

Argentina and Chile

NORTHERN ANDES, CHILE

Sierra Nevada de las Lagunas Bravas, exploration and various ascents. During the four campaigns that we undertook in 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2005, several members of our Iberia Mountain Group visited the Sierra Nevada de las Lagunas Bravas, located northeast of the town of Copiapó. To access the area, we drove through the valley of the Juncalito thermal springs, or Río Negro, and up a road (in bad condition on our fourth trip) that left us near the Laguna del Bayo (lake). In those four campaigns we ascended numerous peaks, most of them first ascents. North of the Laguna del Bayo, our main ascents were of Cerro Tridente (5,417m), “Vértice Zurich” (4,852m, second ascent), and two unnamed heights we christened “Cerro Cobrizo” (4,718m) and “Cerro Entre Dos Aguas” (5,015m). South of the area in which Lakes Jilguero and Bayo lie, we also reached a number of untrodden summits: Cerro Plomizo (5,392m), as well as several heights situated west of the Sierra Nevada (Cerros 5,273m, 5,355m, 5,519m, 5,530m, 5,497m, and 5,529m) and the peaks of the main massif of the Sierra Nevada itself (5,928m, 6,013m, and 6,127m). The first two were first ascents and the highest one a second, as without our knowing it, an American group had been active in the district and had made the first ascent.

In the Cordón de la Azufrera we also reached several mountain tops. This massif had felt the impact of human visitors previously, since we found traces of mining activity at a high altitude, even on the summit of the main peak (Cerro Azufrera de los Cuyanos, 5,921m). Southeast of this imposing chain we made two more ascents: of Cerro 5,732m, which we deemed a first, and of Cerro 5,710m, which members of the Club Alemán Andino of Santiago, Chile ascended in 1976. From the thermal baths area, to acclimatize, we climbed Cerro Juncalito Oeste (5,266m), on whose summit we found no traces of human occupancy. Participating in these campaigns were Rodrigo Bernardo, Carlos Bravo, Maribel Fernández, Luis Bernardo, Francisco Gómez, Fernando Laguna, Carlos Gómez, Alfonso de la Iglesia, Pedro Gómez, Jorge Pérez, Eduardo Ruiz, Alfonso de la Iglesia, and José Martínez. And always in our thoughts was Evelio Echevarría, who had indicated to us the climbing possibilities of these fantastic places.

JOSE MARTINEZ HERNANDEZ, *Madrid, Spain*



NORTHERN ANDES, ARGENTINA

Pissis-Bonete region, various activity. In March, Andrés Fabeiro and I were transported to the slopes of Cerro Pilar (erroneously stated on the official map as Cerro Azul). We erected camp on a barren desert not far from Laguna Brava. My friend had problems acclimatizing, so on

the 21st I tried the mountain, but could only reach a lower summit, at 3 p.m., which I called "Cerro Pilar Pequeño" (ca. 4,820m, S28°23'48.8" W68°50'12.4"). It had no previous ascents. Later, I learned that an archeologist had ascended three peaks around Laguna Brava: Cerro Pilar (5,075m), Cerro Fandango (5,612m), and a secondary summit of Cerro Morado o Tambero (5,230m). He found Inca remains on the top of these, but no modern evidence. The major peaks around the lake have now been ascended.

After our February expedition to the same area, we met a Swede, Janne Corax, and his girlfriend Nadine on bikes. They went to Laguna Brava. Corax ascended, solo, Bonete (6,759m) by its southwest face (first solo of the route and possibly its second ascent). They continued north to the little-visited slopes of Pissis, which, at 6,882m, is the second highest summit in the hemisphere and the highest volcano on earth. They found a lot of snow but managed to reach a summit 2 km south of the higher summit. They named it Pissis II or Pissis East (6,811m, S27°46.137 W68° 46,800) and found no traces of other ascents. This summit can be found on the official map. They then went north and ascended main Pissis and other summits in Catamarca.

Another first ascent in the Pissis region was made by Rafael Solana Plaza on April 10, 2004 (www.andeshandbook.cl). He ascended a virgin peak that he christened "Cerro Peña Vieja del Pissis" (S27°47'16" W68°44'00"). On the new Argentine maps, these coordinates roughly match those of Pk. 6,195m.

MARCELO SCANU, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*

Cordon Cachi-Palermo, first complete traverse. Cachi-Palermo is an isolated range located in the Argentine province of Salta. Its two main summits, Cachi-Libertador (6,380m) and Palermo (6,184m), are linked by a long and previously unexplored ridge, and surrounded by a number of 6,000m peaks.

In October, we (both Argentine) made the first complete traverse of the entire range in a 10-day, self-sustained effort. After four days of acclimatization, which included the approach to the range from Liquín de las Pailas (3,050m) and the ascent of Pelicelli Peak, we reached the main ridge at La Hoyada Peak (6,012m). Then we traveled north for about 26 km, never dropping under 5,470m, climbing the 6,000ers Hoygaard, Cachi-Libertador, Palermo, Quemado, Guanaco, and Ciénaga Grande peaks (the three last just by Vitry). We descended the beautiful and partially unexplored gorge of the Salado River.

Beyond mountaineering, we had two other two goals. First, as no good local cartography is available (the only map is IGM's 1:250,000, which shows no details), we did a preliminary geographical exploration, measuring all the passes and summits with GPS and clinometer. We found that Cachi-Libertador and Palermo are the only peaks in the range with more than 400m of prominence, that the highest point of the flat Ciénaga Grande Peak is its western summit, and that Pelicelli Peak, traditionally considered to be higher than 6,000m, measured just 5,831m. The complete set of gathered info is available via email: chvitry@yahoo.com, dariobracali@yahoo.com.ar

Our other purpose was a brief archeological study of these mountains, as Vitry is an archeologist. The Incas climbed La Hoyada, Cachi-Libertador, and three minor summits between 1480 and 1532 AD; on top of the first are little ceremonial centers. At La Hoyada's feet are two more archeological sites, and clear traces of an Inca trail still can be seen heading up it. We also found two historical mines and a forgotten arriero pass across the ridge.

DARIO BRACALI, *Argentina, AAC, and* CHRISTIAN VITRY, *Argentina*