

descent we took some ropes and other equipment, and some we left for the following days, when we went one more time to the face and filmed some material. On July 13, we said goodbye to everybody in the base camp and went to the valley.

Silvo and Bubu thought for a very long time about how to name the route, and then at the end we named it after a constellation in the sky that we could see every evening and which can be seen only in the southern hemisphere: *Cruz del Sur* (Southern Cross). There are 33 bolts and 16 pitons on the route, of which 17 bolts and 12 pitons are for belays. The most difficult pitch, pitch 2, was given 7c+, the obligatory free spots in the route are up to 7a, and the route is 800 meters long and 650 meters high. Some Friends and chocks are needed; a variety of pitons would be advisable, as would double 60-meter climbing ropes. The sun shines on the face from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m.

A return trip for us would be worthwhile, especially because of the beautiful colors and sunsets, and the friendly people.

BORIS STRMŠEK, *Slovenia*

*La Esfinge, Here Comes the Sun, New Route.* In late May and early June, United Kingdom climbers Brian Bigger and Lucy Regan established *Here Comes the Sun* (E3 5c A3), considered by many parties to be the best line on this fine face. The 700-meter-high route on the east face climbs the obvious nose-like feature, beginning with the initial four pitches of the French route *Papas Rellenas*, then breaking right to diagonal across the prominent headwall via a stellar line of discontinuous flakes. They fixed ropes over seven days, spent another six days on the wall in good weather, and placed nine bolts. Most pitches were freed, with Regan leading the serious crux aid pitch on hooks, expanding nailing, and RURPS, with huge fall potential.

*Based on information from IAN PARNELL (U.K.) and ANTONIO GÓMEZ BOHÓRQUEZ (Spain)*

*La Esfinge, Here Comes the Sun, First Free Ascent.* From July 14-18 (with one rest day), Leo Houlding and Sam Whitaker (U.K.) made the second ascent and first free ascent of the Bigger-Regan route *Here Comes the Sun* (E6 6b, 700m). Houlding's account of the climb, and his observations on style, appear in an article earlier in this journal.

*La Esfinge, Little Fluffy Clouds, New Route.* A large team of British climbers arrived in Peru at the start of July. On arrival at the Sphinx, my climbing partner, Neil Dyer, and I set about looking for a potential new free route that could be climbed without resorting to adding fixed protection and could be climbed ground up. The most feasible line we could devise through our binoculars was the line that became *Little Fluffy Clouds* (IV E5 6a/5.11d X). The first day resulted in only two pitches being climbed, though the second pitch proved to be one of the bolder pitches of the route. I led the pitch at about 5.11b R. Neil and I then abseiled back down to the ground, stripping our gear and pulling the ropes as we went.

The second day was a bit more successful, as we managed to climb the first six pitches, all onsight. We changed positions when releading the bottom pitches, so Neil led the bold second pitch and I led the first. We continued alternating leads with Neil leading the final sixth pitch. This was an excellent, 50-meter, arching crack and the most strenuous pitch at 5.11c. We then again abseiled to the ground, leaving abseil gear on the belays but pulling the ropes down.

For the third day we bivied at the foot of the route so we could start climbing at first light.

Again we started from the bottom of the route. Neil led the first pitch; alternating leads, I then had the opportunity to lead the excellent sixth pitch. We had the bottom pitches pretty well rehearsed, so our progress was fairly swift up to our old high point.

The next couple of pitches were quite straightforward and took us to the foot of two large chimneys; they were part of an existing aid route which to the best of our knowledge hadn't yet been freed. Thinking the meat of the hard climbing was over, we were shocked to find the first chimney to be quite horrific. The first half was very loose and strenuous; there were some bolts on this pitch, but the adequate surrounding natural protection meant I didn't find it necessary to clip them. The pitch was certainly the toughest at about 5.11d X. The rest of the climb was of a modest standard and the rock went back to being the immaculate textured granite we grew to expect from the Sphinx.

By the end, *Little Fluffy Clouds* turned out to be exactly what we hoped for. We managed to climb the whole route without the addition or use of any fixed protection, and every pitch was climbed on sight at 5.11 or below, a grade attainable by many. Although the line wasn't totally independent, it was certainly the most natural line for free climbing and we feel that that is enough to justify its independent existence.

PATCH HAMMOND, *United Kingdom*

*La Esfinge, Dion's Dihedral, New Variation and First Free Ascent.* Looking at the Sphinx (La Esfinge) and following its features and lines, it rapidly becomes obvious that one feature dominates all others. That is the 150-meter left-facing corner, the aid line *Dion's Dihedral*. The corner begins about two-thirds of the way up the crag and looms darkly over the lower slabs, cracks, and walls. The aid line follows a fairly direct route into the corner along some natural features and then uses rivet ladders up the blank walls.

Nic Sellars and Mark "Zippy" Pretty devised a potential free line through binoculars. Their line succeeded in linking all the features, but only by some devious and winding route finding. Nic and Zippy then set to work on free climbing the route. They quickly succeeded on the first four pitches, all of which were about 5.11+. They mainly followed the aid line, though at times it was necessary to perform large detours in order to get around some of the rivet ladders. These early pitches were certainly the route-finding crux. Above, the climbing looked more obvious, but strenuous and sustained.

At this point, Zippy sadly became unwell and was unable to continue, so I took the opportunity to join Nic and try to finish the route. The first day was a chance for me to climb the pitches already climbed by Nic and Zippy. Nic and I quickly worked through these until we were back at Nic and Zippy's high point. The next pitch was a steep, slanting finger crack. It was by far the most physical point of the route and the only pitch that was not onsighted. We both felt it to be a tough 5.12b. This pitch was not part of the original aid line and was well protected with traditional gear. From the high point, we abseiled to the floor and left the ropes fixed.

The second day started with the rather grim task of jumaring back up to our high point. From there, a couple of 5.11 pitches soon took us to a point the aid climbers used for their portaledge. We decided to adopt the same strategy, but to help with the hard work of hauling, Neil Dyer came along to give us a hand. While Nic and I were free climbing, Neil juggled and hauled a portaledge up the fixed lines to our bivy site. The superhuman effort was much appreciated. As Neil happily abseiled back down to the ground and back to camp, Nic and I set up the ledge and went to sleep.

Above us lay a couple of reasonable-looking pitches and then the corner itself. If we were