

The next morning we left before dawn on a clear, windless day, scrambled down, and started climbing the broad southeast ridge. The climb felt more like an excursion into Rocky Mountain National Park than a Patagonian first ascent. About 500m of climbing in 16 pitches had us on the virgin, windless summit of what we called Avenali Tower, for our mentor Peter Avenali who was my inspiration for going to the area. [Editor's note: Some sources initially reported this as the tower immediately south of the northernmost tower climbed in 2004 (Avellano Tower), but it is actually farther south along the same group of towers (see photo). A natural barrier between Avellano Tower and Avenali Tower blocks the view from one tower to the other, and, though they are in the same chain of towers, they are approached via different valleys.] Our route, Avenali Avenue (V 5.11- R A0), has something for everyone. Rock ranging from sublime to shite, difficult routefinding, and some sketchy pro serve up climbing that will keep you on your toes. Eleven raps got us back to the col at midnight, culminating an 18-hour roundtrip.

This season, since Patagonian weather was so consistently good, I propose that all new routes receive an asterisk. They need to be done in more representative conditions before they get full value.

JIM DONINI, AAC

SOUTHERN PATAGONIA, ARGENTINA

CHALTEN MASSIF

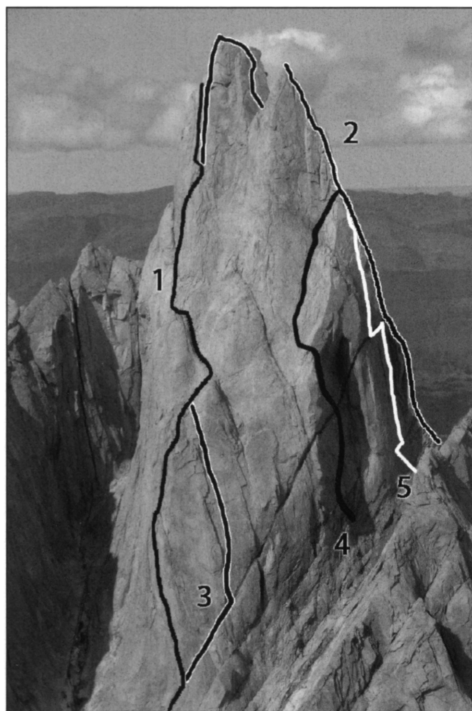
Chalten massif, summary. Unprecedented amounts of good weather greeted climbers in the 2007–08 Patagonia season, resulting in numerous new routes and significant ascents. [Note: This summary supplements the individual reports, mostly of longer routes, below.]

On the southeast buttress of Bifida's south summit, American Crystal Davis-Robbins and Chilean Nico Gutierrez completed the second ascent, and first complete ascent (to summit) of Cogan (800m, TD 5.10 A1, Bruckner-Schorghofer, 1993), which originally ended 100m from the summit after joining Cheoma. Davis-Robbins and Gutierrez climbed a number of variations to the original route.

American Colin Haley and German Carsten von Birckhahn made the second ascent of the upper portion of Puerta Blanca (Huber-Walder, 2007) on Desmochada, climbing several variations along the way. They approached via the Desmochada-Poincenot gully, rather than climbing the rock buttress just left of Desmochada's west face, as did Huber and Walder.

Later in the season Haley and Rolando Garibotti completed the third ascent of the Afanasieff route (1,600m, TD 5.10) on the northwest ridge of Fitz Roy. They started from a camp in the Torre Valley and climbed up and over Hombre Sentado ridge, reaching a point seven pitches below the summit on their first day. After a cold sleeping-bag-less bivvy they climbed to the summit and descended the Franco-Argentine route.

Earlier in the season, French climbers Aymeric Clouet and Christophe Dumarest established a new variation to the Afanasieff route, climbing the steep 400m buttress between the Supercanaleta and Afanasieff routes. They followed a series of steep cracks, with difficulties up to 7a and A2, that they christened Le Chercheur d'Absolu. Clouet and Dumarest traversed left at the top of the initial pillar to join the Afanasieff route, which they followed to the summit.



West face of St. Exupery: (1) Chiaro di Luna (Girodani-Manfrini-Valentini, 1987; finishes on other side). (2) Southwest "Austrian" Ridge (Barthaler-Lidi, 1987). (3) Supertrek (Bowers-Nettle, 2003). (4) Brooks-Crouch (1999) to junction with (2); Bransby-Tresch (2004) to summit. (5) Last Gringos Standing (Grohne-Huey, 2008). Jesse Huey

A similar line had been previously tried by another French team in 2002 and 2003; they tried to continue upward, following the ridge crest, but were turned back 700m up by blank rock.

Also on Fitz Roy, but farther east, American Bean Bowers and Garibotti climbed an independent line to the top of the Goretta Pillar. Their route, Mate, Porro y Todo lo Demas, climbs a series of steep cracks on the northwest edge of the pillar (accessed by Paso Cuadrado). They took 10 hours to climb the twenty-some pitches to the top of the pillar, then descended via the Casarotto route to the col (Bloque Empotrado) north of the pillar, from where they rappelled west back to the base of the climb. In the upper third the route climbs a series of wide cracks, just left of the pillar's edge. The superb climbing went mostly free, with a short section of easy 5.11 and two 10-foot sections of A0 due to icy cracks. This route saw two repeats, by Brazilian and Argentine teams, both stopping at the top of the pillar as well. The buttress just left of the wide cracks on the upper third of Mate, Porro y Todo lo Demas, and right of Chimichurri y Tortas Fritas, was climbed as a variation to the Kearney-Knight variation to the Casarotto

route by Americans Jesse Huey and Toby Grohne (Gringos Perdidos, 6–8 new pitches up to 5.11).

