

*On the same page a photograph shows De Dona and Giongo climbing a mushroom-like formation in cloudy conditions, with a caption that reads: "Climbing the summit mushroom, a few meters below the summit." While Huber's findings cast some doubt on De Dona and Giongo's claims, further investigation is required.*

*Torre Egger, near miss and monster fall.* In early February, Jonny Copp, Josh Wharton, and I joined forces to climb in the Cerro Torre and Fitzroy area. We set our sights on Torre Egger. It had only seen one alpine-style ascent, its last ascent three years ago. We agreed on the east prow, combining the Italian (De Dona-Giongo, 1980) and Titanic routes (Giarolli-Orlandi, 1987), in an alpine-style single push. [This link up (950m ED+ VI 5.10b A2 90°) was first climbed by Martin and O'Neill in 2002—Ed.]

We climbed the route in three massive blocks, each of us enjoying a good share of the leading. The climbing on the first six pitches (Italian Route) follows a large dike, and is mostly loose and moderate. Venturing onto the Titanic, the bottom half of which is indistinct, we simply followed a natural line to the large snow arête a little over halfway up. This section of the route, again, was loose and moderate. Above the snow arête, we found better rock on steeper terrain. We retreated to a ledge at the base of the snow arête, from five pitches above, due to waterfalls. Opting to cover the terrain during a cooler time of day and arrive quickly at the conditions-dependent crux mushroom, we left our bivy at 3 a.m. Josh repeated the five pitches he had originally led, and we continued, battling verglas and extremely loose blocks on traversing terrain. We made the base of the mushroom at 8:00 a.m. It seems that Torre Egger's mushroom is larger and more overhung than those of its neighbors Cerro Torre and Cerro Standhardt. One rope length up an easy ice ramp deposited us within a pitch of the summit. Above our position was a narrow tube through the overhang. Being short on time, this was to be our way to the top in the increasing morning heat.

The lead was wild and involved. Having to excavate as much as climb, but with overhanging stemming and chimneying, I delicately wiggled through the overhang. After 20 more feet of vertical slush, I traversed up and right onto a fin, a mere three meters from the very top. As I began to mantle, the fin detached. I began to fall. The screamer sling attached to the ice screw five meters below me broke, sending



After the fall. Bean Bowers recovering after his 30m fall from Torre Egger's summit mushroom. See color photo in the front of this Journal for the pre-fall photo. Jonny Copp

me over and outside of my tube in a 30m fall. Luckily my trail line flipped me upside down, and Jonny's melted-out V-thread anchor broke, launching him into space, so that I landed with all 26 spikes skyward on a dynamic counterbalanced belay. As the mushroom fell apart above and around us, we decided that it was time to go.

Although we do not consider that we truly attained the summit, it will remain to all of us the most eventful and lucky non-summit to date. And, hell, if you can't have the summit itself, might as well take a piece with you.

BEAN BOWERS

*Cerro Standhardt, Potter Route and other firsts.* I arrived in El Chalten on January 29 to meet Dean Potter, who had been in Patagonia for a month and had a high camp set up at Noruegos, for the Torre group. The weather turned good the minute I got there, and eight hours after I arrived in camp we were climbing a new route, alpine style, on Cerro Standhardt. We started at dawn on January 30 and summited the mushroom in the early afternoon. Several pitches of full-on (clean) aid and the fact that it was an obvious line convinced us we were climbing Motivaciones Mixtas (900m, 5.10d A2 85°, Chaverri-Plaza, 1993), which had not been finished to the summit. Later we discovered we had done a new route to the right of Motivaciones Mixtas, which we called the Potter Route. [The Potter Route climbs the steep 200m upper east face headwall, which it reaches from the col north of the peak via the prominent snow-ramps of Exocet. The Potter Route and the unfinished Motivaciones Mixtas likely share some ground—Ed.]

Next we made an arduous failing attempt to link the Italian Route to Titanic on Torre Egger. Torre Egger had only seen six ascents, so we really wanted to get up it. However, conditions were terrible. We roasted in the sun as we climbed, then the route became a waterfall, and we got soaking wet. We spent a miserable bivy on a sloping rock fin waiting for dawn to bring better conditions, but it didn't get colder. We then got bombarded by half the summit mushroom, trying to fight our way up to the top. Completely drenched, we managed to get 20m below the disintegrating mushroom, but could not get up the mushy, overhanging snow to the summit. We descended in more waterfalls. The day was no fun, but at least no one died.

We descended to Campo Bridwell (Campo De Agostini) to recover. Using a spotting scope to find a better path up the nasty summit mushroom, Dean saw a promising line more to the west. A few days later in the next weather window, we tried for Torre Egger again. We went Yosemite-style, carrying 22 Clif Bars, a liter of water, Gore-Tex and a bivy sack, two ice tools, and one set of crampons. Starting in the evening we climbed and summited in 23 hours, making the first one-day ascent of Torre Egger, as well as the first female ascent. We lost one rope less than halfway down the descent and spent a miserably cold night crouched together waiting for light, before making endless raps with the remaining rope.

We went up the glacier one last time, during another perfect three days of weather in the first days of March. One of Dean's dreams has been to make the first BASE jump in Patagonia. We climbed the Bridwell-Stszewski on El Mocho, and Dean jumped, making it down to the glacier in mere seconds. I got to spend hours rappelling alone, with no traumatic incidents except for having to cut another stuck rope.

STEPH DAVIS