

ground and then out into névé runnels which led to a more open face with soft snow. Finally, below the large cornice we traversed right to find a way to the summit ridge. We didn't go to the summit because of the snow conditions.

NICK CARTER, *Glasgow University Mountaineering Club*

*La Esfinge, Variante Checa.* In June we had the opportunity to attempt to open a big-wall variation on La Esfinge (5,350m). David Font, from Cataluña, Spain, a Mexican friend Emiliano Villanueva, one porter, and I joined as a team. We climbed the first pitch of Papas Rellenas, then traversed left to the route Lobo Estepario. We opened a new pitch to the right of Lobo Estepario. We then climbed the third pitch of Riddle of the Cordillera. Between Via Gringos and Riddle we opened a new pitch that reaches the belay station of Gringos. At this point, after two days of climbing, we fixed ropes and descended.

Two days later we returned to the wall and continued the ascent, climbing the sixth and seventh pitches of Via Gringos. On the eighth pitch we deviated to the right, into a dihedral that forms a chimney and passes through a small roof. We opened the following six pitches, using natural belay stations and rivets, until we found a traverse to the right that ascends directly to the summit. (These last two pitches had been climbed by a previous party.)

The 16-pitch route involved two nights and two and a half days on the wall, with a difficulty of VI 5.10d A2+. During our ascent a fatal accident occurred to a Czech climber on the Cruz del Sur route. For this reason we named our route Variante Checa.

Emiliano Villanueva (Mexico) and Marius Bagnati (Brazil) completed the third ascent of Cruz del Sur a few days after we climbed Variante Checa.

LUIS CARLOS GARCÍA AYALA, *Mexico (translated by Molly Loomis)*

*Chacaraju Oeste, Jaeger Route, solo.* The 24 year-old French alpinist Didier Jourdain completed a solo ascent of the 700m Jaeger Route (TD+/ED1) on the south face of Chacaraju Oeste (6,001m). This line, first climbed solo on July 5, 1978 by the legendary French mountaineer



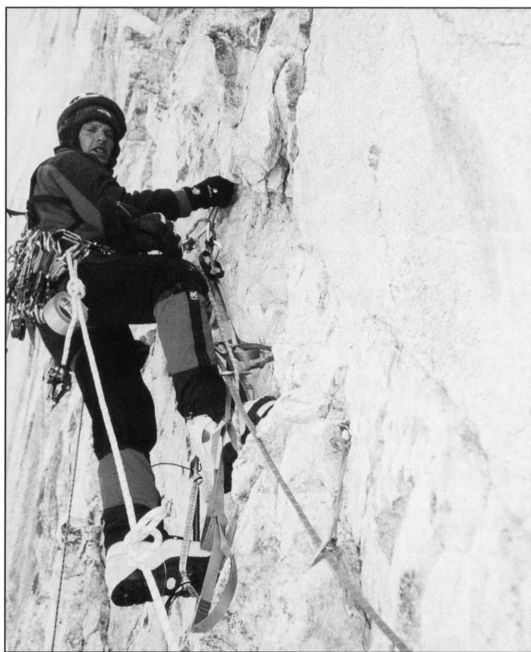
Via Traversiade, on the south face of Pisco Oeste. Richard Hidalgo

Nicolas Jaeger follows the broad couloir between two ice ribs/flutes leading directly to the summit. Jourdain, carrying no stove or bivouac equipment, took 15 hours for the ascent and a further seven hours to rappel the route. Confirming once again that the crux of most Peruvian routes is reaching the summit, Jourdain took four hours to overcome the last 100m.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *High Mountain INFO*

*Pisco Oeste, Via Traversiade.* On the south face of Pisco Oeste (5,752m) on August 21 Italians Tarcisio Bello, Ivan Camolini, Michele Grigenti, and Bruno Castegnaro climbed what may be a new route, Via Traversiade (TD+, 90°) in 10 hours from the base of the wall. (Many routes ascend the south face of this popular mountain but not all are well documented, making new route research difficult.) After climbing nearly to the summit ridge, just below and left of the summit, they were forced to rappel 30m and traverse right to gain the summit on very difficult ice (90°–95°, some aid). The line is thought to be between the 1977 (Bougnaud-Vallençant-Barrand) and 1981 (Bougnaud-Wilson) routes.

RICHARD HIDALGO, *Peru*



Pierrick Keller looking for something cold and steep on Huandoy Sur. Benoît Chanal

*Huandoy Sur, Crise del fe.* What a crazy idea we had! Five young guys—Yann Bonneville, Benoit Chanal, Francois Dupety, Pierrick Keller, and Theo Dubois—suddenly decided to travel to a mythical destination, not yet knowing exactly where. Finally we chose Peru. Now we needed to decide which mountain to climb. The name Huandoy Sur entered the discussion. “Why? Don’t you know of anything steeper?” Benoit asked jokingly. No, I don’t. Maybe that’s why Huandoy Sur. Anyway, we set to work. We tried to find sponsors, but due to our organizational skills and lack of time, we didn’t receive sponsorship. Oh well! We’ll go anyway and see what we can do! In the end, some friends helped us gather enough gear to attack this monster.

We began climbing on July 26, and the initial pitches seemed difficult, cold, and committing. For several days the mountain seemed so far above our level that we were hesitant to commit. Each day came down to scratching our way a few meters higher. And then, as I read in a famous passage, “It’s necessary to shatter the myths, to go too far too fast, what’s important is that you feel ready mentally.” There was nothing to do but keep up our morale.

After doubt concerning the conditions came doubt concerning the objective dangers. Getting hit in the head by a falling rock hurts, but when it happens twice, then three times, then