

ridge. Once on the ridge I took the lead, and we were on the summit at 4 p.m. On the decent Marcus ripped a 15- by 30-foot cornice that left us a little shaken and happy we were roped-up. We named the route *The Ass of Spades*, in honor of the naked-lady playing cards that kept us entertained during the storm.

During our climb we had ample opportunity to check out the north face of the Moose's Tooth, but I was unable to spot a safe or even semi-safe line on the intimidating but gorgeous face. The east face's ice also looked out of condition, and we knew our chances of success were little to none. We therefore bailed, to attempt routes elsewhere in the range. After 28 days on the glacier and the trip of our lives, we flew out to Talkeetna and devoured five dinners between the two of us.

CHRIS DONHARL

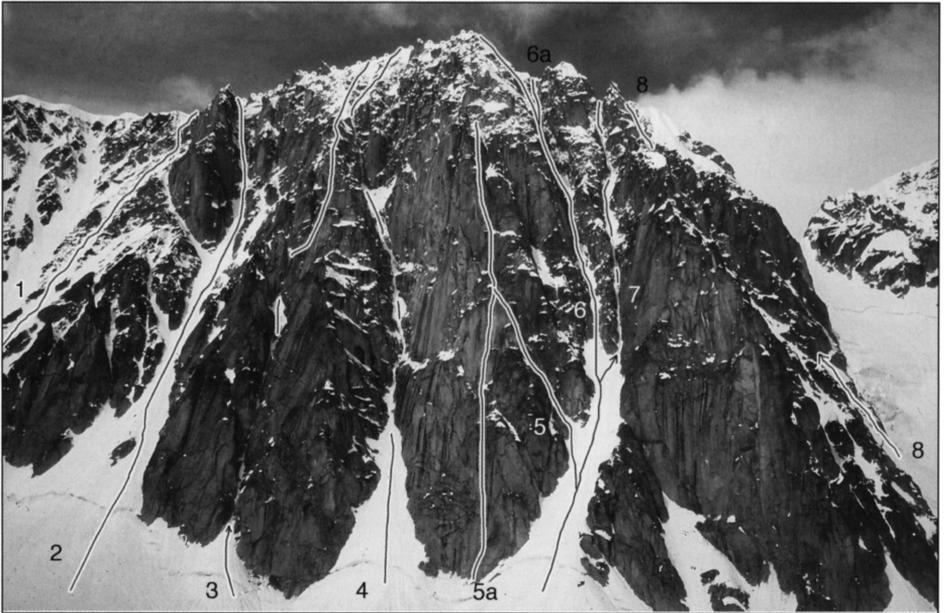
*Royal Tower, Canadian Bacon, and Thunder Mountain, Maxim.* Shawn Huisman and I climbed two new routes during a two-week door-to-door trip to the Alaska Range. This was our first climbing trip to Alaska, and we consider ourselves lucky to have pulled off two first ascents in such a short time. Taking advantage of April's colder temperatures (though longer nights, but still only about six hours of darkness), we found conditions on sun-exposed faces to be perfect, with good snow, ice, and mixed.

The first route was a narrow gully on the 2,500' east face of Royal Tower in Little Switzerland. It is the gully line immediately left of Spam and Legs (AAJ 2002, p. 243). Our *Canadian Bacon* (ED1 M5 WI4) involved 3,000' of actual climbing up thin, foamy ice and steep mixed. Much of the ice was too snowy to accept ice screws, making for unnerving climbing, as picks threatened to slice through the vertical "sn'ice." We encountered four WI4 pitches separated by longer sections of alpine gully terrain. The mixed crux was a steep rock pitch that gained the southeast ridge. Once on the ridge, we cruised to the summit. We completed the route in a 17-hour round-trip with lots of simul-climbing. There are still a few interesting-looking ice and mixed objectives on Royal Tower, so get after it!

Two days later, we bumped over to the Tokositna Glacier and the base of the 3,500' south face of Thunder Mountain. In a 14-hour round-trip, we climbed a gully located on the left side of the south face [the major gully left of Ring of Fire—Ed].



A close up of the left side of the east face of Royal Tower in Little Switzerland. *Canadian Bacon* (Huisman-Isaac, 2004) takes the left gully. The middle gully is *Spam and Legs* (LeeElkin-Seifer, 2001), while the right gully is unclimbed. See AAJ 2001, p. 207 for more routes. Sean Isaac



Thunder Mountain (10,920'), south face: (1) Barlow-Hornby (1993). (2) Maxim (Huisman-Isaac, 2004) (no summit). (3) Ring of Fire (Cordes-DeCapiro, 2001). (4) Dream Sacrifice (Hall-Lewis-Ramsden, 1997) (no summit; ascent to summit by Johnson-Leggett-Su, 2004). (5a) Bragg-Donini initial attempt, to junction with line 5 (2000). (5) Subsequent attempt (Bragg-Donini, 2000). (6) Deadbeat (Cordes-DeCapiro, 2001). (6a) The Bums Lost variation (Johnson-Leggett-Su, 2004) (no summit). (7) Walk of the Schnitzelkings (Duepper-Traxler, 1999) (no summit). (8) Paikea's Journey (Johnson-Piggott, 2004) (no summit). *Kelly Cordes*

Maxim (ED1 M4 WI5) begins as a steep snow couloir that gradually pinches to fun ice and mixed climbing. The first crux negotiated steep ice, slightly overhanging at one point, around the left side of a truck-size chockstone. The last couple of pitches involved a two-foot wide, spotty thin-ice runnel leading to a prominent notch on the gendarmed summit ridge. Unseen from the glacier, this tight, shoulder-width goulotte provided the best climbing of the trip. We stopped here, instead of continuing along the corniced ridge to the summit. Incidentally, this gully had been rappelled after the first ascent of Dream Sacrifice.

SEAN ISAAC, *Canada*

*Thunder Mountain, The Bums Lost variation, and Dream Sacrifice, repeat to summit.* On May 15 Roy Leggett, Steve Su, and I began our first climbing trip to Alaska. Roy and I each received a fellowship grant from the AAC. We set our sights on Thunder Mountain and Mt. Huntington, both on the Tokositna glacier. We were greeted in Talkeetna by poor flying conditions and waited four days before flying to base camp. The weather was fickle, but we left the next day to climb Deadbeat (M6 WI5, Cordes-DeCapiro, 2001). We headed out at 11 p.m. in questionable weather, hoping to get the route done before the weather turned. Steep snow and a few steep ice pitches led to a fork in the couloir, where Deadbeat hung a left (not the big lower fork where Walk of the Schnitzelkings goes right, but a less-distinct branch much farther up). Not knowing this, we climbed the right branch (more straight-up, versus Deadbeat's trend left) via a continuous ice