

South Howser Spire and the Minaret: (1) Beckey-Chouinard (20-22 pitches, TD+ IV 5.10; first ascent: Beckey-Chouinard, 1961; first free ascent: Accomazzo-Sorenson, 1975; first free solo: Ken Trout, 1977; first winter ascent: Hein-Flavelle, 1981). (1v.) Lost in the Towers Variation (TD+ IV 5.11; FA: Kamara-Walseth, 1980; FFA: Trump and partner, 1999). (2) Catalonian Route (20p. ED1 V 5.11; FA: Burgada-Cabau-Masana-Wenciesko, 1983; FFA: Edgar-Geisler, 2004). (3) Soul Cinders (18p. with 70m rope, ED1 V 5.11 C2; FA: Martino-Ozturk, 2004). (4) Bad Hair Day (18-24p., ED1 V 5.12-; FA: Scully-Wirtz, 2002). (5) Italian Pillar (14-20p., ED1 V 5.10+ A4; FA: DeFrancesco-Stedile, 1987). (6) Retinal Circus (12-18p., ED1 V 5.11 A2; FA: Martin-Smith, 2002). (7) Doubting the Millennium (12-18p., ED1 V 5.10 A3; FA: Schultz-Sell, 1999). (8) Southwest Pillar (12-18p., ED1 V 5.10+ A3; FA: Jones-Rogan, 1972). The reason for the variance in number of pitches is because some people only climb to the top of the Minaret and others to the top of the South Howser Tower. *Photo, route lines, and info courtesy of Marc Piché, co-author of the new The Bugaboos Guide: Rock and Alpine Climbs in the Bugaboo Spires and Vowells.*

This was Matt's first excursion to the Bugs, and he figured he shouldn't do a new route until he had climbed a classic. So, for his first Bugaboo experience, within an hour of arriving at base camp below the west face of the Howsers, he ran off and soloed the Beckey-Chouinard Route (V 5.10) on South Howser Tower, in less than four hours roundtrip.

With that out of the way, we could focus on the unclimbed northwest face of Wide Awake Tower in the Pigeon Feather group. This 1,200' Rostrum-like pillar of splintered granite had

In a failed attempt to free the Southwest Pillar of The Minaret (A3), we freed the first six pitches, up to 5.12a. No bolts were placed, but we placed and removed one piton on the first pitch.

Our second new route was an independent line on South Howser between the Catalonian Route and The Minaret. Soul Cinders (V 5.11 C2) entails 20 pitches of chimneys and corners in perfect rock. It was done in 14 hours camp-to-camp, with no hammer or bolt kit.

Before leaving we climbed North Howser via All Along the Watchtower (VI 5.12). French-freeing and short-fixing, we climbed it in daylight from the base to the summit ridge. In the morning we gained the true summit and left a dreadlock of hair, in the absence of pencil or paper. Out of food, we were forced to leave the Bugaboos' towering walls basking in sunshine.

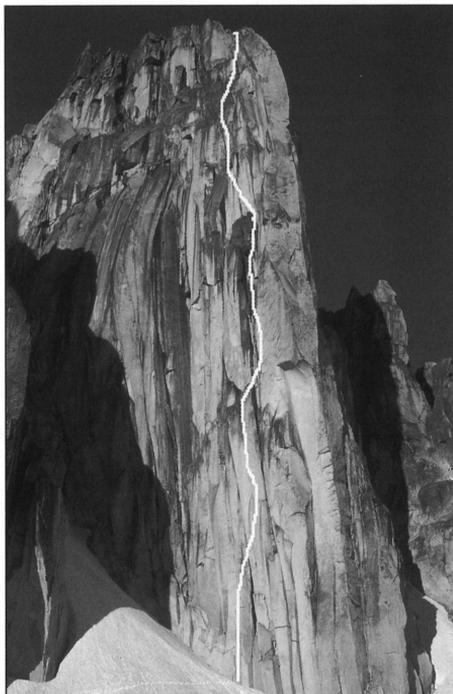
NICK MARTINO

*Wide Awake Tower, Wild Fire.* Being a Canadian Rockies climber bred on shattered limestone and blocky quartzite, I spent the spring and summer road-tripping, determined to learn how to climb cracks. After a couple of months of Indian Creek hand jams and Squamish finger locks, Matt Maddaloni and I hooked up for a week of Bugaboo granite. With 17 trips to this magical playground under my belt, I have had the opportunity to scope some stunning unclimbed gems. As a recent father, I figured that traveling halfway around the world to alpine climb didn't make sense when we have stuff as good as Pakistan or Patagonia right in our backyard.

been looked at, talked about, but not attempted, due to its remoteness and apparent difficulty. In 1997 Brian Webster and I had attempted the golden southwest face but were thwarted after only two pitches by weather. In 1999 Californians Todd Offenbacher and Nils Davis completed this same line, naming it *Wide Awake*. However, the intimidating northwest face remained unchallenged.

Over six days Matt and I aided, cleaned, scrubbed, and fixed ropes, then freed the pitches on lead, until we were close enough to blast for the top. This “aid-point” style produced a high-quality 11-pitch free route, with six pitches of overhanging 5.11 crack climbing. Highlights include Matt’s send of two 5.11+ pitches: Pitch 1, power underclinging protected by a mix of bolts and fixed pitons; and pitch 3, an overhanging, enduro, thin-hands-to-fist crack. We named the route *Wild Fire* (V 5.11d) because of numerous out-of-control forest fires that blazed in the valleys below.

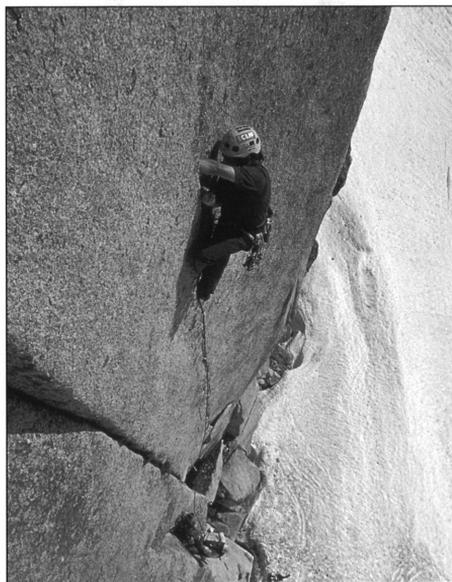
SEAN ISAAC, *Canada*



*Wild Fire*, the first route on the northwest face of *Wide Awake Tower*. Sean Isaac

## CANADIAN ROCKIES

*Canadian Rockies, summary.* Ironically, the first significant ascent of the summer of 2003 was an alpine ice climb. These are, after all, the Canadian Rockies, where summer is but a brief interlude in the long, long winter. In late June the young Canmore team of Ben Firth, Greg Thaczuk, and Eamonn Walsh made the second ascent of *Rights of Passage* (1,000m, IV) on the northwest face of Mt. Kitchener in the Columbia Icefields. Local hardman Eric Dumerac and visiting French all-rounder Philippe Pellet had established the route in the fall of 2002. It received considerable attention after the overhanging glacial ice crux was graded an unprecedented WI8. (Given the nature of the climbing medium, an Alpine Ice rather than a Water Ice grade might be more appropriate, and might help better place the route in the



Sean Isaac jamming pitch two (5.11-) of *Wild Fire*. Chris Atkinson