

tion climbed by Oceano Trango). None of our ascents required bolts, and we used pitons for a few rappels only. However, a few days later we decided to clean vegetated cracks and exfoliated granite on Piranski zaliv to make a better route. In doing so we added a bolt to one of the cruxes, an unprotected slab, leaving the other 7a R crux in its original form.

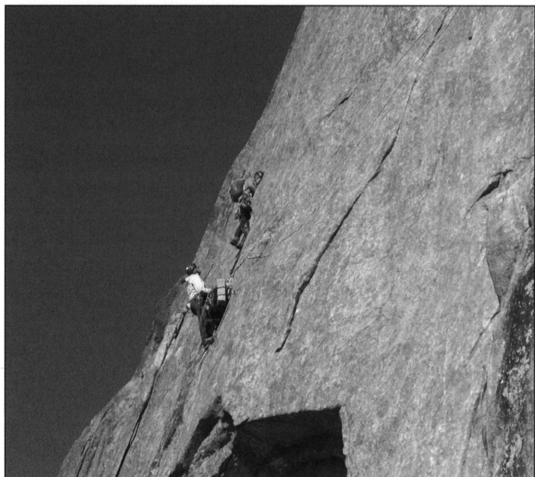
Time was running out, and the high summits were plastered with snow, but we got a nice weather forecast for the last few days of our stay. A fast, one-day attempt on the legendary Eternal Flame on Trango Tower (6,251m) was the only interesting goal, as the route is steep and sunny. On September 8 at 4 a.m. we started climbing from the south col. I led the first half of the route, and Silvo jumared the harder pitches, climbing easier ground with the small sack. At 8 a.m. we arrived on the shoulder and met the rest of our group, who had started the previous day. Sandra, Tanja, and Tina were also headed for Eternal Flame, while Matevž, Matjaž, Ales, and Nejc were going for the Slovenian Route. While overtaking the girls on the first few pitches above the shoulder, I used some aid but climbed the rest of my leader block free. We switched leads on the small ledge atop pitch 19 and by 2 p.m. were at the big ledge just six pitches below the top of the rock wall. There, a snow shower with icy winds froze us, and we stopped climbing for half an hour. After the storm, we made slower progress, mostly aiding due to the cold and the pitches being harder. At 9 p.m., after two hours climbing in moonlight, we reached the point 150m below the summit where mixed terrain starts. We thought the rest would go quickly, but there was a lot of snow and mixed climbing up to M5. We were tired and with only one set of ice gear, the second had to climb the snow pitches in a pair of lightweight sneakers. We reached the summit a little before midnight, rating the 1,000m route VI 7b A2 M5. Rappelling through the night without incident, we regained the col at 4 a.m. Our 24-hour roundtrip marathon reminded us of a similar, long single push on Cerro Torre in 2005, where we climbed the 1,700m partial new route, Sitting Start, in a 32-hour round trip. Although that climb was far longer, Eternal Flame is at a much higher altitude and has more free-climbing. The next day we left for home.

ANDREJ GRMOVSEK, *Slovenia*

*Editor's note: Prior to this year the only alpine-style ascent of Eternal Flame to the summit of Trango Tower was made over three days in 2004 by Slovenians Tomaz Jakofcic, Klemen Mali, and Miha Valic.*

*Trango Tower, Eternal Flame, all-female ascent; Garda Peak, Karakoram Khush, first free ascent.* The female part of the Slovenian expedition reported above comprised Tina Di Batista, Aleksandra Voglar, and I. We definitely provided the spice to the male-dominated climbing society in Trango base camp.

We came to Pakistan open-minded, though with many ideas, but our goals changed as fast as the Pakistan weather. Our first objective, repeating in alpine style the Slovak route, Mystical Denmo, on Hainabrakk East, changed after we watched rockfall bombard the approach gully daily. We crossed off our second goal, an alpine-style repeat of Inshallah on Shipton Spire, after hearing a report from Americans that part of the route above pitch nine had fallen down. So our next goal became the Slovenian Route on Trango Tower in alpine style. After discussion with members of our expedition who wanted to free-climb the route, we realized that we couldn't all climb at the same time. So we opted for an alpine-style ascent of Eternal Flame. This plan we stuck to right to the summit.



Tanja Grmovsek, belayed by Tina Di Batista, on the initial section of Eternal Flame, above Sun Terrace. *Andrej Grmovsek*



From left to right: Aleksandra Voglar, Tina Di Batista, and Tanja Grmovsek on the Trango Glacier. The three Slovenians made the first all-female ascent of Trango Tower, via an alpine-style ascent of Eternal Flame. *Andrej Grmovsek*

At base camp some of us had problems adjusting to the unclean kitchen and suffered a month of diarrhea. Tina and I were pretty beaten up by the end of the expedition. Although the weather was miserable for much of the time, there were so many of us at base camp that entertainment was not a problem, and waiting for good weather proved easier than expected.

To acclimatize we twice walked up and down the long approach gully to Trango Tower, then we climbed Great Trango Tower (6,287m) by the normal American route on the north flank (ice and snow to 80°, though mainly 40-60°). We reached the summit on August 23.

