

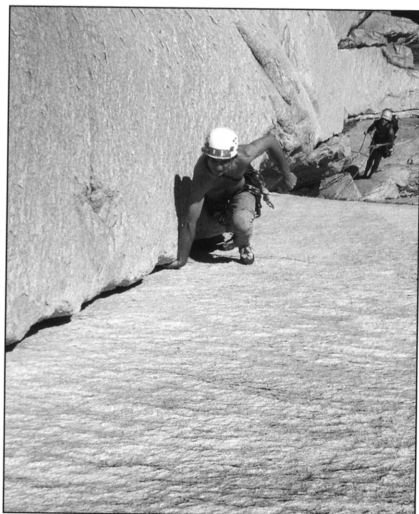
open and untamed rains poured down again. The wall became a massive waterfall. We were on pitch 10, diving desperately for cracks in which to place bad gear to abseil from, as the water rose to our hips.

After another drenching week in the cabin, we got two days of reasonably good weather. This allowed us, after 39 hours of climbing, to finish our free route [except for one rappel point], climbing beautiful and beautifully exposed granite slabs, hard vertical faces, and steep, perfect cracks and dihedrals all the way to the summit. There we stood with the day fading, soaking up the breathtaking view and drinking home-brewed German schnapps.

We can recommend Valle Cochamó to anyone who wants to experience the unique nature of Patagonia (rain included), who wants to hike on old gaucho trails through a mossy rainforest, who wants to find himself in a remote and overwhelming paradise. It is a peaceful, precious place.

Viaje a la Luna Creciente (1,070m, 24 pitches, 7c (7a obl.) A0, Jens Richter-Sabine Tittel, December 2004). Belay stations are established, and important bolts and pitons remain in place. Climbers need 60m twin ropes and two complete sets of cams and nuts.

SABINE TITTEL, *Germany*



Andy Hoyt on pitch four of *Viaje a la Luna Creciente*, Cerro La Junta. *Jens Richter*

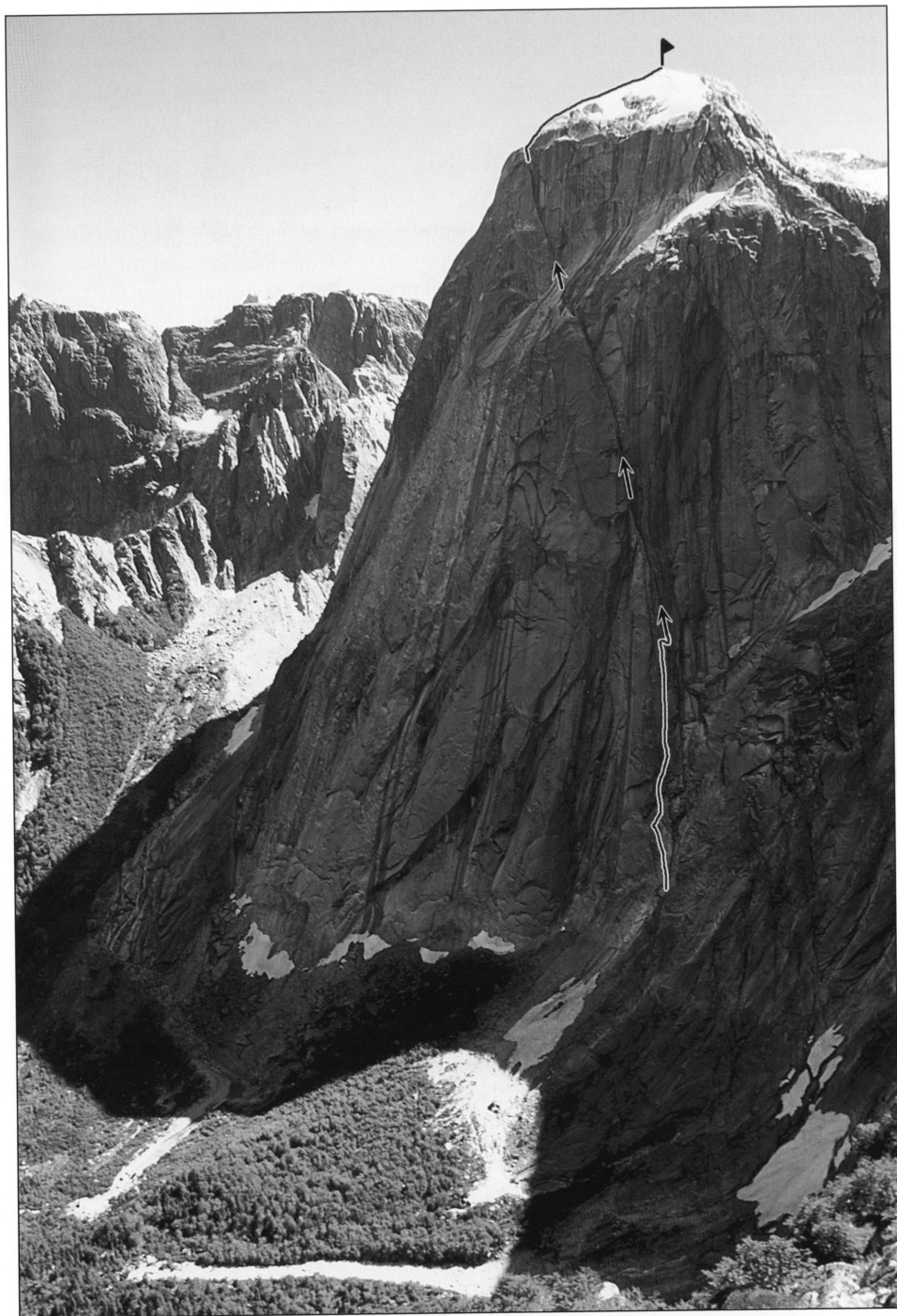
El Monstruo, La Gran Raja. Jerzy Stefanski and I (both Polish) created a new line on the previously unclimbed east wall of El Monstruo. After transporting our equipment to Barranca Pass (sort of our advanced base camp), we descended the next morning to the Barranca Valley, through a vertical forest. At 2 p.m. on February 18, 2006, we started our climb, leading a few pitches up to 7a. After a cold, uncomfortable bivouac with no sleeping bags or other bivy equipment, we climbed the rest of the wall the next day, up to a snowy headwall ridge, encountering difficulties up to 6c. We reached the top exactly when the sun set, then followed the ridge down north to our bivouac on the pass.

