch too troublesome to free; we did, however, free the rest of the route at 5.11b. The route included the usual stunning Patagonian features, splitter cracks sys-

tems, corners and an especially nice finger crack and layback flake near an arête high on the route. We summited at sunset and rappelled leisurely in the light of the full moon to a wide rocky ledge at half-height, where we rested and shivered till sun-up. We reached the Polish Camp 36 hours after departure, having contended with a few stuck ropes.

Earlier in our trip, we attempted to climb Techada Negro from the Bridwell Camp only to find a grim band of chossy slate barring access to the easy snowfields leading to the summit. Unwilling to risk our lives for that particular chosspile, we opted to traverse east into a cirque ringed by a number of spires and cliffs. We chose a prominent spire in the middle and, armed with four stoppers and three tricams, charged the west ridge. Helmetless in double boots, we climbed two pitches of the most fractured and loose basalt imaginable. On pitch two, I dislodged a 60-pound block which actually shook the summit pinnacle. We opted to downclimb the route, as most every feature was about as trustworthy as a career politician. We dubbed our climb of "Shady Wilson Spire" the *House of Cards* (5.8, not recommended). The south face is much steeper and less blocky and may yield some more difficult, and possibly more solid, routes in the future.

FRANK CARUS

*Aguja Saint Exupery, Condorito.* Kurt Albert, Bernd Arnold and Edbert Dozenkaff did the first ascent of *Condorito* (5.12d A2, 400m + 300m via the Buscaini route) on the southeast face of *Aguja Saint Exupery*. Jens Richter and Rainer Treppner did the second ascent of the route on February 18.

FACUNDO JOSE, *Club Andino Bariloche*

*Fitz Roy, West Face Attempt, and Supercanaleta, Ascent.* On December 6, 1997, Jack Tackle and I arrived in Chaltén to attempt a new variation to the unrepeatable Czech Route on the 6,000-foot west face of Fitz Roy. The next four days were spent carrying gear to Campo Bridwell and to an advanced base at the so-called Polish Camp below Poincenot in the Torre Valley. On December 11, we carried a load up the 3,000-foot ramp on the southwest side of the Hombre Sentado (Sitting Man Ridge). This consists of snow and ice up to 55° with 300 feet of moderate mixed climbing at the top. On December 14, we climbed the ramp again and continued farther up the Hombre Sentado (two 5th class pitches) and cached our ropes and hardware near where the ridges run into the west face. On descent, we fixed 300 feet of rope in the final goulotte on the northwest end of Hombre Sentado, which allowed us to bypass the tiring ramp via the easier northeast side and mostly avoid the seracs at the end of the Torre Valley.

Perfect weather arrived on the 15th, which we needed to rest and dry out. Early on the 16th, we left Polish Camp and ascended the fixed line, walked under the *Supercanaleta* and continued to our high point on the ridge. The rest of the day was spent following the Czech Route to a good bivy at the top of the prominent 450-foot corner some 5,000 feet up the face. The Czechs had reported that they removed their fixed lines. But it appears they cleaned only a few pitches, as the route was littered throughout with tattered rope. The next day, despite a malfunctioning stove, we left the Czech Route and headed straight up, aiming for the prominent 1,500-foot corner that leads to the ridge. After two new pitches, we retreated due to slow climbing, surprisingly crumbly rock and an overwhelming abundance of wide cracks. We decided to attempt the regular Czech Route and climbed several more pitches of that. Continued hard climbing and deteriorating weather sent us back to our previous bivouac. On the 18th, in increasing wind and clouds, we made 18 rappels, climbed five sideways pitches and left two chopped ropes behind to arrive back at the Glaciar Fitz Roy Norte and then Polish