



Paolo Vitali on The Missing Mountain.  
SONJA BRAMBATI

wasn't exactly the "clear blue sky" for which it's famous. The rain came every day. So, instead of new big wall routes, we spent our time climbing enjoyable shorter routes close to the Base Camp.

On the lower section of the Russian Tower, we followed a nice crack system that we christened *The Missing Mountain* (F6a/b, 580m), while on the lower section of the Central Pyramid we first climbed the slabby *A Better World* (F6a/b, with one pitch at F6c, 380m), and then the mixed *Take It Easy* (F7a, 360m). All of them are excellent free climbs on red granite with knobs and chickenheads; the difficulties are mostly obligatory.

We looked very carefully for any signs of preceding ascents during our climbs, but we found nothing. Regarding *The Missing Mountain*, we know of a route to the left of it, more in the center of the wall, just right of the white rock-fall scar, that we joined in the penultimate pitch. We found one piton on that pitch, the only signs we could find.

We'll surely remember the ascents from this trip as much as the wonderful time spent with Artyk, our guide/cook, and our horsemen and their families, who gave us a great lesson in kindness and humanity.

PAOLO VITALI, *Italy*

## Karavshin Region

*Peak Gorniak, Third Ascent.* Peak Gorniak (5013m) is difficult to get to without a helicopter. It takes two days and entails crossing two passes from the Karavshin Base Camp in the Asan-Usen region. Only two routes have been established on it: one, the Lenivkovoy route (5B), ascends the northwest rib, and the second, the 1992 Sidorov route (6B), ascends the center of the north-northeast face. The latter took two attempts; it was a seriously organized expedition that used a helicopter and a lot of climbers.

The Altsport team from St. Petersburg of V. Shamalo, leader, and K. Korabelnikov made the third ascent of the mountain from July 31 to August 7 via a variation to the 1992 Sidorov route, which averages 78° and is 1100 meters high. They climbed the route without any help, without a helicopter or a base camp. They reached the face of Gorniak from Karavshin Base Camp and returned 19 days later. The route was awarded second place in technical difficulty climbing class for the 1998 Russian mountaineering championships.

VLADIMIR SHATAEV, *Russian Mountaineering Federation*