

summit push, but the continuing good weather prompted them to go for the top from La Cornisa, alpine style.

The next morning, after several hours of hiking in fresh snow, expedition member Marcelo Camus had to turn back due to a knee injury. Pablo, Camilo, and Manuel continued, passing an exposed serac barrier en route to the north summit ridge. To reach the main summit they had to surmount the north summit and descend to a snowfield before climbing up again. Alas, they encountered the huge summit ice mushroom as darkness fell. Encouraged by good weather, they descended to the snowfield below the summit and bivouacked in a snow cave. Temperatures dropped as low as  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  during the night. The next morning they went back up, climbed the mushroom, and finally gained the summit on July 16 at 1:30 p.m. It was Pablo Besser's third attempt to climb San Lorenzo; with this ascent Camilo Rada has ticked Patagonia's two highest summits in winter (the highest being Monte San Valentín, 4,058m).

*Reported by PABLO BESSER to JOSE IGNACIO MORALES for Escalando*

*Adapted from Alpinist magazine, www.alpinist.com*

## NORTHERN PATAGONIA, ARGENTINA.

*Lake District, Bariloche, Cerro Catedral.* The granite spires around Refugio Frey in Cerro Catedral provide great rock climbing, with routes ranging from one to ten pitches in a beautiful alpine environment. Routes tend to be mixed, requiring an average rack and having bolts in featureless sections. Many routes tend to be run-out and adventurous. Between mid-February and mid-March 2005, I replaced 270 old self-drive bolts, many of which had homemade hangers, with new 12mm stainless steel bolts and hangers (Triplex-Fixe combo). Euro-style self-drive bolts are notorious for being unreliable and having low holding power. These kind of bolts have been used in this area since the late 1980s and continue to be used by a few people. I hope that this bolt-replacement initiative will help first ascensionists realize the importance of stainless steel bolts and hangers instead of self-drives or zinc-plated bolts, which have a short life span. I replaced bolt-for-bolt, not adding extras, and in several instances chopped bolts that had been added after the first ascent without the first ascensionist's consent. Many thanks to Fixe USA for selling me the bolts and hangers at wholesale cost, and to my friends Lynn and MFT for loaning me drills and extra batteries.

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI, *Club Andino Bariloche*

## SOUTHERN PATAGONIA, ARGENTINA

### CHALTEN MASSIF

*Season overview.* The Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre massifs saw a ferocious amount of activity this season, particularly during a long spell of good weather in late January and early February. This is the third time in the last few years that an unusually long good-weather spell occurred, always around the same time of year. This might be another indication of global warming. Despite George Bush's denial of human responsibility for global warming, weather conditions in Patagonia, and elsewhere, are changing at a pace that hardly seems natural.

In addition to climbs reported individually below, many impressive repeats and new variations were made. Englishmen Leo Houlding and Kevin Thaw climbed Poincenot from the west, starting via an unclimbed ramp below the Carrington-Rouse route to join the Fonrouge-Rosasco route, which they followed to the summit. There they bivied before descending the following day. Later Houlding and Thaw completed the 5th ascent of the Goretta Pillar to the summit of Fitz Roy, which they reached via the Casarotto Route and Kearney-Knight variation. They started from Rio Blanco base camp around 2 a.m. and summited at 8 p.m. the following day, returning to base camp in mid-afternoon of their third day. They took a minimalist approach, carrying no stove, bivi gear, or alpine boots, and taking only one ice axe and one set of strap-on aluminum crampons between them. They free-climbed everything except a pendulum to avoid icy cracks. They rapped the route in poor conditions through the second night.

American Aaron Martin became the fourth person to solo Cerro Torre. (Previous solo ascents were by Pedrini 1985, Whimp 1993, Potter 2002. Potter and Martin are the only ones to have done the ascent on-sight.) He roped up only for the Bridwell Pitch on the upper headwall, but found scary mixed climbing low on the route while climbing in crampons over his approach shoes. (Yes, he climbed Cerro Torre in sneakers!) Martin fixed his rope at the compressor, then climbed to the end of his rope, at which point he tied it off to his only ice screw and continued toward the summit. A body length or so from the summit he found unconsolidated snow and decided to retreat. He left the Noruegos advanced camp at 2:30 a.m. and reached the top around 1 p.m., completing the ascent in 16 hours roundtrip. During his stay in the area, Martin, with American Jacob Schmitz, made the second ascent of the Canadian Route on Cerro Fitz Roy (see below). Schmitz dropped his climbing shoes early on, so Martin led every pitch, completing the ascent in 36 hours roundtrip from base camp. Earlier the two had attempted the Casarotto Route, with the Kearney-Knight variation, reaching the top of the Goretta Pillar from which they retreated after a cold bivvy.

On Aguja Poincenot, Italian Elio Orlandi and Argentinians Horacio Codo and Lucas Fava made the second ascent of the Potter-Davis route (2001) on the north face, making a slight variation at the top, where they avoided the prominent roof by climbing up and right for the last two pitches.

