



*Bruno Sourzac climbing steep terrain on pitch 5 during the second ascent of Cerro Paine Grande.*

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI

Punta Bariloche and the central summit, where the technical difficulties start. On the 28th, we left our camp just before 5 a.m., collected the equipment stashed the day before and, following a line different from that used by previous parties, climbed an easy snow ramp (55°) that slashes right across the base of the central summit's steep wall, to reach a large plateau at the base of the summit pyramid.

At a little past noon, we crossed the bergschrund of the main summit's south flank, and climbed a fairly direct line that leads to a recess just left of the final snow mushroom, which we contoured by its south side to reach the summit (3050m) just past 5 p.m. In all, we climbed six interesting pitches with difficulties to WI5 in rather porous ice. A few rappels, much down climbing, and a race with the fading light brought us back to our tent by 10:30 p.m. The views from the summit were indescribably beautiful, from Fitz Roy, to the steppe, to the sea—countless lakes, valleys and an infinity of dreams. Special thanks go to Sergio Echeverria and Hernan Jofre for their unconditional support.

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI, *Club Andino Bariloche*

## Ascencio Valley

*Cerro Escudo, The Dream, Attempt.* At the end of January, our party arrived at the Japanese camp. There was nobody else there, except a group of three Basques and two Chileans. Our plan was to climb a new route on Fortaleza. After a typical few-day wait for better weather, we started carrying our stuff to the base of Fortaleza. Once over the glacier, we dug a cave just below the wall. We spent an entire week waiting for improvement, but it never

came. Because time was getting short, we decided to climb the American route *The Dream* (VII 5.10 A4+) on Escudo.

By February 6, we had carried all the equipment to the foot of Escudo, and we started climbing the following day. We decided to climb capsule-style. We set up our first hanging camp at the fifth belay, from which point the only possible route was upward. Beginning February 12, we did not return to the ground anymore. On February 18, we reached Camp II at the ninth belay. The weather during this week forced us to stay in the portaledge for two days, waiting. The climbing on this part of the wall was great, with beautiful technical pitches (A4 to A4+). The following section over the Red Tower was a little more relaxing, the difficulty decreasing a little; there was even a perfect ledge where we could stand on our feet again.

After four pitches, we set up CIII at pitch 13. There was a small ledge with snow, so we could save up a little water for cooking. The following day, we got over one of the most serious pitches using loose skyhooks. On February 25, we moved all our stuff to CIV at pitch 16. The next day, we got through the last difficult A4+ pitch and fixed the ropes to pitch 19. The weather the following morning was nasty again, so we spent the whole day in our portaledges, planning the "final attack." We were freezing more and more, and our psyches were getting tired. We got up at 4 a.m. and tried to climb as far as we could. We climbed the whole day; the weather was totally bad. At 11 p.m. we reached the 22nd belay, and all agreed that we had had enough. At night we rappelled down to CIV.

We spent the following two days rappelling down and praying for better weather. But nothing changed. In the end we stood on solid ground. We did not reach the summit but were happy enough with having climbed the route.

Apart from three falls "for better judgement" and one upside-down wake-up call, our quest went well. Marek Holeček, Tomas Rinn, and Tomas Sobotka woke up from their dream in Puerto Natales. We would like to thank the guys from Big Foot Expediciones and give our compliments to the gentlemen Brad Jarrett, Chris Breemer, and Christian Santelices who made the first ascent of the route.

TOMAS RINN, *Czech Republic*

*Torres del Paine, Various Ascents.* Sylvain Empereur and I flew from Lyon, France, to Punta Arenas, Chile, on October 12. Two days later, we reached the Japanese Base Camp in the Silencio Valley (to reach the camp, we had to pay U.S. \$80 each to enter the national park in which it is situated). We were alone, as it was early in the season and unusually snowy. We waited a week in bad weather before we could move. Then we tried to repeat the route *Wild Wild West* on the Central Tower of Paine (opened by S. Cosgrove and J. Smith in 1991 and still unrepeated). After two days of climbing in alpine style (with two ropes), we reached belay number 7, but strong winds arrived, forcing us to abseil. Two days later, we climbed the Bonington route on the Central Tower in six hours and 15 minutes from the col to the top (simulclimbing with one pack, no bivy gear, and two ropes). The route was very dry and the weather perfect. After a rest day in base camp on November 1, we used the same style to climb the Aste route of the South Tower in four hours and 45 minutes from the rimaye to the summit (21 hours BC to BC). We used only half a pitch of aid (due to bad rock in the first part) and found difficulties up to French 6c. The upper section was superb, all on sound granite, with good, windy weather. However, during the night, the infamous Patagonian weather returned. Nevertheless, we tried to ascend *Ultima Esperanza* on the North Tower two times, but the Aste route was to be our last ascent. We left BC on November 11, having climbed four