

However, an amazing route (PD). The weather broke, with nine consecutive days of snow. With time running out Thomas, Gilbert, and Pennington made a final attempt on Rumca III via the stunning south face arête but felt they would be taking an unnecessary risk to continue under such conditions.

DI GILBERT, *United Kingdom*



The south face of Illimani, near La Paz, showing *Nada es Seguro*, 2001. *Karen McNeill*

*Illimani, Nada es Seguro.* On April 25 Bruce and Sheila Hendricks and I took the 3 p.m. bus from La Paz to Cohoni. During the ride we chatted with locals and were able to hire an arriero (mule/horse driver), whose horses would carry our equipment into Illimani. Before we left Cohoni repeated emphatic instructions were given to our companions to ensure that they took us to the rarely visited south side of the mountain. Several hours later we realized that our instructions had been misunderstood, and we were heading to the base of the regular route. Bruce and Sheila took over navigating and led the way to the south side of Illimani. Minerio Mesa Qala is a dilapidated mine at the base of the mountain. Arriving at dusk we set up camp among the ruins. Our arriero descended so that the horses could feed at a lower elevation. During our hike the mountain had tricked us with lines that appeared to be on the south face, but from the mine we had a better view of the south face and discovered that the features were part of the southwest face. We awoke the next morning to blue skies and feasted on the views. A good portion of the day was used to memorize details of our chosen route, which was the westernmost (leftmost) line on the south face proper.

By 3 p.m. our companions arrived to ferry remaining equipment around to Puente Roto. Our intentions were to meet them late the following day after descending the west ridge. After their departure we began the hike to the base of the route. It took three hours to traverse moraine, cross smooth slabs of granite, and ascend a glaciated snow cone. The top half of the route sported a large snowfield, so it was decided to climb during the cool of night. Using headlamps to light our way, we began to climb pitches of ice, using rock anchors. Unfortunately, by dawn we were only ten pitches up and still had a lot of elevation to ascend. The technical crux of the route had been the first pitches of waterfall ice. We decided to continue up, knowing that it would be possible to move more quickly through the alpine bowl. The conditions varied from

deep, unconsolidated snow to smatterings of shallow ice and several broken rock bands. As the afternoon wore on the blue skies departed, and clouds descended upon the mountain.

The summit ridge was reached by the evening of the 28th. As we arrived a storm began swirling spindrift in our faces and reduced visibility, so we dug a snow cave and spent the night crammed in our packs. By morning visibility had improved somewhat, and we were able to proceed along the ridge, being careful not to walk off into space. As the summit was gained, the weather deteriorated again, and hailstones violently stung exposed skin. We spotted footprints and began to follow them down. Luck was not on our side, though, as the prints vanished in the wind. For a second night we were forced to dig a snow cave. During the evening the clouds momentarily lifted, and we were given a clear view down the mountain. With no tent or sleeping bags to keep us warm at camp, we stayed put. By morning the clouds had descended once again, but we were able to find our way down. At Nido de Condores a local guide, who had awaited our arrival, fed us hunks of bread and cheese that we washed down with numerous cups of tea. Feeling refreshed the three of us hiked back to Cohoni and spent a final night there before catching an overloaded bus back to La Paz. The bus ride was the crux of our entire adventure. We called the route *Nada es Seguro* ("nothing is certain"), 1,450 meters, V WI3+.

KAREN MCNEILL, *Canada*

*Condoriri Group, Huallomen, southwest face, Bon Anniversaire Annick.* In 2001 I spent a few days climbing in the well-known Condoriri group near La Paz. The snow/ice conditions were very good considering we were there at the end of July. With a friend, Martin Imgrüth, I climbed a route on Huallomen's southwest face that would appear to be a first ascent. It is an obvious line cutting through the rock face. When I talked about it with the guides in La Paz no one could tell me if it had already been climbed. The best information I managed to get was from Jose Camarlinghi, of Andean Summits, who told me that it was previously a Bolivian guide's project that he didn't complete. Jose said he hadn't seen this line in such good condition for many years.

After walking 20 minutes up the Tajira glacier we turned left to reach the base of the triangular face. To get to the bottom of the line we climbed a snowy couloir for 200- to 250-meters. The first pitch followed a diagonal ramp, from left to right, leading to a chimney. We belayed with two pegs at the base of the chimney. We climbed the vertical chimney (UIAA IV+) on poor rock and then a thinly iced gully to belay on friends. Following up the gully it steepens to 75-80 degrees and then a snow wall of 85-90 degrees. Belay on ice screws. The gully continues with good ice then a very steep mixed section. Belay on cams. From there the ascent became easier up a gentle snow couloir leading to a section of poor rock. After this last rope length the couloir continued for 150-200 meters only interrupted by a little mixed section. The last difficulty is a poor rock chimney (UIAA IV) leading to a saddle. From there the view is very impressive. We then followed the



Low on Bon Anniversaire Annick. *Martin Imgrüth*