

## *New Zealand*

SUMMER 2002/2003 – AUTUMN 2004

*The Darran Mountains, Fiordland summary.* The Darran Mountains are New Zealand's greatest multi-pitch alpine rock venue. With technical diorite slabs and faces, occasional glacier approaches, and peaks up to 2,700m, this region offers a diversity of climbing opportunities for the beginner and advanced climber alike.

Activity in the Darrans is sporadic and largely weather dependant—the range's coastal proximity and resultant high precipitation make climbing days precious. Limited flying-in opportunities make access difficult and progress slow on more technical climbs that require bolts. New routing in the Darrans requires time, commitment, and patience.

The 2002/2003 summer saw Craig Jefferies and visionary developer Paul Rogers complete an aid route on the isolated Sinbad Gully headwall. Their route, The Original Line, is rated 23 (5.11c)/A2+, 10 pitches, and was established over two seasons.

Long-time Darrans activist Dave Vass teamed up with Richard Turner and Rene Renshaw to make the first ascent of Mt. Mahere's south face (2,137m), in the Lake Turner area, Central Darrans. It's Alright—We Think is 10 pitches and grade 21 (5.10d). They also climbed a shorter route on the South Ridge of Mt. Milne (2,135m).

Also in the Central Darrans Keith Riley, Craig Jefferies, and Brigid Allan climbed the south face of Mt. Milne at grade 19 (10b), 5 pitches with 300m of scrambling to the summit, the east face of Tarewai (2,158m), 6 pitches, grade 18 (10a), and a short line on the west face of Mt. Milne.

Steve Carr, an active new-router and soloist from Otago made the first rope-solo of the ultra classic Labyrinth, grade 22 (11a), six pitches. Labyrinth is located on the north face of Barrier Knob (1,879m); a broad, steep face of glacier- and water-eroded diorite only a three-hour walk from the area's base hut, Homer Hut (NZAC). This face is growing in popularity and has seen a surge of quality new lines in the last three years. Murray Judge (active new router on alpine rock since the 1970s), Wayo Carson, Matt Squires, and Jamie Foxley have all contributed mixed bolts and natural pro lines at grades up to 23 (11c).

*Barron Saddle, Mt. Brewster region summary.* This is a large and complex alpine region broadly covering the Southern Alps south of the Aoraki Mt. Cook region to the Haast Highway, north of Mt. Aspiring.

This region is a treasure trove of new route possibilities, a fact made apparent by the "number of new routes to come out of this area in the last two years. Ross Cullen (the area's guidebook author) and Bill McLeod tackled two peaks on the lower Huxley Range, climbing Waka Jumping, 13 (5.6), 13 pitches on the south face of Leaning Mount, and Zwieback on the Hunter Valley face of Peak 2,285m.

The Cullen and McLeod duo also continued to explore the South Temple Valley and pick off new lines, one of the best finds being the Grasshopper Wall on Peak 2,070m; this wall yielded one line, and though not technically hard is a good contribution to the area. Paul Hersey and Mat Woods established two new lines on the north face of Benross Peak (2,486m) from the