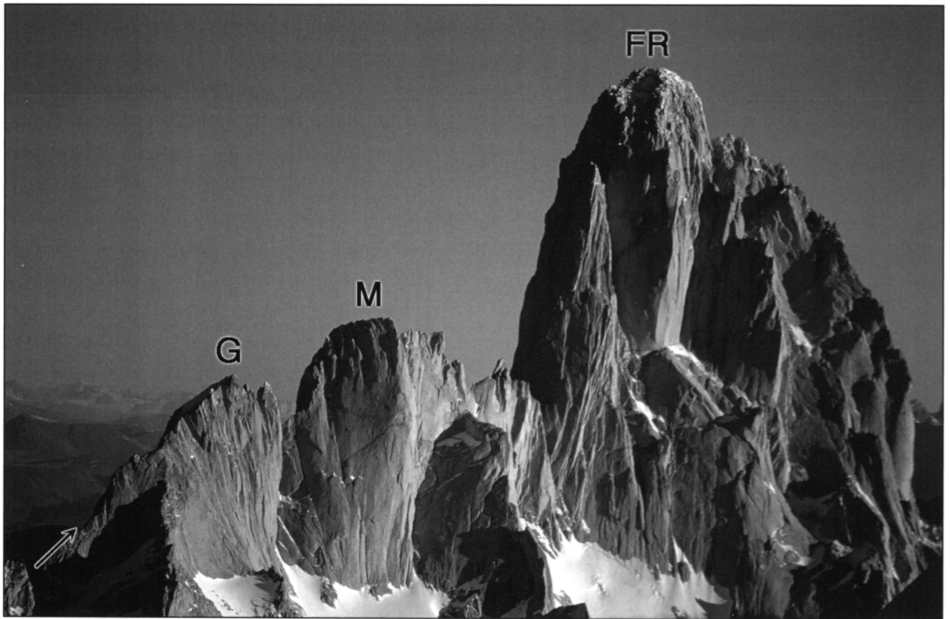


up the center of the wall and then angling left to the summit ridge. Due to rockfall, not much is left of the Ragni attempt—only three pitches. It was impressive to find 15m blank sections below old belay stations, where rock and cracks climbed years before had simply caved off.

*Compiled from e-mails from CHRISTIAN BRENNIA and HERVE BARMASSE, Italy*

*Care Bear Traverse (Guillaumet, Mermoz, and Fitz Roy); Guillaumet, The Lost Men; Fitz Roy, Hoser Chimney.* Dana “Mad Dog” Drummond and I hit the soon-to-be-paved streets of Chalten on January 16, 2008. With a promising forecast, we quickly repacked and hiked in the next day to the Piedras Negras bivy on the north side of the Fitz Roy massif. Following a tip from Colin Haley, we headed for a new line on the west face of Guillaumet that Colin had attempted the week before. After a false start, we finally got going on the right line at 11 a.m. The climb went in eleven pitches, with a touch of 5.11 and a few aid moves around iced cracks. The highlight was undoubtedly the final two pitches, where Dana navigated us up the Fissure Mad Dog, a burly offwidth and squeeze chimney system that topped out only 15m south of Guillaumet’s true summit. On the pitch above Colin’s high point, we found a single European-style piton with sun-bleached bail tat tied to it. On the same pitch I noticed a German candy bar rapper, expiration date 1993, wedged into a crack. Perhaps we had joined with Padrijo, the only established route on the face (which was indeed established in 1993), although the topo and photo on [www.climbinginpatagonia.freeservers.com](http://www.climbinginpatagonia.freeservers.com) shows Padrijo taking a crack system right of our line. A more likely scenario, given Padrijo’s traversing nature, is that the team rappelled down our corner system. The last possibility, though the resident experts in Chalten have no record of it, is that this line received an undocumented ascent or attempt. Anyhow, we’ve named it The



View from the northwest, with the Care Bear Traverse starting at the arrow and climbing the approximate skylines of Guillaumet (G), Mermoz (M), and Fitz Roy (FR). *Rolando Garibotti*

Lost Men (550m, 5.11a A0) in honor of these unknown soldiers. Perhaps someone out there will read this report and can shed light on the historical record.

The weather kept getting better, so we packed for the main attraction: Fitz Roy, the north face of course. Our vague plan was to investigate new terrain on or near Tehuelche. We left high camp at 3 a.m. on January 21, hoofed it over Paso Cuadrado, and dropped to the base of the face. In the predawn light, we failed to see any compelling lines on the lower face, and followed the starting pitches of Tehuelche to the Gran Hotel ledge. From here, we followed a chimney system up the prominent headwall right of Tehuelche. This portion of the climb was dripping wet and offered 5.10 adventure climbing at its finest, with a surprise M5 chockstone pitch at the top. We established about 10 new pitches before joining the Afanasieff Ridge just before dark. We brewed up, broke out our single sleeping bag, and spooned until dawn, then scrambled the final few hundred meters to the summit of Fitz Roy at 9:30 a.m. Our climb, Hoser Chimney (5.10 A1 M5), should be considered a minor variation rather than any sort of major new route. Still, we found it remarkable that such a long, complex face could be climbed at such a modest grade. After rappelling Tehuelche in the blistering afternoon sun, we made it back to Piedras Negras at dark. Several days later Crystal Davis-Robbins and Max Hasson established another line in the same neighborhood. With an independent start and harder, better climbing, I think their effort produced the finer line.

