

slight buttress immediately right of the gully that separates Kichatna from the next peak to the north. On May 1 I crossed the bergschrund around 7:00 a.m. and launched up an impressive steep chimney system that we followed for six pitches. This eventually gained a 300m ribbon of blue ice that led to the ridge. The chimney involved sustained mixed pitches that went all free, except a few meters of A1 on pitch three. We climbed all day, leading blocks of three to five pitches, with the two seconds jumaring for speed. The seconds' packs contained the bare minimum gear: two liters of water each, Clif Bars and Shots, bagel sandwiches, a stove and a liter of fuel, belay jackets, and a light tarp. We gained the north ridge around 10:30 p.m. in a building snowstorm, so we exercised good judgment and began the descent. We rappelled all night in constant spindrift, reaching the glacier and our skis at sunrise.

We named our new line The Voice of Unreason (700m, ED2 M7 WI5 A1), and it required a 25-hour round trip "day" to complete. Our 13-pitch route terminated at its juncture with the 1966 original route up the north ridge, about 200 vertical meters below the summit. Of course, we would have liked to stand on the summit of Kichatna Spire, since it had only been climbed seven times before. We were impressed with how sustained the route was, with its many consecutive M6 and M7 pitches. Both M7 crux pitches involved three-dimensional body English, technical torques, and a whole lot of groveling to pull through overhanging off-width/chimney features. In addition to hard dry-tooling, the route featured aesthetic ice features, like an inch-wide vein of ice on the second pitch and a foot-wide, super-tight runnel on pitches six and seven. The final handful of pitches wound up fun WI4 punctuated by M5 chockstones.

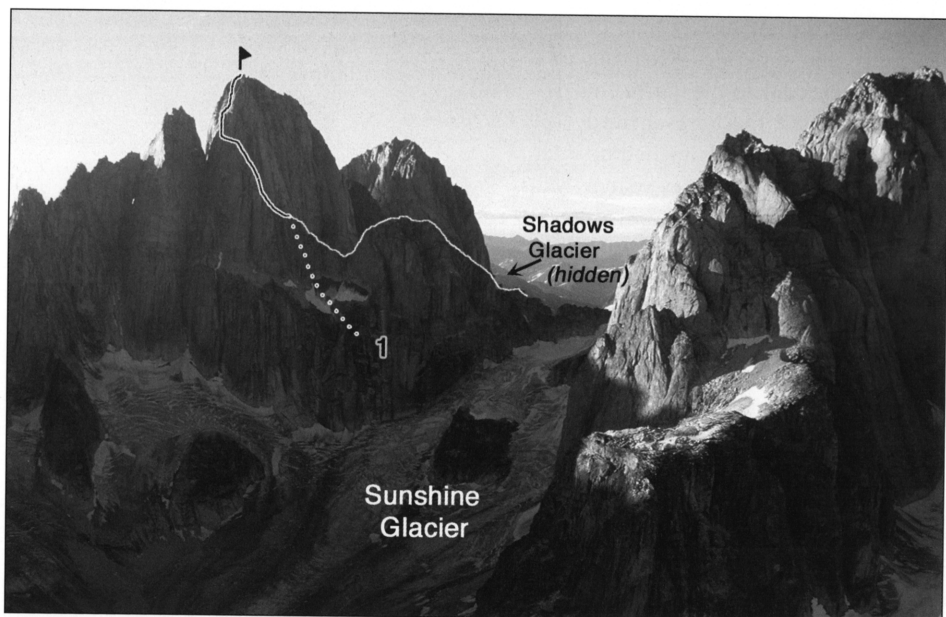
Our trip would not have happened without the generous support of the Mugs Stump Award and Arc'teryx.

SEAN ISAAC, *Canada*

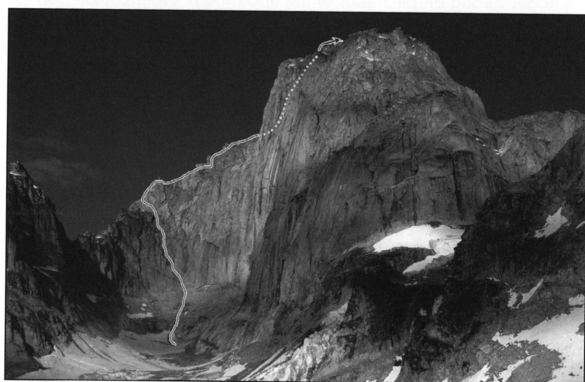


Roger Strong on pitch four of the unclimbed "super couloir" on the northwest face of Kichatna Spire, before overhanging snow mushrooms ended the attempt. Sean Isaac

*Kichatna Spire, Black Crystal Arête.* Chad Kellogg and I completed a new route (to the summit) on Kichatna Spire (8,985') in the remote Kichatna Mountains. The Black Crystal Arête (3,000', 5.10 A2) climbs the striking south ridge of the spire, and is the first route to ascend the peak's



