

Unsure of my mental state and my ability to climb, I set off with Powell and Samuel the following day, June 7. Eventually, after much grimacing, I joined the pair as they stood beneath the Eigerlike face. Their intended line ran up the height of the face on dripping icicles that were melting rapidly. Having only come for “a look” and maybe to take a photo or two, I wished them well and limped off for a glance around the corner at the west-northwest face.

Watching pin pricks of light move up to the northwest bowl at 11 p.m., I snuggled into my bag feeling no pressure whatever—it was a miracle I had made it up to here. An hour later I set off on my chemically enhanced adventure, moving slowly to reduce the depth of my breathing—an attempt to alleviate the pain from torn intercostal muscles. It didn’t work. Harboring secret ambitions that a direct line, climbing the left side of the west-northwest face, might go, I picked my way up the steep ice-slope beneath the face. The mushrooms on the summit ridge had appeared small when I scoped the face on the taxi-drive in, but only time would tell.

Crossing thin bridges over monster crevasses made me glad I had nothing except washing line in my sack. The ice was perfect; my trashed body, in a Voltarol (anti-inflammatory)-induced numbness, appeared to be coping with the demands of the climbing. Steady WI3/4 following deep flutings led to the middle of the face. A left-rising traverse was made to join a series of runnels. In the dark they appeared to be continuous, running up the left side of the face. The climbing became more tenuous and steeper in the runnels, thin ice covering compact rock, until, about six pitches from the mushrooms, things got interesting. Picking my way from one thin, rotten ice patch to another focused my thinking and slowed me. Finally, just beneath the summit, the ice disappeared and was replaced with 90° rock, covered in powder. The climbing was sustained M5, and looking down 1,000' of ice made me realize that the sun was up and working its deadly, destructive powers. The need to get off the face quickly was apparent, but with only a few feet left before reaching the summit slope, I couldn’t resist. Crawling between two mushrooms deposited me on the summit plateau. It had taken seven hours to reach this point, sustained climbing at an overall grade of ED1.

The need to start descending immediately, before the sun turned the face into a melting death trap, forced me not to visit the true summit. The original Bullock plan was to downclimb as much of the route as possible, but with the first few steps I discovered that lowering using the knackered left shoulder was as painful as hell. The steep ground would have been impossible to downclimb anyway, so an epic of rappelling on washing-line for 75' at a time began. I found that threading the 7mm cord directly through Abalakov threads worked well. Staring at the melting mushrooms above encouraged me to move quickly, but it still took six hours to reach the base of the face, 13.5 hours from when I started. The following day I hitched a ride in the back of a truck, and one colectivo trip deposited my broken body into Huaraz, land of cake, comfort, and pharmacies.

NICK BULLOCK, U.K.

*Bullock was unaware of the West-northwest Face route (Earl–Trimble, 2000), and suspects that his solo roughly follows that line. Further investigation indicates that Bullock may have climbed independent ground on the right at the bottom and top, joining the Earl–Trimble line in the middle portion—Ed.*

*Ocshapalca, south face.* Back in Huaraz after the Huayhuash, I rejoined my friend Iñigo Mujica (Note: Baró Ramon and Mujica had climbed on Chacaraju and Jirishanca Norte. See note in

*Huayhuash section.*) A team of four was descending after finishing a new route on the south face of Ocshapalca, which joined the Gato Negro (Black Cat) route two pitches from the summit. Only three of the team members—Ander, Joanfra Farreras, and Olga Torras—had been on the wall. The fourth, Akraitz Yurrita, had been suffering intestinal problems.

I suggested that we join forces on a bid to finish their route to the top. My new companions immediately agreed, so off we went. Things went smoothly, since Akraitz was familiar with the area, and we had no trouble finding traces of our friends' passage, as they had equipped the route for rappelling. We climbed rapidly, reaching our comrades' high point before noon, and forged on for another three exposed pitches on typical Peruvian snow. We reached the ridge soon after 2 p.m. After the first three rappels we reached the existing rappel route, which allowed us to reach base camp before dark. This climb took place on July 30, and I was scheduled to fly back to Spain on August 2, so the rest was a mad rush to make the flight.

ORIOI BARÓ I RAMON, *Spain* (translated by Oriol Solé-Costa)

*Milpocraju to summit ridge, Goulotte Gau Txoni.* Kepa Escribano from Spain and Cristina Prieto from Chile climbed a new route on the west face of the 5,310m north summit of Milpocraju, located just south of the spectacular, well-known Nevado Cayesh. The ascent took place on August 1, the pair climbing a 330m couloir to finish on the ridge some distance left (north) of the summit. A direct line to the highest point was well-defended by a large and active barrier of seracs. Goulotte Gau Txoni starts with relatively straightforward 45°–60° slopes, which give access to a steep, mixed central section (60°–80° and IV+). The left end of the serac barrier must then be breached (50°) to reach the summit ridge. The pair rappelled from this point. They thought the route warranted an overall grade of around TD.

This is the first route on the west face of the north summit, though the west face of the main summit has been climbed by at least two lines—in June 1985 by the British team of Derwin, Gore, Hinkes, Payne, Peter, and Thorn (TD-, 60°–80°) and in June 1986 by Gigliotti and Marchini, who probably followed the British line to the snowfield and then climbed about 200m left of the upper gully to reach the summit directly.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *High Mountain INFO*

*Punta Numa, Hasta Luego, Zorro (So Long, Fox).* (This report serves as an addendum to p. 303 of the AAJ 2002—Ed.) Our route on Punta Numa (5,179m), located in the Huantsan Group of the Quebrada Rurec, is dedicated to El Zorro, the bashful base camp fox and invited guest at every dinner. Roberto Iannilli and I completed the 1,200m route on August 2, 2001, after seven days of climbing, rating it EX+ (7a free-climbing and A3+ artificial climbing). The first twelve pitches were equipped with fixed ropes, now removed. The rock is good but mossy, especially in the cracks. Belays are equipped with hardware for the descent. The last two pitches are shared with the Spanish route Monttrek.

LUCIANO MASTRACCI, *Italy*

*Cordillera Blanca, clarifications and corrections.* AAJ correspondent Antonio Gómez Bohórquez, a noted Cordillera Blanca climbing researcher, sent the following notes regarding reports in the 2002