In November Italian Claudio Inselvini and Swiss Michi Lerijan climbed a major variation (No Brain, No Pain) to the Supercanaleta. After climbing 800m up the Supercanaleta gully, well below the Bloque Empotrado, they traversed right for 200m, across a series of ledges and easy slabs, crossing Ensueño to near the southwest ridge. They then climbed six to eight pitches, involving slabs and steep cracks on the north side of the ridge, to reach the upper portion of Tonta Suerte, before joining the upper ridge of Supercanaleta and eventually the summit.

On the east face of Fitz Roy, Americans Jimmy Haden and Mike Pennings made the first alpine-style ascent of Royal Flush (5.12 A1, Albert-Arnold-Gershel-Richter, 1995, to junction with El Corazon), and only the second complete ascent of the route to the summit (first complete ascent by Gäbel-Schafroth-Treppte, 1998, in three days roundtrip with fixed ropes). Haden and Pennings completed the 4,000' route in a 48-hour roundtrip from Paso Superior.

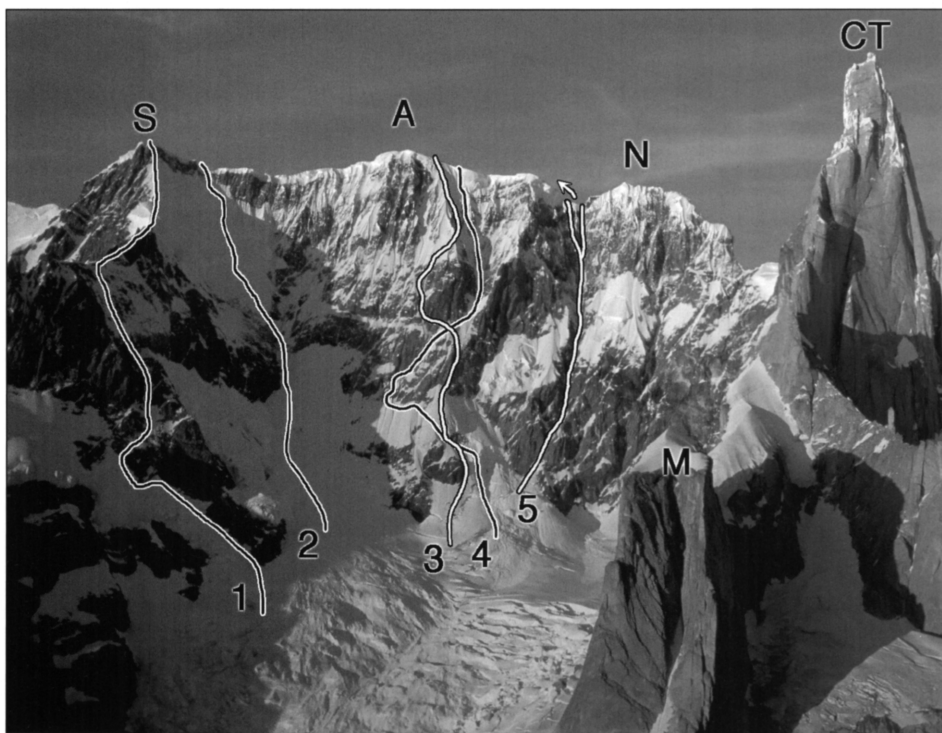
On the west face of St. Exupery, Huey and Grohne established Last Gringos Standing (V 5.11- C1), just left of the Southwest "Austrian" Ridge (Barthaler-Lidi, 1987), over two days in early March 2008. Huey and Pennings spotted the route in February, and during a recon climbed three pitches of perfect 5.10 cracks to a dike, where they discovered enough holds to

allow a 60' leftward traverse to a second crack system that promised to lead to the upper ridge. Huey returned with Grohne, free-climbing everything except one icy crack and joining the Austrian Ridge after seven pitches, along which they continued to a bivy at the notch between a false summit and the true peak, which they reached the following morning.

Unreported previously, in early 2007 Ariel Martorelo y Horacio Gratton climbed a five-pitch variation to the Rubio y Azul route on Aguja Media Luna. Their line climbs a crack system (5.11) on the steep prow left of Rubio y Azul, which it joins at the middle break on pitch six.

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI, AAC

Cerro Adela, Asamblea de Majaras. Alvaro Novellón, Oscar Perez, Santi Padrós, and I had hoped to climb Cerro Torre, going directly to the Col of the Hope via A la Recherche du Temps Perdu (Marsigny-Parkin) and continuing to the summit by the Ferrari West Face route, a link-up first completed by Colin Haley and Kelly Cordes in January 2007. Many parties other than Marsigny and Parkin had tried this link-up before, including Pepe Chavarri and I in 1995, Bruno Sourzac and Laurence Monoyeur in 1997, and Ermanno Salvaterra and a partner later. During our attempt to climb A la Recherche du Temps Perdu, while we were a little below halfway, two consecutive avalanches released from the serac above, urging us to retreat—luckily without serious consequences.



(S) Adela Sur: (1) Northeast Arête (Aikes-Monaco-Pellegrini, 1967), (2) Direttissima dei Seracchi (Grassi-Rossi, 1986). (A) Cerro Adela: (3) de la Cruz (1987), (4) Gringo en la Noche (Podgornik, 1991), (5) Asamblea de Majaras (both exits shown; Ascaso-Padrós and Novellón-Perez, 2007). (N) Adela Norte. (M) El Mocho. (CT) Cerro Torre. Rolando Garibotti