

We scoured John's telephoto pictures for the best lines in the cirque. Two interesting, unclimbed lines attracted us. A breathtaking ice chimney over 1,000' long split the middle of the northwest face of Pucahirca Central (6,014m). This intimidating line looked to have a horrific approach up the icefall. It would be quite an accomplishment, if global warming does not do away with it. The other line linked various promising features up the middle of the north face of Pucahirca Oeste. This was our line.

We camped on the glacier below the north face of Pucahirca Oeste. Some of the features that seemed in good condition just a few days before had deteriorated in the sun, and we watched debris fall directly down our intended line.

We made a high camp on the glacier and made an attempt that night. However, we moved slowly on the low rock buttress, which was less than optimal and steeper than expected. Combined with the fear of unfavorable conditions ahead, we turned back. The next morning we realized the wisdom of our decision when we watched an awesome avalanche sweep near our intended line.

ASA FIRESTONE, AAC

Taulliraju, El Centelleo. Riding a bike for three days from Carhuaz (2,650m) to Punta Olimpica/Pasaje de Ulta (4,890m) sounded like a fast, simple method of acclimatization. Two hours after Matej Flis, Tadej Golob, and I departed, though, I realized once more there are no shortcuts in alpinism.

Our objective was an alpine-style ascent up the unclimbed center of Taulliraju's south face. Aware of the difficulties before us, we brought all kinds of gear, but by daybreak on the first pitch, it was clear that we wouldn't be able to make our way over the powder-covered granite.

Thus we pared down our equipment for the GMHM Route (400m, TD+ WI4+ M4, Gleizes-Gryski-Prom, 1987), which we hoped to use to access the start of the east face, where we would attempt a new line. The GMHM Route surprised us with a variety of conditions. At nightfall we bivied on a comfortable shelf on the top of the buttress. The following day we continued along the Guides' Route (800m, TD+, Balmat-Fabre-Monaci-Thivierge, 1978) to the east face [Cordillera Blanca scholar and AAJ correspondent Antonio Gómez Bohórquez notes that this portion of the route is erroneously attributed to the 1978 Chamonix guides. Credit belongs to the 1976 Japanese team of Mizobuchi-Nagashino-Yoda.] half a pitch to the right of the Monasterio-Richey 2002 attempt (as we found out later). I started up the first two pitches wearing crampons, but after two falls, I changed to climbing shoes. The granite was first class, only briefly blemished by some huge, loose flakes. On the last pitch, powder again covered the rock, and it was nearly impossible to set belays.

The sun had already set behind Alpayayo as we stood on the summit (5,830m) on May 29, having completed El Centelleo (700m, VI 6b M6+). A glance down the Guides' Route wasn't promising, so we instead rappelled the east face, which appeared mushroom-free. At the end of the first rappel, I practically fell into an ice cave; it proved to be the best shelter we could find.

After we spent an uncomfortable night, the next rappel led to an established anchor. The following rappels were made in a similar manner to the base of the mountain. Looking over the photos back in base camp, we found we'd descended the Monasterio-Richey attempt.

GREGA LACEN, Slovenia (reprinted/adapted from ALPINIST, issue #18, www.alpinist.com)

Huandoy Sur, correction. The route on the northeast face, climbed by Canadians A. Sole and G. Spohr, in June 1979, repeated by Spaniards M. Ábrego, J. Muru, and G. Plaza, in May 1980, and by Slovene P. Kozjek in August 1995 (AAJ 2003, p. 306, AAJ 2002 p. 300, and AAJ 1996, pp. 215-216), was climbed in 1978 by the French expedition of F. Tomas, D. Julien, R. Mizrahi, R. Müsnch, G. Vionnet-Fuasset, and H. Lüdi.

ANTONIO GÓMEZ BOHÓRQUEZ (A.K.A. SEVI BOHÓRQUEZ), *Andesinfo, Spain*

Tocllaraju (possible new route); La Esfinge; Huandoy Sur, new route to summit ridge. I went to Peru in early June, headed straight to Huaraz, the “Chamonix of South America,” and spent three months climbing in the Cordillera Blanca.

After acclimatizing on four smaller peaks, I went to the Ishinca Valley, where Evan Sloan, of Boulder, Colorado, and I climbed the left side of the west face of Tocllaraju, staying well left of the normal route. Our route consisted of about nine pitches of mostly ice and snow averaging 60°-70°, with a short overhanging s’nice pitch to get out of the ever-widening bergschrund. This possible new route/variation (many variations and lines have been climbed on this face and are hard to tell apart) ended 100m below the summit, from where we followed the standard route (Northwest Ridge) to the top. We climbed the line in a 20-hour round-trip from base camp in perfect typical Peruvian weather.

I then moved on to La Esfinge in mid-July with a Californian friend, Matt Meinzer (also of Sacramento), intending to seek out a new line on the east or southeast face. We scoped both faces in search of a natural new line, and decided upon the steep central orange-and-red wall 100m right of the original east face route. As we started climbing, Matt got increasingly sick and after two pitches was forced to descend. Since solo big-wall climbing is my passion, I wasn’t hesitant to continue, but was saddened to see Matt have to bail. In the six days I was on the face, I was subject to snow and high winds almost every night but had beautiful daytime conditions. The climb went well, with only seven holes, hand-drilled on pitches four and five. The route is about 650m long and almost completely independent, topping out on the last few easy pitches of Lobo Estepario. [Antonio Gómez Bohórquez, the AAJ’s Cordillera Blanca expert, notes that, actually, Turner’s line joins the upper half of the 1999 French route, Papas Rellenas (Cruaud-Devernay-Peyronnard-Plaze).]

After La Esfinge I wanted to climb another challenging alpine route, so I headed to the Llanganuco Valley and Huandoy Sur’s southwest buttress, which borders the immense 1,000m south face granite wall. My style was simple: To climb fast and light, alone on a new route. I hiked to camp with a light pack, after catching an afternoon bus from Huaraz. After a nap I headed up with no rope, stove, or bivy gear on the mixed spur that separates the south face from the Southwest Buttress route. My route turned out to be harder and steeper than it had looked through the clouds the previous evening, having continuous mixed climbing with steep unconsolidated snow. After 700m, I came upon the final crux, an overhanging cornice below the ridge. Unable to go around it and too high to turn back, I had to wallow up it, using every technique possible. I crested the summit ridge at dawn, after climbing for six-and-a-half hours from the ‘schrund, just in time to see the summit area before a storm hit. I hurriedly continued until it was impossible to see. I knew I was about 100m vertical from the elusive summit, but was unsure if I could continue and make it back without bivy gear. With the last drink of my water and half an energy bar, I raced down the Southwest Buttress and eventually found