



On the approach to Skardatindar. *Stéphane Benoist*

Pessi climbed with Basile Ferran, Mathieu Maynadier, Mathieu Detrie, François Delas, and Benoit Monfort on the right side of the Porcelain Wall, combining Doug Scott's route with a more recent route opened by Icelanders.

STÉPHANE BENOIST, *FFCAM, France*

Norway

SPITZBERGEN

Atomfjella Mountains, new German-Swiss routes. I first took note of Svalbard, as Spitzbergen is called in Norwegian, in 1999 when reading an expedition report about mountaineering in Atomfjella. Spitzbergen lies a mere 1,500km from the North Pole and, true to its name and unlike the flat Pole, promised to be a mountaineering paradise par excellence. Markus Stofer and I were delighted to be invited to join Gregor Kresal from Slovenia on the Atomfjella, the steepest mountain range of the island. Grega had been there twice before.

Spitzbergen is roughly as large as the Iberian Peninsula, and Longyearbyen, its capital, has a population of 1,500. A hundred years ago one would have set off from here with sledge dogs, but modern



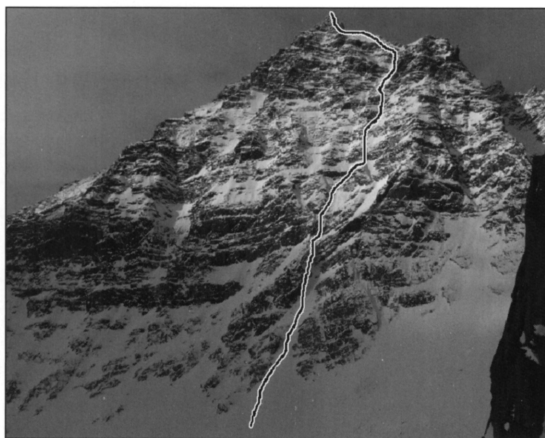
Deutsch Slowenische Freundschaft on the "Triangle" northwest face. *Robert Jasper*

Norwegians, like the rest of us, rely on technology. And so when the snowmobile broke down just outside of town we had to wait almost an hour in a -20°C whiteout for the mechanic to reach us. Sledge dogs wouldn't have given up so easily! Luckily in April the sun never sets, and 24 hours of daylight makes time seem relatively unimportant. After almost 18 hours we had to haul our gear and sledges over a long ice section to reach the upper basin of the Tryggvebreen Glacier, where we set up our tents for base camp.

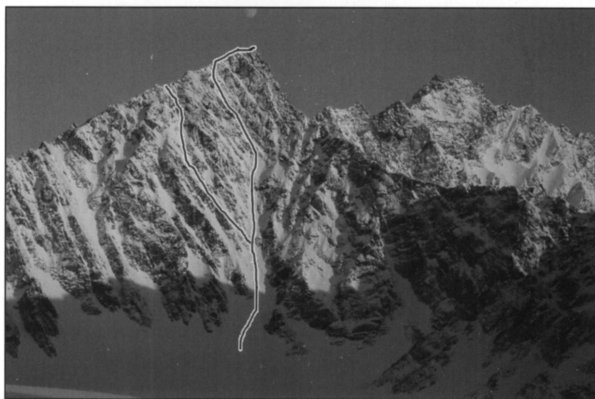
Temperatures can drop seriously up here in the Polar circle, and we registered down to -28°C in the tents. The Slovenian Slibowitz drink warmed us from the inside; Klemen and Boris had managed to pack an astounding amount in just 20kg of flight allowance, but nevertheless the cold was almost unbearable, working away at our energy reserves and in doing so it became a life-determining factor. Up on the peaks and when climbing in the shade the thermometer even dropped to circa -40°C . Talk about life in the freezer!

We were immensely lucky with the weather. High pressure dominated the weather pattern over the next week, and we found out later that this was the best weather in 100 years. Though extremely cold, the weather was stable, and we climbed every day. There were plenty of walls with fantastic mixed lines, so we realized our dream of establishing modern mixed and drytooling routes without bolts in an alpine environment.