We also climbed Karakoram Khush (graded 6b A0 by first ascensionists Jakafic, Mali, and Valic in 2004) on Garda Peak (ca 4,700m), where we did a free variation to the first pitch at 6a/b (50m). On the 26th we climbed the whole route free (6a/b, 300m). On the 29th we repeated the pleasant Oceano Trango, feeling it to be 6a+, and then continued for two additional pitches to the top of the tower above, christened Pinocchio. This provided a logical conclusion to the route with a 55m pitch at 5 and a 60m pitch at easy 6a. Bad weather intervened again, and when it finally turned for the better, we had only six days left before our intended departure for home.

Our goal now was a fast and light alpine-style ascent of Eternal Flame. We wanted to reach the summit and more important, come back safe and happy. We climbed as a party of three, with the leader going light and the other two bringing up the gear. We took just two sleeping bags, a stove, one ice axe, and one pair of crampons. The two backpacks were heavy to begin with and felt heavier the higher we climbed. We led in blocks, while the second and third climbers jumared. We climbed most of the lower section to Sun Terrace free, as we did with the snow and mixed pitches leading to the summit. The rest of the route we climbed mainly on aid due to the cold, though there were sections of obligatory free climbing.

Starting from the south col, we took three days to completing the first all-female ascent of the tower. The weather on the first day was poor, but on the second, as we climbed above Sun Terrace, it improved. We bivouacked on the "big ledge" atop pitch 23, where we shivered through the night on a spot just big enough for one person. Not looking carefully enough at the topo, we mistakenly climbed the variation to pitches 20 and 21 put up by the Pou brothers in 2005. This year it was completely dry.

Our third day began with nice weather, but an increasingly strong wind soon chilled

us to the bone. At 9 p.m. on September 9 we stood on the summit, screaming with joy while admiring the moonlit scenery. After climbing such a route I was standing on top of Trango Tower with smiling and crying women around me. We regained Sun Terrace at 2 a.m. after loosing a rope, stuck on a rappel. Back at base camp the following night we packed our gear, ready for porters to carry out the following morning. We were only able to really rest once we'd reached Skardu.

For us the ascent of Eternal Flame was challenging from the very beginning, and we walked a thin line between going up and going down. We were tired and cold and frostbit fingers and toes, but each of us kept silent and did her job. We climbed the 1,000m route at 6c A2 M5. It was hard, but it was worth it.

TANJA GRMOVSEK, *Slovenia*

*Trango Tower, West Pillar, second ascent.* A Swiss team comprising Francesco Pellanda, Giovanni Quirici, and Christophe Steck made the second ascent of the 1987 Dedale-Schaffter-Fauquet-Piola route on the west pillar of Trango Tower (6,251m), a demanding 1,100m line originally graded VI 6c A4. This route involves amounts of hard aid, as confirmed by the experienced Spanish big wall climber, Alfredo Mandinabeita, who attempted the route, solo, to half-height in 2004. The Swiss were attempting to free climb the route and, after a lot of work, reached the summit on August 2 using aid only on pitches 13 (A4), 15 (A3), and 16 (A3). They estimate the 13th pitch would go free at around 8a.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO, CLIMB Magazine*

*Trango Group, various new routes; tower northwest of Garda Peak, first ascent; Trango Tower, attempts.* Two Polish teams operated separately from the Trango Glacier during August and September. One comprised Maciej Ciesielski, Wawrzyniec Zakrzewski, and I. At first the weather was bad, and it wasn't until August 31 that we could climb our first route: Oceano Trango (300m, 5.10a), a warm-up on the slabs above base camp. [This route was put up in July 2006 by the Belgian team of Christophe Bingham, Sanne Bostels, Jasper de Coninck, Stijn Dekeyser, An Laenen, and Hans Marien, who compared it to routes in northern Italy's Mello Valley.] More rain and snow intervened until September 5, when improving weather allowed us to open a new line on an unclimbed tower left (northwest) of Garda Peak. The route was 540m long and went at on-sight at 5.11c, with one move of A0: a pendulum from a muddy crack to a crack on the left. We baptized the virgin summit Garden Peak, not only due to the rich vegetation on the face but also as a sort of tribute to nearby Garda Peak. The route, named PIA after the national airlines, offers fine climbing on mostly good rock. It should make a good warm-up for teams coming to the Trango area with more challenging goals. We used 70m ropes, and some pitches are quite long. After reaching the top we rappelled once down the summit ridge, then descended 20-30m to the northwest. We then made four long rappels into a gully, which led down easily to the glacier.

On the 17th the three of us climbed a new route that solves the problem presented by the central section of the southwest face of Sadu Peak. We climbed Pretty Close on-sight at 5.10d. It is the third route on this face, the others being the original Sadu [350m, 5.11b, Antoine and Sandrine de Choudens, 2003], and Piya, Piya [Love, Love, 350m, 5.11a, Jakofcic-Mali-Valic,