

At the Laguna de Parón, we told two South African climbers, Mike Cartwright and Malcolm Crowans, of our attempt. Three days later, they climbed the mountain by an easier route that eventually gained the northeast ridge. They named their route *Solar Shield* (5.9, 650m). This may have been the first ascent of the mountain.

ANTONIO GÓMEZ BOHÓRQUEZ, *Spain*

*Unnamed Peak, Mission Control.* Kent McClannan and I climbed a new route on an unnamed peak west of Shaqsha in the Cordillera Blanca. The granite wall, which tops out at ca. 16,000', is clearly visible from a base camp midway up the Rurek Valley and can be identified by the low vegetation-to-rock ratio. On this wall's east face, *Mission Control* (IV 5.11+ A2+) was completed over three days between periods of unsettled weather in June. The route follows an obvious right-leaning, right-facing dihedral system for four pitches, then follows the ridge for an additional eight pitches. Most of the harder climbing was encountered in the first half of the route, with the crux (the "Jules Verne Simulator") coming at the end of pitch 2. We rappelled the steep yet shorter section of the wall just south of the summit. There was no sign of previous route activity elsewhere on the peak.

CAMERON TAGUE

*Ranrapalca, Scandinavian Direct, Solo.* On July 24, Pavle Kozjek (Slovenia) made a solo ascent of *Scandinavian Direct* route (ED inf) on the north face of Ranrapalca (6162m). It took him three hours to climb this ca. 1000-meter mixed route (the topo of the first ascensionists indicate 12-15 hours for their ascent). He couldn't get information about the other ascents of this route, which seems to be a little bit overgraded. He descended the Northeast Face route.

FRANCI SAVENC, *Planinska zveza Slovenije*

## Paron Valley

*La Esfinge, Dion's Dihedral.* On June 23, after two weeks of effort, Larry Dolecki and I climbed to the 5325-meter summit of La Esfinge, completing the first ascent of a big wall aid route on the mountain's east face. La Esfinge is a beautiful alpine tower of orange granite that hosts four previously established routes on its east and southeast faces.

Our original objective was to add a second route to the cold 900-meter southeast face, but due to lack of time (only 16 days total to acclimatize, ferry loads, climb and descend), we focused on the shorter right side of the east face. Although only 500 to 600 meters in height, this area of the wall had the steepest, cleanest rock on the mountain. We set our sights on a soaring orange-streaked corner that dominated the upper part of the face, which was separated from the ground by 200 meters of thin features and seemingly blank sections.

After a couple of easy free pitches, the tricky aid began with three pitches of hard nailing and heading interspersed with some rivets. The crux (A3) arrived on the fourth pitch, which took two days to climb due to intricate route finding and long sections of copperheads with ledge fall potential. During these initial days, the weather wasn't the perfect Peruvian blue sky that we had heard about, but at least it was consistent: sunny, warm skies in the morning would last until about 3 p.m., when clouds would build up, resulting in an evening snowstorm. The