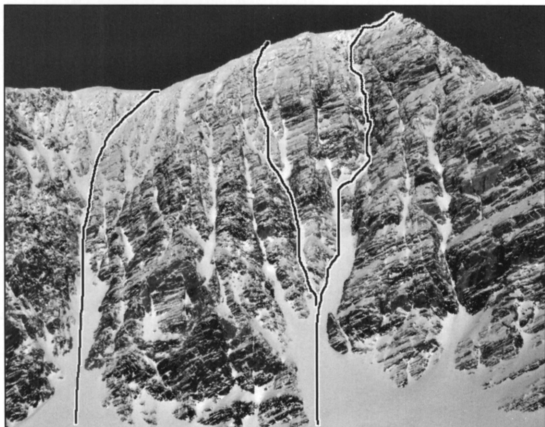
The faces are similar to the



The east face of Chadwickrügen's Polar Pow(d)er. Robert Jasper



The northern foresummit of Chadwickrügen. The Slovenian route is on the left, and Knut is on the right. Robert Jasper



The west face of Ceresfjell with its new routes. From left to right: Norwegian, Slovenian, Northern Siesta. Robert Jasper



Robert Jasper on Deutsch Slovenische Freundschaft.
Markus Stofer

north faces in the Alps, and almost all are virgin and circa 900m high. But we were so far out there that whenever the plane flew overhead toward the North Pole it kindled human warmth and a desire for civilization.

We were guests in the kingdom of the polar bears and we protected our camp with an alarm fence including a gun. We realized that this wasn't a game when we discovered fresh frying-pan sized footprints on the glacier close to our base camp. Luckily they led down and back out to the fjord. It seems climbers are less interesting than fat seals down on the ice pack.

Our complete expedition team was Anderj Erceg, Grega Kresal, and Boris and Klemen Zupanc from Slovenia; Markus Stofer from Switzerland; and me from Germany. All routes were climbed alpine style without bolts and first ascended from the ground up. Only friends, nuts and pegs were used for protection.

The following are the first ascents put up by Markus Stofer and myself: Chadwickrüggen, northern foresummit, ca 1,600m, north face, "Knut" (600m, M5), possible first ascent (descent via east face to southern col 500m 40–45°), April 17; Ceresfjt, 1,677m (N 79°08.166', E 016°55.662'), west face, "Northern Siesta" (750m, M6), (descent from summit circa 500m east along the crest, down S face 40° to glacier, then west to the col, down west face 45°), April 19; Perriertoppen, 1,717m (N 79°09.237', E 016°46.763'), south face, "Ich möchte kein Eisbär sein" (900m, M7), (descent across summit west-southwest to foresummit, then down to col, continue down east couloir 600m, 40–45°), April 20; Chadwickrüggen, 1,641m (N 79°05.787', E 016°47.890'), east face, "Polar Pow(d)er" (700m, M6), (descent from main summit down via the S couloir 700m, 45°), April 22; "Triangle" NW Face, "Deutsch Slovenische Freundschaft" (450m, M7), (descent from main summit, abseil ca 80m down via north face into gully, then descend 400m 45°), by Andrej Erceg and me.

ROBERT JASPER, *Germany*

Atomfjella Mountains, new Slovenian routes. This was my third Svalbard expedition. There were so many things I had to learn about Arctic logistical problems and the secrets of these cold mountains. The experience you gain in Svalbard is unique, and my knowledge from other parts of the world just didn't work here in the beginning. As a matter of fact, at the end of the second expedition (2006) we climbed a very good route, The Partner (600m, M6+, Kresal-Zupanc). With that route I realized that the Atomfjella Mountains were worth coming back for to try the hardest needles.

It's true that the rock is usually quite bad around Spitsbergen, which is the main island of the Svalbard Archipelago, but there is one place where it's hard to the bone. This is Atomfjella. A little copy of the Alps. The place in one word is... amazing! Mixed climbing, which is usually