Argentinian/Slovene Monika Kambic-Mali and Slovene Tanja Grmovsek completed the first all-female ascent of Cerro Torre, which they climbed via the Compressor Route. Right below the compressor, two pitches from the top, Kambic-Mali was hit by falling ice and broke several ribs. With Kambic-Mali in severe pain but unwilling to give up, Kambic-Mali and Grmovsek were aided by a British team who fixed their ropes. While Kambic-Mali jumared, Grmovsek climbed protecting herself with the fixed rope, but on the Bridwell Pitch was forced to pull on the fixed line a couple of times because the rivet and copperhead placements were out of her reach. It should be noted that Kambic-Mali, with Tina Di Batista, is also responsible for the first all-female ascent of Fitz Roy, which they accomplished in 2003.

In August 2004 Canadian Sean Isaac and American Will Mayo made the second winter ascent of Aguja Guillaumet, via the Amy Couloir (350m, III 5.8 55°).

After their ascent of a new route on the west pillar of Paine Chico (see below), Slovenes Tomaz Jakofcic and Grega Lacen moved to the Chalten massif, where they climbed Ipermermoz (600m, 6c, Giordani-Levitti, 1996) on the north face of Aguja Mermoz, completing what might have been the first free ascent. Earlier in the season Argentinians Horacio Codo and Walter Rosssini also climbed this route. Later Jakofcic, with American Josh Wharton, made a rare

ascent of Corallo (450m, 7a+ A0, Leoni-Salvaterra, 1994) on Aguja Rafael Juarez.

On another note, in December 2004 the National Parks Administration of Argentina approved a measure instating a US \$200 per person climbing fee for Cerro Fitz Roy and its outlying peaks, which includes the Cerro Torre group. There was an immediate strong reaction against this measure, both from mountaineers and park rangers. Before the new regulation could be enacted, in late January the National Parks Administration temporarily suspended it until they could study the matter further. Since that study is on-going, it is important to make our voices heard. Please send an e-mail to fitzroy\_chalten@yahoo.com to receive more information, including a list of reasons to oppose this measure, as well as a list of addresses of Park Service officials to e-mail.

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI, *Club Andino Bariloche*

*Cerro Torre, Quinque Anni ad Paradisum.* Italian climbers Alessandro Beltrami, Giacomo Rossetti, and Ermanno Salvaterra climbed a new route on the 4,000' east face of Cerro Torre in November 2004. Salvaterra first climbed Cerro Torre in 1983, and has been one of the area's most devout climbers. See his feature article earlier in this Journal.

*Cerro Torre, Slovenian Start variation, and Aguja Poincenot, Italian Route, first integral ascent.* On January 17, 2005, our small team from Slovenia, Patagonian veteran Silvo Karo, my wife Tanja Grmovsek, and Monika Kambic-Mali, and I settled down in Campo de Agostini. Our plan was to climb fast and light and to adjust our goals as the weather permitted. A window of good weather was forecast for January 19. The forecasts, which Thomas Huber was getting from Innsbruck (big thanks to him and Innsbruck's meteorologist), were a big help. On the night of the 19th we left Campo De Agostini and went directly to the base of Aguja Saint Exupery's west face. Silvo and I warmed up on a very nice route, Chiaro di Luna (800m, 6c), which we climbed in six hours (plus three hours to rappel). At 3 o'clock in the morning we returned to Agostini, after 23 hours on foot.

After more bad weather Silvo and I climbed the Anglo-American route (450m, 6b, Boysen-Braithwaite-Dickinson-Reid-Sylvester, 1974) on the west face of Aguja Rafael Juarez, in strong winds and snow showers, mostly in boots, on January 26 from Polacos.

At the end of January an unusually long and warm spell of weather set in. We moved our high camp to Noruegos and, on January 31 Silvo and I started our planed line: the Slovenian Start on Cerro Torre. With only rock- and ice-climbing equipment, power bars, and a bottle of water, we started climbing at first daylight. We climbed the route Rubio y Azul (350m, 6c, Salvaterra, 1994) to the summit of Torre de la Media Luna. We continued on virgin terrain, climbing a few pitches up to 6c+ and passing the Three Sisters towers, as we named the first three towers above Torre de la Media Luna. Then we made a 40m rappel, climbed another pitch back to the ridge and continued on an easier ridge (UIAA III/VI) for more than 500m, passing an obvious 30m spire that we named Torrisimo. After another rappel we were at base of Torre Pereyra. We climbed 300m (6c+) in fine cracks and corners to its summit. We then traversed another 100m down the ridge and after a short rappel were on the Col of Patience, meeting climbers who already climbed the Torre. We had been climbing for about 11 hours. We drank a bit, left some cams, and at 5 p.m. started up the Compressor Route. We made good time on the first wet pitch, but conditions worsened, with more snow and ice, forcing us to climb in