

On December 27 we left our tents and faced a nasty surprise: the weather had changed. We couldn't see more than 5m in the heavy fog. The mountains had disappeared! We were forced to take a rest. Our spirits dropped along with the temperature. But it improved that evening, and the morning after was stupendous. We finished the route, leaving the belays well equipped. We descended the route and returned to base camp satisfied. We named the route El Condor (V 5.9 A1, 300m) after one of them flew overhead during our homecoming.

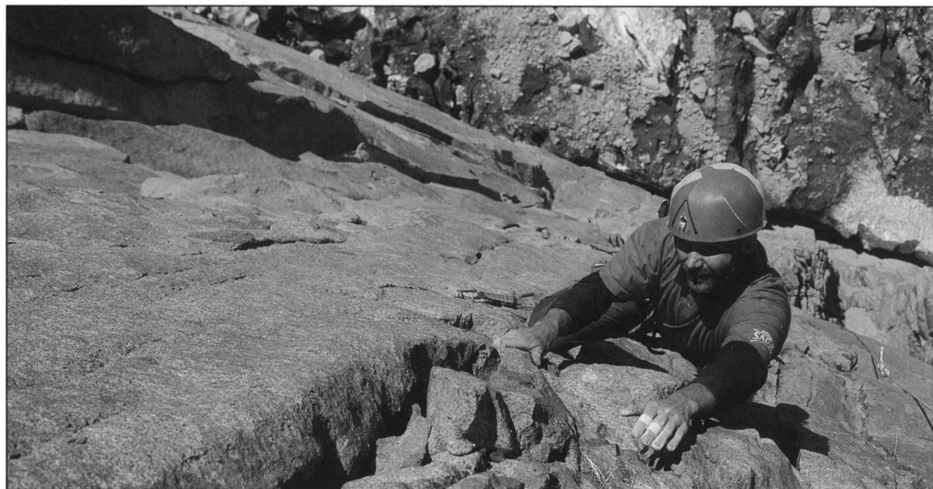
SILVESTRO STUCCHI, PONTERANIC, ITALY

Adapted from Alpinist magazine, www.alpinist.com

Torres del Brujo, Aprendiz del Brujo, Grand Illusion, and other activity. The Torres del Brujo area is situated in the Chilean Andes, south of Santiago, in the massif of Cerro Portillo (4,850m). The starting point is the small town San Fernando, located in the province Region VI, 150km from the capital. From San Fernando turn toward Termas del Flaco. At first the road is good, then dusty. After 50km continue from the statue Piedra de la Virgen, upstream of Rio Azufre and Rio San Jose, to Glacier Universidad and the Torres del Brujo base camp.

In February 2005 five Slovak mountaineers visited this area. The group consisted of Dusan Beranek (club: Metropol Kosice), Jozef Kristin (club: HK Filozof Bratislava), Juraj Podebradsky (club: Slavia UK Bratislava), Rastislav Simko (club: HK Sitno Banska Stiavnica), and I, Vlado Linek (club: HK Filozof Bratislava). Our goal was to repeat and, if possible, free climb the route Clandestino (9+[UIAA] A0) on Falso Brujo and to make first ascents in the Torres del Brujo massif.

After a two-day approach we reached base camp below Torres del Brujo, close to Glacier Universidad. There were Spanish and Italian mountaineers there too, and they did some routes. The approach glacier to Brujo was in bad condition, and it was necessary to use picks and crampons. The weather was stable and very hot. According to local people, it was a La Niña year in Chile. The glacier was changing every day. Because of the dangerous glacier, the Italians and Spaniards decided to climb on lower walls that had a good approach, while we found a way



Jozef Kristin on the third pitch of Grand Illusion. Vlado Linek

across the complex glacier. The approach from base camp to the face took four hours. We started sleeping on a moraine, close to the glacier, that was two and a half hours from the wall.

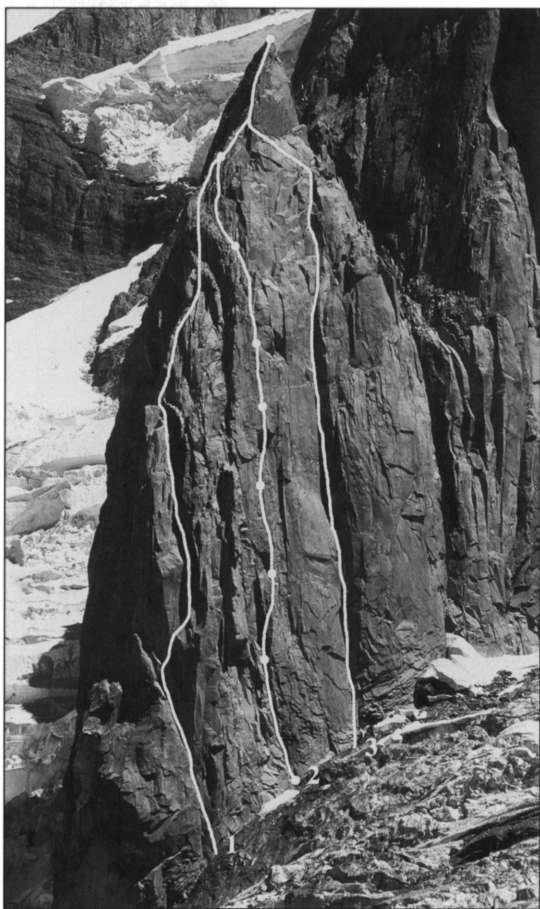
On February 13–14, Dusan Beranek and Juraj Podebradsky did probably the third ascent of Clandestino, at 7c+ A0. It is 13 pitches (7b, 6c+, 6b, 7c+ A0, 7a, 7a A0, 7b, 7a+, 7a+, 7c+, 7a+, 6a+, 7b) and 400m. During the ascent Rastislav Simko filmed their progress. Their initial plan to climb Clandestino free was not realized. The fourth pitch, graded 7c+ A0, would be climbed free at 8a+ or so, the A0 in the 6th pitch is too smooth for free climbing, and the 10th at 7c+ AF has a very hard start [AF, “all free,” is a designation for a pitch on which a climber led all the moves free, but could not achieve a continuous redpoint or onsight. Perhaps the climber fell or had to rest on gear, yet did not resort to pulling on gear for upward progress—Ed.]. Dusan Beranek was not able to imagine how to make some of the moves. They finished the route at 6 p.m. the second day. Free Clandestino is a challenge for the future.