Kichatna Spire (8,985') from the south-southeast. The plain white line is not a route, but drawn to separate the foreground ridge from the background rock. The dotted line (1) represents the hidden lower portions of Black Crystal Arête, rising from the obscured Shadows Glacier, with the stroked line showing the upper portions. Gnomon Spire is immediately left of Kichatna; the Citadel is the dome to the right. Gurney Peak is in the upper right corner. *Joe Puryear*



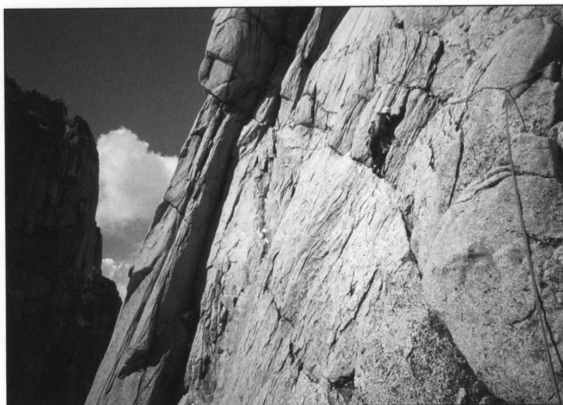
The east face of Kichatna Spire from the Shadows Glacier, showing Black Crystal Arête. For other lines visible from this angle, see *AAJ* 2002, p. 245. The upper right skyline forms the 1966 North Ridge route. *Joe Puryear*

southern aspect. This was the seventh independent route to the summit, and the eighth ascent to the top of the spire. We accomplished the climb by a single-push, 25.5-hour round-trip effort from our camp on the Shadows Glacier.

After two brief attempts, we left on the morning of July 13 during a rare spell of good weather. We accessed the complicated arête via seven pitches up its east wall, below its first major gendarme. On pitch two, I led an unlikely 5.10+ sequence through small

roofs and delicate flakes: the first key to the route. Once we were on the arête, several gendarmes required much routefinding but went mostly free, with a few points of aid. Chad's "Bomb-bay's Away" pitch proved exciting, as a seemingly stable booger of rock, five times his size, flushed out of a chimney as he climbed it and stood on top of it. Overhanging aid through shifty chockstone flakes followed.

The ridge, however, dead-ended into a steep headwall 900 feet below the summit. Somewhat discouraged, we considered our options. Straight up, a 100-foot offwidth disappeared into blank slabs. To the right, overhanging cracks and chimneys offered little hope. But to the left, the most amazing feature became apparent. Two dead-horizontal seams jutted for 200 feet into what could be construed as more promising terrain. Chad led out. One for the feet and one for the hands, these near perfect “cracks” gained instant



Chad Kellogg leading the key horizontal traverse, where the ridge intersects the upper headwall, on Black Crystal Arête. Joe Puryear

2,000-foot exposure over the south face. It was an amazing traverse and another major key to the route. Above, I got the “Icebox Desperado” pitch—an ice-smearred vertical chimney that required some brilliantly nasty aid and free up disintegrating cracks and whatnot.

Several more pitches led directly to the summit ridge, only 200 feet from the summit. An easy boulder move got us up the summit block. We were on top in the late evening, not a breath of wind, and hardly a cloud in the sky. We spent nearly 45 minutes on the summit before starting the long and cold descent. A repeat of the traverse with frozen fingers and toes and 20 rappels later, we reached the western cirque of the aptly named Shadows Glacier as the rising sun again warmed us. We named the route for magnificent, near-faultless black quartz crystals on the ridge. Some were upwards of two feet long!

We also made two attempts on the Citadel. The first was a week spent on its sheer east wall, where continuous rain hampered our efforts. We also made a single-push attempt on the peak’s south ridge, reaching a point 800 feet below the summit before descending.

Also of note, we had to leave earlier than planned because the Shadows Glacier was quickly melting. Each day we would watch the fern line rapidly move up toward our airstrip. A combination of warm temperatures and less-than-normal snow pack was surely a factor. In general it looks like the Kichatna glaciers have recently been taking a real hit. We called Paul Roderick of Talkeetna Air Taxi to come rescue us, before we might have had to walk out.

JOE PURYEAR, AAC

*Denali National Park, other ascents.* The following information supplements the individual reports above. Ian Welsted and Chris Brazeau started up the Denali Diamond after the Japanese party (see above), and though they skipped the upper four pitches (including the crux), traversing off left to the Kahiltna Horn, they spent 44 hours on the face and a mere 73 hours round-trip from the landing strip.

On Mt. Foraker, the Talkeetna Ridge, known for its elaborate cornices and having only two prior ascents (the 1968 FA and 1986 first alpine-style ascent), saw two rapid ascents in early May. Both parties, Sue Nott and John Varco, then Dave Nettle and Aaron Zanto a week