

*Northern Quimsa Cruz, Various Ascents.* Frank Van Herreweghe (Andorra) and Marc Gavalda put up two rock routes on minor peaks way to the left of the Obelisco and Halcon peaks: *Kawsachun Coca* (6b A1, 160m) on June 10, and *Uk amaki* (6b, 215m) on June 12. On the north face of Cuernos de Diablo (5270m), they put up a new variation (F6b, eight pitches) to the classic North Face route on July 23. The pair reported superb climbing on clean graniodorite with excellent protection. There is an aluminium box left by the 1987 German expedition on the summit for registering ascents. The pair were the 11th to write in the book. On July 25, they put up a new route on the first tower left (from Base Camp) of the obvious flat-topped tower southeast of Pico Halcon. The pair followed a finger-to-fist crack in the middle of the tower, reaching a corner crack after one pitch. They then climbed one full pitch up the corner crack until it became too wide to jam or protect, at which point they veered right for 50 meters. The final pitch brought them to a platform from where they bouldered to the summit. They reported no signs of previous ascents and graded the climb F6b, very mossy.

YOSSI BRAIN, *United Kingdom*

*Cordillera Quimsa Cruz, Various Ascents.* It was reported that Spaniards Óscar Acín, Javier Pina and Miguel-Angelo Zaragoza made a number of first ascents in the Cordillera Quimsa Cruz. They first climbed *Directa Inti* (IV/3) on the 500-meter south face of Nevado Piroja (5400m). Next, they put up *Vía de Raciones y Hombres* (IV/4) on the 400-meter south face of Vola Collo (5200m), a direct route that climbed mixed ground (80°) to the upper snow face (max. 65°) to the top. Descent was made by rappelling the route. They then climbed *Vía Aragonesa* (IV/4) on the 500-meter south face of Nevado San Luis (5600m). The route trends slightly to the right, passing to the right of the large serac band half-way up the face and left of two rock barriers higher up. The crux was the exit pitch onto the summit ridge. (*Desnivel* 141)

#### CORDILLERA OCCIDENTAL

*Cordillera Occidental, Overview.* Snow conditions were extremely poor in the Cordillera Occidental. Bolivia's highest mountain, the extinct volcano Sajama (6549m), is normally a snow plod, but the 1998 season saw very few non-guided or guided groups summiting due to the length of time needed to climb a 40-meter, 60° ice gully to reach a huge and time-consuming penitente field with spikes up to 1.8 meters high. Parinacota (6330m) was completely clear of snow on the east (normal route) side, leaving a massive amount of decidedly unpleasant-looking volcanic scree. Teams were failing on the Chilean (western) side of the mountain due to the length of time needed to get through the penitentes. No peaks south of Parinacota had any snow at all.

YOSSI BRAIN, *United Kingdom*

#### CORDILLERA SUD LÍPEZ

*Cordillera Sud Lipez, Overview.* The Cordillera Sud Lipez lies to the east of the southern part of the Cordillera Occidental and runs down to the Bolivia-Chile-Argentina border. Major peaks include Cerro Lipez, Morurco (5681m), Uturuncu (6008m), and Zapeleri (5656m), which sits exactly on the point where the borders of Bolivia, Chile and Argentina meet. The peaks are volcanic, technically easy and normally snow-covered, but in 1998 no snow was

seen anywhere in the area, leaving huge piles of scree to climb. The first recorded climbing in the area was by the Frenchman G. Courty before 1903, which left the intriguing reference in Jill Neate's *Mountaineering in the Andes*, "Nuevo Mundo, 6020m, location uncertain." Further exploration in the area was done by German geologist Frederic Ahlfeld, who emigrated to Bolivia in 1924. Ahlfeld began exploring the region in 1945 and climbed a number of peaks, including Uturuncu and Bonete (5695m).

In 1962, in a letter to Andean historian Evelio Echevarría, Ahlfeld stated that Nuevo Mundo, at ca. 5850 meters, was the highest peak in the Cordillera Sud Lipez and suggested that it was one of the two Cerro Lipez peaks. The Bolivian IGM map has a Nuevo Mundo lying immediately south of Cerro Lipez. However, in his book *Geografía Física de Bolivia*, published in 1969, Ahlfeld has a drawing of a Nuevo Mundo (5438m) and a description of its location far to the north of the Cerro Lipez group.

La Paz residents Toto Aramayo (Bolivia), Yossi Brain (U.K.) and Dakin Cook (U.S.) decided to go and look for Nuevo Mundo. After ten days and 2700 kilometers in a long-wheel-based Toyota Land Cruiser, they found Ahlfeld's Nuevo Mundo (5438m), failed on Cerro Lipez due to appallingly loose rock, and managed to climb Uturuncu (6008m) on October 8. They were greatly helped by the existence of a sulphur mining road to 5770 meters, which left them a 45-minute stroll to the summit.

Uturuncu would appear to be a good contender for Courty's Nuevo Mundo and, once you've got to it, certainly deserves the epithet, until now applied to Huayna Potosí in the Cordillera Real, as "the easiest 6000er in the world."

YOSSI BRAIN, *United Kingdom*

## CHILE

*Chile, Various Activity.* In the last two southern summers (December through March), I accompanied local mountaineers in repeat climbs in central Chile. However, on the four first ascents I was able to make in that period, I had no companions. On December 16, 1997, I climbed Cerro Pastén (4357m) in the upper Yeso valley east of Santiago, and Cerro Parrera (4569m). The latter peak is situated in the sources of the Navarro Creek, Aconcagua Province. In both ascents, I was harassed by very strong winds. In the following Chilean summer, I climbed P. 4121m, situated at the head of the Arroyo Blanco Creek and south of the Nieves Negras Pass, on December 31, 1998. I named it Alto del Arroyo Blanco (High Peak of the White Creek). Its southern ridge, which I used, had unstable rock and was quite exposed. On January 14, 1999, I ascended the fine red rock pyramid of Cerro Gastón (4024m), also situated in the upper Yeso valley of the Santiago hinterland.

EVELIO ECHEVARRÍA

*Cochamo, Various Ascents.* It was reported that British and American climbers have begun developing an area of granite big walls in the Patagonian Andes east of Puerto Montt in a valley 15 miles from the town of Cochamo. Briton Crispin Waddy discovered the area in 1997, cutting a machete swath through the dense jungle to the 2,000-foot west face of Mt. Trinidad, where he, his girlfriend Nell, and Noel Craine attempted a route only to have the attempt cut