Jozef Kristin and I worked on

new route in the central part of Aprendiz del Brujo. The granite is good, very hard, similar to the rock in Yosemite Valley. In the northeast face there are obvious crack systems. We decided for a line in the center of the wall. From February 12–14 we climbed three pitches (a chimney, a pillar, and nice slab) and joined a crack system that goes through a big overhang and continues to the upper part of the face.

On February 15 Dusan Beranek and Rastislav Simko left for home, while Juraj Podebradsky joined Jozef and me. On February 17 and 18 we finished the route and reached the summit of Aprendiz del Brujo. The fourth, fifth, and sixth pitches have nice crack climbing, and the last two pitches are easier slabs and the summit ridge. The route is 310m long and was climbed in 8 pitches.

On February 20 we climbed all of the route free and graded the pitches 6+, 7-, 8-, 9/9+ AF, 8, 8-, 5+, 7-. We climbed all pitches redpoint or pinkpoint, except for the 4th. The 4th pitch



Aprendiz del Brujo, showing: (1) Reflexión Vertical, 5.11d (Farias-Heitmann). (2) Grand Illusion, 310m, 8 pitches, 9/9+ AF (Jozef Kristin, Vladimír Linek, Juraj Podebradsky, 2005). (3) *Un poco Patagonia*, 5.10d (Veit Uhlig). Vlado Linek

involves an overhanging corner crossed by a big roof. Juraj Podebradsky did it AF. We named the 310m route Grand Illusion, because the crux pitch resembles the route with the same name on Sugarloaf, in California: bad hands and no feet. We hand-drilled 30 bolts, 17 for belays and 13 on pitches. We recommend taking 15 quickdraws, two sets of cams, and a set of nuts. We wanted to try the crux pitch again, but falling rock damaged the crampons we left on the glacier, and we were not able to return.

There are several routes on the towers Aprendiz del Brujo and Falso Brujo from 300m to 500m long. In 2004 and 2005 local climber Juanjo Fernandez, from Santiago, did routes there, but we have no information about his climbs. Italian and Spanish mountaineers also did routes there this year.

VLADO LINEK, *Slovak Mountaineering Union JAMES and Mountaineering Club Filozof Bratislava*

CENTRAL ANDES, ARGENTINA

Aconcagua, 2004-2005 season overview. From December 15, 2004 to March 15, 2005 there were 6,490 visitors, less than the preceding year. There were fewer trekkers, but more climbers and more ascents. There was also less snow and serious concern regarding rising temperatures and melting glaciers. Park facilities were improved and 20 tons of garbage brought down.

Four climbers died. Two French died on the south wall in a big storm, a German on the Polish Glacier, and a Brazilian on the normal route. He summited at night and died of exposure. There were two other climber deaths in the region, one in Mercedario, San Juan and other in Pissis, Catamarca.

As an interesting sidelight, a backpack lost two years ago by an Argentinean climber was found by the police and returned to its owner. The pack contained lots of equipment and euros. After the two years the money was worth three times its value in Argentinean money. A good investment!

MARCELO SCANU, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Uruguayan rugby team plane crash of 1972, new discovery. On February 12, 2005 Mario Perez (an Argentinean horse guide) and I made a historical discovery related to the famous crash in the Andes of a Uruguayan plane chartered by a rugby team in 1972. This story gained worldwide fame after 16 people survived 72 days on the frozen slopes with nothing to eat except the bodies of their dead teammates. It was made even more famous by the best-selling book, *Alive*.

I visited the well-known crash site in the Cordillera Occidental and decided to explore up the mountain looking for the point where the airplane must have initially hit. As Perez and I climbed up we found parts of the airplane that seemed to indicate that the plane actually crashed in a different gully than previously believed. As I followed this hunch I found a coat, glasses, and the wallet belonging to one of the survivors, Eduardo Strauch. These were almost 3,000 vertical feet above the place where the fuselage came to rest and the survivors had lived their odyssey.

Eduardo had taken his coat off when he boarded the plane 32 years ago. He had his wallet in his inner pocket, and he put his glasses on the outer pocket. When the airplane hit a saddle in the mountains it broke into two pieces. The inside of the plane decompressed and the coat