

1998). On December 27, while recovering their many fixed lines, Carlos Garcia suffered a 30-meter fall when he slipped through the ends of his ropes while rappelling. He was lucky enough to land at the base of the route itself, three pitches above the bergschrund. He was towing several ropes, and as he fell past a prominent flake, one of them got caught and slowed him down considerably. He suffered many torn ligaments.

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI, *Club Andino Bariloche*

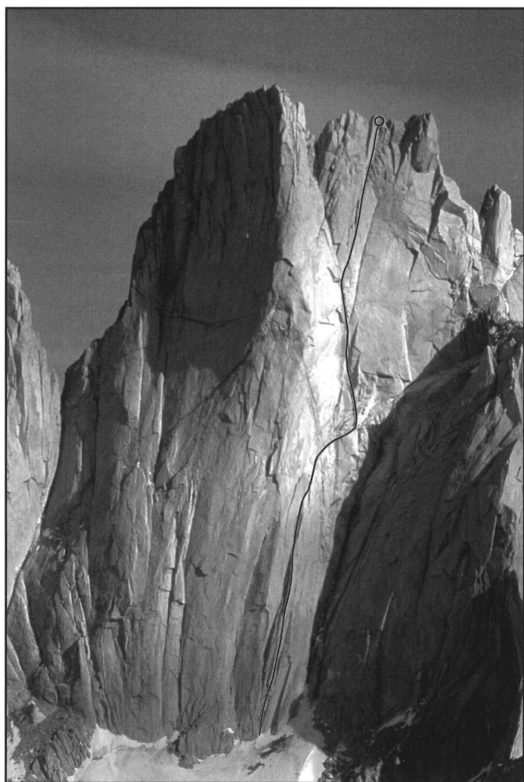
*Aguja Mermoz, West Face, and Guillaumet, Northwest Ridge.* Zlatko Koren and Klemen Mali (Slovenia) came to Piedra del Fraile Base Camp on January 28, 2000. The first ten days it rained a lot, and there was even snow in BC. In bad weather, we managed to bring our gear to Paso del Cuadrado. Our main aim was to climb *Tehuelche* on Fitz Roy's north face. But after the rainy days, all the cracks on the lower part of the route were filled with ice and snow.

On the first beautiful day we changed our plan and noticed a nice line on Mermoz's west face. We didn't have any information about the line or whether it had already been climbed. The same day that we brought the gear to the base of the wall (February 7), we climbed the first 120 meters and fixed the rope, then rappelled down and bivied at the base of the wall. During the night, the weather changed for the worse and we left for BC.

In the first four pitches we found old pitons and bolts at the belays. After the fourth pitch there was nothing. The information that Rolando Garibotti gave us was that two Swiss climbers, Vicent

Banderet and Paul Maillefer, tried to climb the line in 1985 but retreated after completing eight pitches when faced with a steep offwidth. (Notes Garibotti, "Banderet and Maillefer descended a different way, which is why the Slovenians found no equipment higher than the fourth pitch.")

After a few days, the beautiful weather started. On February 12, we started from BC at 2 a.m. At 8 a.m., we started to jumar the 120 meters. After the comfortable ledge, we found the hardest climbing on the route: offwidth cracks mixed with aid and free climbing. During the day, the weather changed and in the afternoon, it started to snow and blow. In the middle section, where we found the hardest climbing of the route, we also had a lot of bad rock in wide cracks. In bad weather, we managed to climb to the top of the wall at 11 p.m. or so and quickly started to rappel. After two rappels the weather cleared up, and we had a cold but clear night for the descent. We descended our route of



*The west face of Aguja Mermoz, showing Barriga Patagonia (Koren-Mali, 2000).* ROLANDO GARIBOTTI

ascent, which we called *Barriga Patagonica* (6a+/A1- V+, 650m). At 6 a.m., we stood at the base of the wall. We took a rest at the bivy for three hours, then left for BC with all the gear.

Four days later we left for Guillaumet, thinking to climb a new line on the west face. The weather was bad again. In bad weather, we climbed the Northwest Ridge (V A0, 400m) (Comesaña-Fonrouge) in three and a half hours. We departed BC on February 20, 2000.

KLEMEN MALI, *Slovenia*

*Aguja Guillaumet, North-Northwest Ridge, Free Ascent and Other Activity.* Bruce Miller and I arrived at Chalten at the end of November with the intentions of trying the *Supercanaleta* on Fitz Roy. After our first and only attempt on December 3, we decided against it, for it was in poor shape. During our seven-week “super-expensive camping trip,” we refined our camping techniques, bouldered much, got fat and managed to get some hand jams on the lesser summits of this proud range. We climbed the North-Northeast Ridge on Guillaumet for possibly the route’s first free ascent, for Bruce sent the A2 pitch at .10+ tight handies. The climbing was excellent, but the summit was not obtained; high winds forced us to retreat. We rapped the route.

We tried to climb the Franco-Argentine Route on Fitz Roy for several weeks with no great height gained because a four-week storm did not give us a window of opportunity. During our last days in, we managed to climb the Kearney Route on St. Exupery (IV 5.10), the Anglo-American Route with the Kearney Variation on Innominata (IV 5.11-), *Medialuna* (III 5.11), and Bruce and Bruno Sourzac linked up and climbed a new route (III WI4) on Cerro Solo.

KENT MCCLANNAN

*Aguja Guillaumet, East Face, Attempt.* Dave Hesleden and I went to attempt the West Face of Fitz Roy in November and December, 1998. In actual fact it was quite snowy and icy, so we switched to the east side. After one attempt at the Franco-Argentine Route on the big Fitz (all the cracks were full of ice), we realized that we would be better off trying to climb on mixed routes. We did 450 meters of good climbing on the [400-meter] east face of Guillaumet, abseiling off two to three rope lengths from the top due to constant spindrift. The climbing was good and hard: Scottish VI/VII-ish with poor protection on the second half.

ANDY CAVE, *United Kingdom*

*Torrecita Tito Carrasco, First Ascent, and Cerro Pollone, West Pillar, A Fine Piece.* In November, 1999, I went back to Patagonia with Jim Donini with no fixed objectives but hopeful of finding some good unclimbed terrain above the Marconi Glacier. Armed with info provided by my hero, Rolando Garibotti, and after some reconnaissance, we settled on a pair of decent prospects.

At our first opportunity, we climbed a beautiful virgin tower that is the first peak on the ridge north of the main summit of Cerro Pollone and named it “Torrecita Tito Carrasco” in honor of a friend of Jim’s wife, Angela. Tito died in Angela’s arms after he was struck by rockfall while sport climbing at El Portrero Chico, Mexico, in 1997. We followed the path of least resistance with sections of snow, ice and mixed, capped by a few nice pitches of moderate rock. The last few meters of rime and rock to the absolute summit were spicy. In all, an excellent day outing.