

## CENTRAL ANDES, CHILE

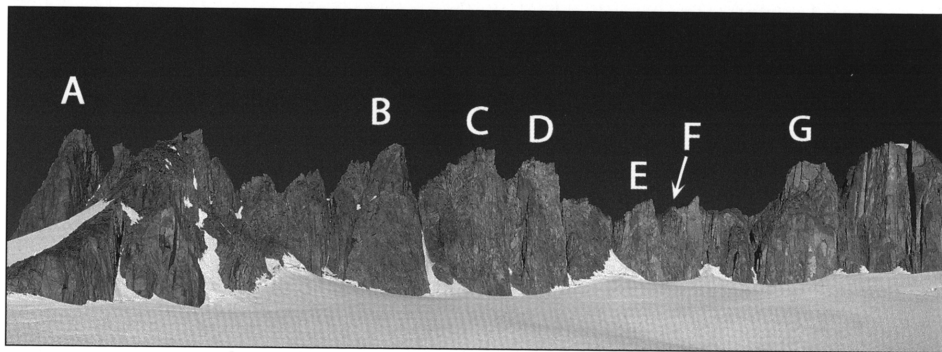
*Cerro Marmolejo, Senda Real and The Nook.* Austrians Harald Berger and Albert Leichtfried established a wild ice route on the south face of Cerro Marmolejo (6,100m, about 20 km from Baños Morales) in the Cajón del Maipo in January 2006. Their line, Senda Real, climbs six difficult pitches of glacial ice with enormous roofs and pillars (WI5, 6-, 7-, 7+, 5, 6-), at over 4,500m, before continuing up lower-angle slopes to the summit. After onsighting the first three pitches, they used redpoint tactics on the crux pitch, including preplaced screws and hook placements in the ice of a 20' roof. For photos and information, see [www.escalando.cl/marmolejo.htm](http://www.escalando.cl/marmolejo.htm)

In February 2002 Canadians Ben Firth and Eamonn Walsh established what was probably the first steep ice line on Marmolejo. Their route, The Nook, climbs five pitches on the southwest face, starting with climbing up to WI4 to reach a prominent scree ledge. From the ledge they took the rightmost of three independent lines. A 60m WI6/6+ pillar, reminiscent of the famous Canadian route French Maid, followed by a 30m WI5 pitch, led to a plateau, which they crossed, then continued to the summit. Although warm temperatures limited their options, they saw many promising-looking lines for colder months.

Cerro Marmolejo's West Ridge apparently sees some traffic as a mountaineering objective. Firth and Walsh note seeing several bivy sites and cairns as they descended that route, and also encountered another party coming up the ridge.

*Cordon Granito, overview and various ascents.* Cordon Granito is part of the Río Cipreses National Reserve, located in Chile's VI Region, about 100km south of Santiago and just north of the better-known Torres del Brujo Range. Before we visited the area I spoke with a few people, some of whom described remote and unexplored granite walls supposedly up to 900m.

The area was first explored in 1883, when German pioneer Paul Gussfeldt climbed several 3,000m peaks and even photographed the Aguas del Palomo. In 1959 Eduardo García, Pedro Durand, and Francisco Vivanco made the first ascent of one of the range's most challenging peaks, Dr. Hernán Cruz (4,565m). Since then only a handful of teams have climbed in the area, the last to put up new routes visiting in 1993.



The Aguas del Palomo granite spires: (A) El Velero. (B) La Maestra. Las Mellizas (C) Grande and (D) Chica. (E) El Penitente. (F) La del Lado. (G) El Búho. *Jose Ignacio Morales*

We left Santiago in January 2005, a team consisting of Basques Mikel Martiarena and David Segurado, German David Bruder, and Chileans Waldo Farías (from the 1993 expedition), Jose Edwards, and I. Given the remoteness of the range, we hauled gear and food to last for 30 days.

We knew it wouldn't be easy to get to the walls. It took five long days to finally reach them. As we got closer, the walls got smaller, and we could not help but feel disappointed after such a long approach. Instead of 900m walls, we found mostly 200-300m walls, although longer routes exist in the Dr. Hernán Cruz area.

Our disappointment, however, didn't keep us from putting up several new routes, including a 700m alpine line on Dr. Hernán Cruz's west face, two on Sandra's west face of about 300m, three new routes, up to 500m, on an apparently unclimbed peak we dubbed "Punta María Ángeles" (ca. 4,300m) and several shorter routes on a nearby crag. All the action took place above 4,000m.

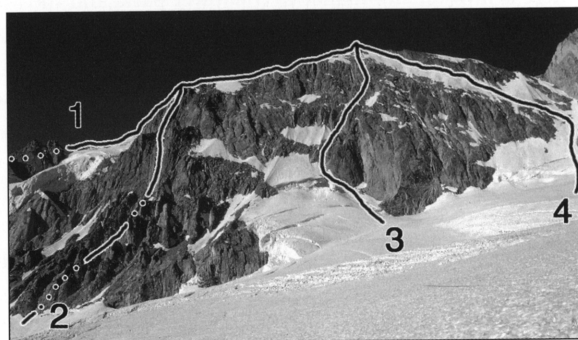
After two weeks, part of the team left. David Segurado and I stayed, moving camp to the Agujas del Palomo, a magnificent chain of a dozen granite spires, up to 200m high, with steep west faces. There wasn't a single climb reported from this area.

Our plan was to climb a spire a day for as long as our supplies lasted. In five days we climbed five spires. Overall, we put up more than 20 new routes in 21 days. All the routes were climbed ground-up in alpine style, without the use of a hammer and only leaving slings and jammed knots for rappels.

Cordon Granito is still a wild and remote range, and to date there is not a single piece of fixed pro. It is our responsibility to keep it like this, as a wild adventure-climbing destination for future generations to enjoy.



Punta María Ángeles: (1) Directa (600m, D+ 5.9, Martiarena-Segurado, 2005). (2) Normal (350m, 50°, Bruder, 2005). (3) Arista Este (400m, 5.6/7, Bruder-Farías, 2005). *Jose Ignacio Morales*



Cerro Dr. Hernán Cruz: (1) Normal (Durand-García-Vivanco, 1959). (2) Las Mulas del Apocalipsis (770m, D+ IV 5.9 45-50°, Edwards-Morales, 2005). (3) Sur Directa (700m, 5.10a WI4 80°, Besser-Farías, 1993). (4) UC-DAV (700m, 65°, García-Huidobro-Flowree, 1993). *Jose Ignacio Morales*

JOSE IGNACIO MORALES, *Chile*