

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

Camp. We then switched our energy to the 1965 *Supercanaleta* route, which we climbed from December 30-January 1, arriving back at Campo Rio Blanco at midnight.

Most parties have approached *Supercanaleta* from Piedra del Fraile on the Rio Eléctrico and arrived at the Glaciar Polone via Paso del Cuadrado. Unless you are already based in the Torre Valley for other ascents, it is our opinion that this traditional approach would remain the best option for parties attempting any route on the northwest side of Fitz Roy. As for the descent, you remain on your own to figure it out.

JOE JOSEPHSON, *Calgary Mountain Club*

*Fitz Roy Area, Various Ascents.* On February 11, 1998, Rainer Treppter and two partners (all from Germany) summited Fitz Roy via the *Royal Flush* route (second ascent). On February 12, German Jens Richter and Jack Tigle (Scotland) climbed the Franco-Argentine route after five attempts. On February 14, three parties summited Fitz Roy: Slovene Klemen Mali and Argentine Monika Kambic, Sandi Kelneric and Bostjan Sterbal from Slovenia via the Franco-Argentine route. Two Spanish Basques climbed the *Supercanaleta* route.

There also were several repeats of the Willans route on Poincenot, and two parties did Carrington-Rouse route on the same peak.

FACUNDO JOSE, *Club Andino Bariloche*

*Torre Egger and Cerro Standhart, Attempts.* Hugo Biarge, Pere Vilarasau and I tried an alpine-style ascent of *Badlands* on Torre Egger on December 15-16. We were unsuccessful. January was awful: there wasn't a single day of good weather; our ice cave got buried by snow with all the gear in it and it took us several tries to find it. During our last try on February 1 (five days before the plane was leaving), the weather improved a little so Hugo, Santiago Palacios and I went for it. We wanted to link *Tomahawk* and *Exocet*, so we started to climb at 9 o'clock at night. The route was in very bad condition but we kept going anyway. At sunrise, we reached the snow slopes on the middle section of the wall. The day was gorgeous and we were super-motivated to go on, but as soon as we climbed the first pitch on the upper goulotte of *Exocet*, the day got warmer and huge blocks of ice started to fall everywhere off the wall. The couloir was one of the most dangerous places to be because all the falling ice was funneled down it. We were only seven pitches below the summit. We went down and suffered an epic descent, rappeling off shitty gear while being hit by chunks of ice all over. It took us the whole day to reach the ground, but when we got back to the ice cave we were the happiest men on earth just because we were alive.

We still think alpine style is the right way to climb mountains, even if you have to push the limits, even if you have to fail like we did.

SIMON ELIAS, *Spain*

*Cerro Torre, Ferrari Route, and Cerro Standhart, Tomahawk and Exocet Routes, First Link-Up.* Laurence Monnoyeur and I have been to Patagonia two times, once in 1996 and the second time last year. In 1996, we climbed El Mocho via the Goulotte Grassi (IV 4+, 250m), Cerro Polone via *Mastica e Sputa* (V 5+, 650m), a route established four weeks before by Luigi Crispa and Lorenzo Nadali, and made two attempts on Fitz Roy, via the *Supercanaleta* and Franco-Argentine routes. In 1997, we arrived with good weather at Chaltén with the goal of climbing the west face of Cerro Torre. We decided to climb *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*, which finishes at the Col of Hope (VI 5, 800m), to get on the Ferrari route. We climbed it in