A week later Mad Dog and I onsight-freed the Red Pillar route (650m) on Mermoz. A few of the pitches were wet, but the coarse granite still provided enough friction. The route lived up to its reputation in terms of quality, though its technical grade is probably closer to Yosemite 5.11+. Potential suitors of this classic should note that we carried a single 70m rope, which worked perfectly for descending the anchor-bolt-equipped line.

Having climbed Guillaumet, Mermoz, and Fitz Roy, we considered linking them in a single skyline traverse. Down in Chalten we pored over photos on my computer of the gendarmed ridge that connects the summit of Guillaumet over Mermoz to the start of the Goretta (North) Pillar of Fitz Roy, identifying key features. We reckoned we'd need three days to pull off the enchainment, but the unsettled forecast called for two short 30-hour spells of high pressure, separated by a short wind storm with colder temps. Realizing that our only chance at the link-up was to sit out the unsettled weather somewhere in the middle of the traverse, we went a little heavy on bivy gear, borrowing a lightweight tent from our buddy Mark Postle. We made up for this extra weight by carrying no pins or bolts, just one axe, and a single pair of aluminum crampons.

The first day, February 5, we began climbing from Paso Guillaumet at 8 a.m. and linked Guillaumet's Brenner Ridge to the West Face of Mermoz. This enchainment is a fun objective in itself and had been done at least once before. The ridge connecting these two classics involved many 30m rappels and ledge traverses, with a few moderate "mountaineering pitches" mixed in. We reached the summit of Mermoz at 6:30 p.m. and, rather than press on, took time to build a protected bivy. As the wind increased that night, and an endless line of vaporous freight trains rolled by outside, we were thankful. The next day we waited until noon for the winds to abate before continuing. We wanted to reach the base of the Casarotto Route, on the Goretta Pillar, in time to rest and psyche up for the next day. This section of ridge hadn't been traversed before and in many ways seemed like it would be the crux of the link-up. We found lots of committing rappelling, ledge-shuffling, and moderate climbing, but amazingly encountered no stopper gendarmes or dead-end slabs. Whenever the route seemed to blank out, an appealing option waited on the other side of the ridge. We reached a talus slope 60m above the Bloque Empotrado

at the start of the Casarotto route (Kearney-Knight variation) by 6 p.m. and excavated another bivy ledge.

Mad Dog and I had divided the leading duties according to our relative strengths. With more alpine routefinding experience, I had led the ridge traverse from the summit of Guil-laumet to the start of the Casarotto. The next morning, February 7, I unleashed the Dog, who's spent the last two years living in Yosemite, on the splitter cracks of Fitz Roy. From my perspective, the next 10 hours passed in a blur of wind-sprint juggling, belaying, and fast action gear exchanges. It felt like I was the member of some bizarre alpine pit crew, as Mad Dog short fixed the entire route and delivered us onto the summit of Fitz Roy by 5:30 p.m. In a word: badass.

We had left our bivy gear at the base and were thus committed to rappelling the route. The weather threatened, then our ropes stuck, and I had to perform a mandatory "mystery jug" to free them. Why do descents always have to be so fucking dramatic in Patagonia? But just when it looked like we were on the verge of a full-blown epic, we reached the Bloque and dropped to the lee side of the ridge.

Throughout the day we had watched my girlfriend, Janet Bergman, and Zack Shlosar climb the Red Pillar. Now, we watched their headlamps as we simultaneously rappelled through the darkness. We touched down on the glacier at the same time, and shared a middle-of-the-night reunion before slogging back through Paso Guillaumet and down to Piedras Negras in the spitting rain. Mad Dog and I largely attribute our success on what we called the Care Bear Traverse (VI 5.11 A0) to our willingness to carry a comfortable bivy set up. Traditional bivies aren't stylish these days, but the extra comfort and rest they afforded us allowed us to chill out and then attack.

FREDDIE WILKINSON, AAC

*Fitz Roy, El Flaco con Domingo.* On January 26, 2008, I met Crystal Davis-Robbins; we were both without partners, and the weather continued to blow everyone's mind. I felt like I needed more rest, but there was no time for that.

We ran into Freddie Wilkinson and Dana Drummond on the hike up; they had just climbed the face that we were interested in, via the bottom half of Tehuelche and a new path to the summit ridge. The crux involved a mixed chimney that we hoped to avoid. Preferably we could find dry rock that would yield some quality free-climbing.

After scoping from the base, we started from a horizontal snow bench below and maybe 800' right of Tehuelche's landmark leaning spire. I led off the snow and found great cracks, followed by a bit of kitty litter and then a broad face with sporadic features. Our sixth pitch took a lot of my energy, as it traversed a ropelength to the left, toward Tehuelche. A few more pitches up a corner I found a good ledge for eating lunch and transferring the lead. Due to a surprisingly bulky backpack, the second jumared most of the climb. After three more pitches, while juggling I spotted a bolt to our left: we had found Tehuelche. Easier ground and simul-climbing on Tehuelche got us to the Gran Hotel, the ledge system that breaks the wall in half. We'd climbed about 15 long pitches. We slogged up dry talus to the apex of this ledge and found improved bivy spots and a wedge of icy snow for making water. The impressive Diedro di Marco (Tehuelche's notorious off-width) shot directly above us; the sun's rays transform this feature into a funnel for water and rock.

In the morning we climbed a right-facing crack system capped by an imposing roof. We