

ECUADOR

Cotopaxi, Northeast Face, New Route. From February 28 to March 1, Gaspard Naverette, Jurg U Umlaut and Gabriel Llano climbed a new route on the northeast face of Cotopaxi (5897m). From the refuge, the three traversed eastward around the mountain for three hours, crossing three ridges to reach camp. They then headed up, summiting after seven hours, having picked their way through innumerable crevasses, some of which had to be descended into and then climbed out of. Said Llano: "It's a different mountain from that side—you never see Yanasacha (the landmark rock outcrop on the north face to the left of the normal route)."

YOSSI BRAIN, *United Kingdom*

Chimborazo, North Ridge of Veintimilla Summit. On December 20-22, Byron Sykes and I, with support from Jens Larsen and Jorge Davila, climbed the striking line of the prominent north ridge of the Veintimilla summit (20,561') of Chimborazo. By 3 p.m. on December 20, we had completed crossing the "paramo" of the approach, a distance of just a few miles from the Ambato-Guaranda road. From there, three hours of hiking and loose scree scrambling led us to a bivy site at the toe of the north ridge (ca. 16,000'), just short of the snowline.

From our bivy we climbed up a short ridge that led to the prominent rock walls guarding the difficulties. These walls are a lower eastern extension of Las Murallas Rojas (the red walls). Traversing westerly on snowslopes to a notch between a large rock pillar and the rock wall on our left then allowed us a view directly up several pitches of ice, which proved the key to the route. Rockfall was constant, and it was obvious that the gully had been scoured by collapses of the Reiss Icecliff, which hangs 1,000 feet above the route on the right. We were able to scramble along rock and black ice on the left side of the gully for about three pitches to the final rock band. Sound darker rock, followed by a band of very friable frozen mud, led for 80 feet to a belay perch. We then quickly climbed back left toward the ridge crest and away from the danger of the Icecliff. An uncomfortable but dramatic bivy site was located beneath the last rocks of the route at 18,900 feet, protecting us from the hail. We started quickly on December 22, but soon encountered calf- to thigh-deep rotten snow on steepening slopes. For fear of being avalanched off our route, we began a long traverse west toward the standard route, reaching it after three hours of motivated snowplowing and crevasse crossings.

The Veintimilla summit lay 1,200 feet above us, but due to the lateness of the hour, and satisfied with our climbing, we simply opted for the descent.

ALEX VAN STEEN

PERU

CORDILLERA BLANCA

Pisco West, East Face, Canadian Non-Direct. In May, Chris Geisler and I established the route *Canadian Non-Direct* (5.9 WI 4+ 90°, 400m) on the east face of Pisco West (5752m) in 12 hours. (*This face was climbed in 1977 by John Bouchard and Marie Meunier directly to the summit via the "easiest line." The ascent was not reported at the time.—Ed.*) The ascent featured mixed climbing to the left-hand edge of the snowfield in the center of the east