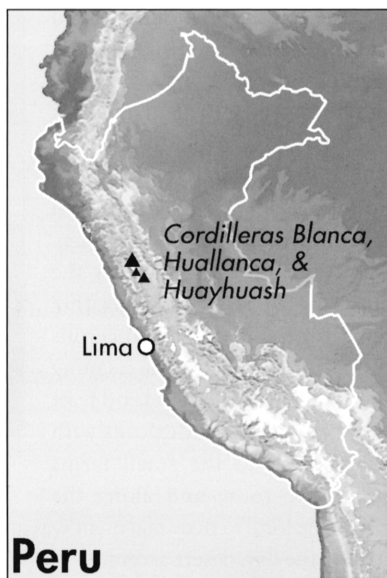


## Peru

### CORDILLERA BLANCA

*Alpamayo to north ridge, Sensations of History.* On August 8 the Catalans Josep Escruela and Tino Tain climbed the gully to the right of the Ferrari Route. From the Alpamayo–Quitaraju pass they reached the start of the Spanish–Chilean Route, subsequently climbing to the left along the base of the bergschrund before crossing it at the start of the French Gully. They climbed 120m leftward across 45°–50° slopes to reach the left-hand gully. Precarious curtains of 90°–95° ice, with poor belays, led to a narrow gully between the Ferrari Route and the French Gully. The gully was climbed, mostly on 60°–75° ice and snow, to the north ridge. They descended the Ferrari Route without continuing to the summit. The team estimated that the route was 400m long, with a UIAA grade of ED, 45°–60°–95°. They called it *Sensations of History*.



ANTONIO GÓMEZ BOHÓRQUEZ, *Spain (translated by José Luis Bermúdez)*

*Taulliraju, east buttress, second ascent.* Possibly the most notable event in the Blanca during 2002 was not the creation of a new route but the second ascent of a major line that had remained unrepeat for 20 years. Over eight days from June 26 to July 3 the talented French trio of Stéphane Benoist, Patrice Glairon-Rappaz, and Patrick Pessi made the first complete repeat of Taulliraju's East (Right-Hand) Buttress (Fowler-Watts, 1982) on the southwest face. Although the group has an impressive collective resumé, including the second winter ascent of the Gousseault route, a winter repeat of Rolling Stone, and a solo of No Siesta, all on the north face of the Grandes Jorasses, plus the first ascent of the difficult north face of Chuchubalstering in the Hindu Raj (and Pessi had just led 8b before the trip), they found the route to be the hardest they had climbed in their lives.

The line is obvious, but even the elite Blanca activist Nicolas Jaeger had decided it was not for him in 1978, and moved well right to climb the shorter south face to the upper south-southeast ridge. Three Japanese, who climbed a hard direct route up the south face in 1976, probably also had the southwest face in mind. It was left to the British pair of Mick Fowler and Chris Watts, on their first expedition to altitude, to complete a test piece that subsequently defeated a number of strong parties. Fowler and Watts, both leading very hard pitches (Fowler took his first fall as a second) and both climbing with packs except on one pitch, spent four-and-a-half days on the route, reaching the 5,830m summit on May 28, 1982. There was superb ice, difficult aid on the generally sound but compact granite, and the usual Peruvian excavating and groveling. One particularly memorable pitch involved an overhanging chimney behind a large, free-hanging icicle. The 800m route was solid ED3

and had difficulties that could probably be rated V A3+ AI6. It was done in perfect, though cold, weather.

Last summer the weather was not obliging for the three French. Apart from the clear and sunny first and last days, it was generally overcast with some snowfall. The trio fixed the first 60m, already aiding where they expected free-climbing, and continued in alpine style with a large haul bag, using bivouac sacks rather than a tent. They reached the top after 30 pitches and six bivouacs, the last just three short pitches below the summit. The icicle seems to have been too fragile to climb, but Pessi managed to aid the wall just to the right, with a long reach at the start that was only possible for someone of his 6'2" height. He then moved carefully over the top ice bulge. The team used a lot of aid (to New Wave A2), free-climbed only one rock section, and confirmed the AI6 rating (sections of 90°–95°). Only one peg was found in place on the entire route. The three descended by rappel. This was another fine French effort in the Cordillera Blanca and was short-listed for the Piolet d'Or. It confirmed, if confirmation was needed, that the first ascent in 1982 set a new benchmark in Peruvian climbing.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *High Mountain INFO*

*Santa Cruz Chico, east face to within 20m of summit.* Scottish-based Jason Currie and Guy Robertson made a new route up the east face of the rarely climbed Santa Cruz Chico (a.k.a. Atuncocha), the 5,800m peak on the ridge between Santa Cruz (6,259m) and Santa Cruz Norte (5,829m). The face is not big and appears largely rocky, but before last year was unclimbed. The only previous recorded line on the mountain seems to be the 1958 American Route (Michael-Ortenburger-Ortenburger).

The Scottish pair reached base camp on July 7 and made their first attempt on the 13th. They tried a single-day push up the center of the face but came to a halt 150m below the summit, being forced to retreat, dehydrated, the following day. On the 17th they tried again, making a very early start and carrying a stove, though no bivouac gear. They first climbed three pitches (75°–80°) up a gully left of the toe of a rock spur in the center of the face, then, after a short rock pitch, followed a 60° gully and snow slopes to a very steep rock band. This was overcome at A1. Above, the pair climbed up right through mushrooms and seracs to a couloir leading to the summit ridge. They climbed the couloir (100m, 55°) to the crest of the ridge and eventually stopped 20m short of the summit due to typical Peruvian unstable cornice formations. A rappel descent was made of the route largely using rock anchors and Abalakov threads. Although there was around 600m of climbing, the height of the face was no more than 400m and the route graded Alpine TD. The pair report that the weather was generally stable throughout their stay in the mountains.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *High Mountain INFO*

*Abasraju to summit ridge, Moonlighting.* On July 7 Tony Barton (U.K.) and I climbed a new route (Moonlighting, 11 pitches, TD) on the west-southwest face of Abasraju (5,550m). There is only one other route on the face, and it goes up to the left of the summit. Our route is an almost vertical line approximately 200m to the right of the summit. At the base of the face, directly below the summit, is a small rock buttress. To the right is another larger rock buttress. Between the two is a snow funnel that leads up to an ice runnel. We followed this into mixed