The east wall of El Monstruo (the name given by climbers in Cochamó) is 1,000m high and has one weak point: a series of dihedrals that, after about 10 pitches, becomes a crack and then a chimney. That is why we called our line *La Gran Raja* (*Big Crack* in English, *Wielkie Pekniecie* in Polish). The route has 22 pitches, difficulties up to 7a (we climbed it onsight), climbing distance of 1,100m plus 200m of snowy ridge to the top.

Before El Monstruo, we tried to repeat the Alandalaca on Trinidad Sur but didn't succeed (bad weather and lack of energy).

We also tried a new line on Piedra de Gorila. After two days of cleaning dirty and grassy cracks, an uncomfortable bivouac, and a few falls, we gave up.

Cochamó Valley is located in northern Patagonia, close to Puerto Montt. Summer weather makes this area similar to Yosemite Valley. There are five 1,000m big walls and a few smaller

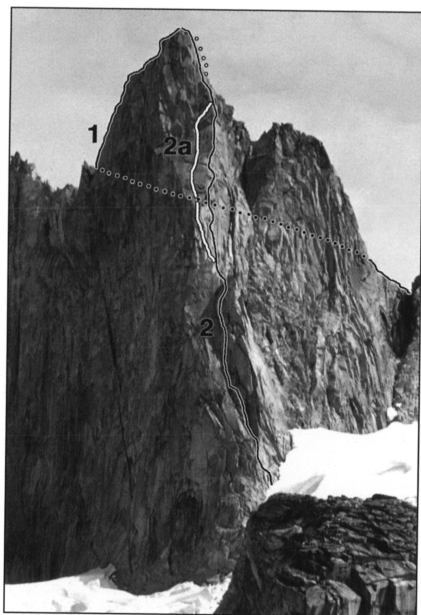


La Gran Raja, the first and only route on El Monstruo. *Boguslaw Kowalski*

walls, mostly unclimbed. Thanks to Daniel Seeliger, an American living in Bariloche, for the friendly atmosphere in Cochamó. Nice place, nice people.

BOGUSLAW KOWALSKI, *Poland*

CENTRAL PATAGONIA, CHILE



Alleвано Tower: (1) Conquistador Ridge (Anderson-Grez-Herlighy-Selda, 2004). (2) Avellano pal Verano (Grez-Morales, 2006). (2a) Costumes Rehearsal (O'Neill-Roseberry, 2006). Dots indicate hidden portions. *Jose Ignacio Morales*

Alleвано Tower, Avellano pal Verano, and Costumes Rehearsal. While working for a month by massive San Lorenzo Peak as a mountain instructor, I thought about a third attempt to climb a directissima up the northeast pillar of Avellano Tower in the XI Región de Aysén.

My first time in the valley as a climber ended with the first ascent of the spire by a snow, rock, and ice route (Conquistador Ridge, IV 5.10 80°, *AAJ* 2004, pp. 307-308). Bad weather persisted for 26 out of 28 days, allowing us to climb only one route but leaving us with a taste of the potential of the valley, in particular for the directissima, which my partners Dave Anderson and Jamie Selda attempted on that trip.

In 2005, with less time than the previous summer, Marcelo Mascareño and I made a second attempt to the direct route. Conditions were a bit better, but poor weather and a lack of time kicked us out off the wall and back to Coyhaique to enjoy New Year's eve. That same season, a Basque team (Azier Izaguirre and Xavier Amonárriz) also attempted the direct route, but failed due to bad weather.

Jose Ignacio "Nacho" Morales, editor of *Escalando* (a recently launched Chilean climbing magazine) and my climbing partner this time, had asked me, "What about Avellano for the summer?" I thought about the poor weather, the time spent in the tent staring at the wall getting fat and swearing at the weather. And I said, "I'll do it."

I finished work in the San Lorenzo area on February 12, 2006, and returned to the Avellano Towers on the 14th. Along with Nacho and me came Wyoming climbers Becca Roseberry and Brendan O'Neill, and my girlfriend Julie, from France. We settled into base camp, with the conditions quite dry. Most of the snow was gone, and the cracks looked clean of ice. On February 16 Nacho and the Americans scouted the best approach from our base camp. There were some significant avalanches tumbling down from the hanging glacier at the foot of the wall, which made the approach not casual. Plus, routefinding was required on the upper glacier to reach the upper snowfield.

Overcast skies the next two days had us eating under the tarp, but on the evening of February 18 Nacho asked me to set up the alarm for 3 a.m., so we could check the weather.