

as the pitch eased off. A few more ropelengths led to a large snow-mushroom-encrusted chockstone. After overhanging snow and a few mixed moves I was on 50° snow. Two more pitches, and we were standing on top.

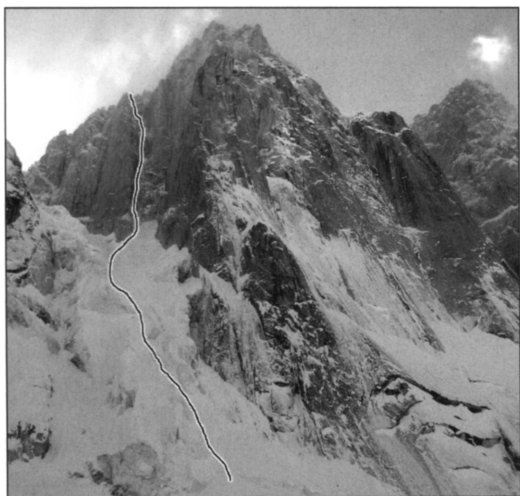
It was 1:00 a.m. and snowing; visibility was less than 50m. We tried to rap off the north ridge to a pass separating the Ruth and Buckskin glaciers, but, after losing our way, we succumbed to a brief bivy and waited for more light. However, our proposed descent led to powder-covered granite slabs, so we descended our route. Ten rappels and a bit of downclimbing got us to our skis.

After leaving the range, we could find no reference to the line being climbed previously, nor did we find evidence of other climbers. It was a fine blend of climbing, which left a memorable impression on us. A Fine Blend (750m, IV AI6 M6+ 50°) is Peak 8,010's second recorded line, after the South Route (500', Allemann-Lotscher, 1968). Ryan and I found that obscure, shorter climbs are sometimes the scariest and most rewarding.

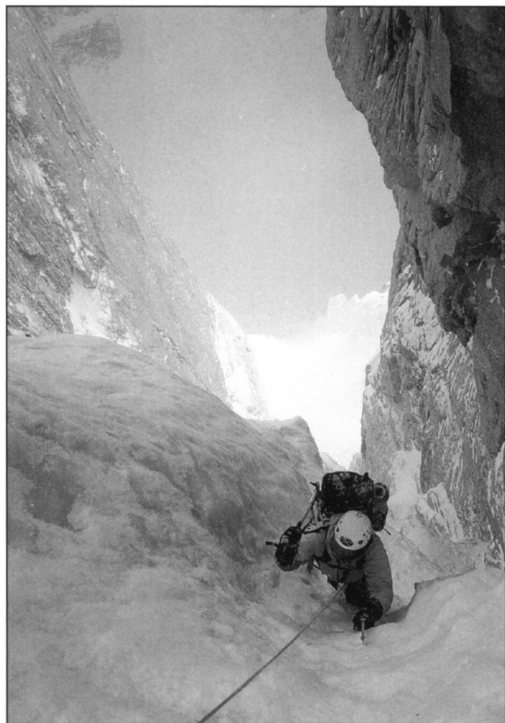
CHRIS GIBISCH

*Bear Tooth, House of the Rising Sun to southwest ridge.* In mid-April, Jared Vilhauer, Zach Shlosar, and I left our base camp and skied to our gear cache on the south fork of the Buckskin Glacier. We left our skis and headed for an untouched 3,200' line I had spied in March on the southeast face of the Bear Tooth. The climb started with an icefall and snow slope to reach the face. When we were four pitches up the polished icefall, the slopes above started sending down spindrift so persistent that our wait under an overhanging serac turned into a bivy. The night was clear and cold, and the morning the same. Zach led out and took us up the snowfield to the start of the technical portion of the route. We relaxed a little, glad to be out of the shotgun alley and at the base of a cool new route. Jared took the next block, climbing scratchy, thin, vertical ice with no pro for long stretches. Climbing and hauling each pitch took time. We stopped for the night on a small patch of 60° snow. Over an hour's worth of effort yielded two small ledges.

We woke to a light snow falling, accompanied by spindrift slides. The terrain above was too steep to build up huge avalanches, though the small slides were intimidating. Slides would be more or less constant for the rest of our climb, as it snowed every day. I led out of the bivy ledge up a pitch of undulating AI4 until I ran out of rope. The next pitch was vertical bad ice with bad pro and took several hours, during which Zach and Jared were constantly bombed at their belay in the narrow couloir. As I pulled the crux, a big slide nailed me, packing the inside of my shell with snow. Exhausted, I offered the next pitch to Jared, who took it gladly. It ended up being creative A2. While Zach belayed, I



The southeast face of the Bear Tooth, showing House of the Rising Sun. Jared Vilhauer



Jared Villhauer on day 3 on the Bear Tooth. Zach Shlosar

dug our next cave behind a thin skin of ice. Soon Jared fixed the ropes and rappelled into bivy #3.

In the morning we ascended the lines. I took the next pitch; another protracted effort up vertical-to-overhanging snow/ice, but with good sticks and reasonable pro after much searching. The next portion of the climb kicked back a bit, and we moved together, with Zach leading over fun ice and snow. Zach brought us to the base of good ice, the quality of which had been improving as we gained altitude. Another pitch had us at what looked to be a terrifying steep, rotten couloir. We were being pummeled by larger and larger slides, so we exited the couloir to gain the ridge as quickly as possible. Two mixed pitches brought us to our high point, just below the southwest ridge (we didn't actually break through the cornice), as darkness fell and the weather worsened. We dug torture-tube bivies into a small snow spur, with huge exposure, where the left side of our

couloir met the ridge, zipped our bivy sacks shut against the whirling snowstorm, and slept.

The next day the storm was the worst yet, so we rapped a half-pitch and dug a better cave to wait out the weather. We could hear avalanches hissing over the cave walls as the storm went on.

The next morning, our sixth on the route, our food was gone. We had finished our couloir (3,200', AK Grade V, AI6 A2) to the ridge. We did not make the summit but were happy to climb such an awesome feature on a beautiful mountain. Fourteen raps, much downclimbing, and a quick ski brought us back to the base. Because the southeast face caught only the early morning sun, we named the route House of the Rising Sun in the spirit of our friend Johnny Soderstrom. Johnny loved both exploratory climbing in Alaska and Bob Dylan. To finish with style, we skied the Buckskin to the Chulitna River and hiked to the road.

JESSE (BILL) BILLMEIER

*Kichatna Spires, mystery routes.* Widely reported, including to the AAJ, were that three presumably new ice/mixed/snow couloir routes were climbed somewhere in the Tatina Glacier area of the Kichatna Spires, by U.K. climbers Mike "Twid" Turner (leader), Simon Hitchens, and Phil Jeffery. Turner's report, however, included no information on the locations of the peaks or lines. In response to our requests for this information, Turner wrote, "Just tell folk that there was some nice climbs put up and if they go they will have a great time."