

easy ground leading to the summit near where the American route joins the route, we were forced to retreat due to the rain/snow and strong winds. We were somewhat disappointed not to have reached the summit, but after many hours of rappelling in cold and wet conditions we were both quite sure that we had made the right decision. We were back in our camp in the Sitting Man Ridge by 1 a.m., in time for yet another big pot full of polenta. During the remaining two weeks we stayed in the area, the weather was never good enough for climbing, but we had a great time walking, reading, eating and hanging out with many good friends from Chaltén.

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI, *Club Andino Bariloche, Argentina*

*Aguja Mermoz, Vela y Viento.* Kurt Albert and Bernd Arnold (G) climbed a new route on the east buttress of Aguja Mermoz that they named *Vela y Viento* (5.12 b/c ED, 500m). They finished on January 9, after several weeks of attempts with the use of fixed ropes. This line was previously attempted in 1993 by Topher Donahue and Kennan Harvey (U.S.), who climbed to within 20 meters of the summit ridge but were forced to retreat due to a very iced-up chimney. The route features well-bolted anchors and bolts next to cracks (Harvey and Donahue had climbed much of the same line without placing bolts or using fixed ropes).

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI, *Club Andino Bariloche, Argentina*

*Aguja St. Exupery, West Face, Attempt.* Greg Crouch and J. Jay Brooks (U.S.) attempted to climb a new route on the west face of Aguja St. Exupery to the right of *Chiaro di Luna*, but despite many valiant attempts in less than ideal weather, they were forced to give up the idea after having climbed some nine pitches. Their best attempt took place February 12.

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI, *Club Andino Bariloche, Argentina*

*Argentine Patagonia, Various Activity.* As we had the preceding season, we arrived at Chaltén at the beginning of October with a head full of ideas. But “el tiempo” did not give us the same luck. Nevertheless, we had a very good time in this beautiful range.

From November 7 to 19, we climbed the Volcan Lautaro (3380m) in the middle of the Ice cap, which we reached in five days via Paso Marconi. We skied up two-thirds of the way to a cirque between the south and southeast ridges, then continued via an easy walk with crampons to the south summit. From there, it was a short walk down and across the crater to reach the top among incredible rime formations. We were super surprised to discover the volcano to be active— islands of hot rock and gas in an arctic ambiance! We then had a very good ski down.

On December 5, we attempted Cerro Pier Giorgio in alpine style via the *Greenpeace* route. We twice reached a point a third of the way up the face on the best granite we have ever seen. After a really hanging bivy (due to strong wind), we changed our minds about continuing. N.B.: After the first pitch, do not follow the old fixed rope. It leads too far to the right—the wrong direction.

On December 12, we climbed the east face of Val Biois via the Gabarrou-Marsigny-Vimal goullete, an unbelievable ice line, finding wet snow and wet ice conditions.

We also climbed Fitz Roy via the classic Franco-Argentine route during a limited good