

join me, we began thinking about an objective. Sean Isaac bestowed his knowledge, and we decided on the Ladyfinger and Hunza Peak.

However, after we arrived and trekked for a long day in the remarkable area of Ultar Meadows, we decided to abandon Ladyfinger and Hunza for safer and quicker approaches in the Hushe Valley. We were fortunate to find a conveniently located and spectacular base camp up the Nangma Valley, above which many talented climbers have left a legacy of hard aid and spicy free climbs. We stumbled upon the unfinished east face of Zang Brakk (4,800m), where a Czech team had abandoned a line earlier this summer. [See note below.] The objective seemed to fit our window of weather, ability, and motivation.

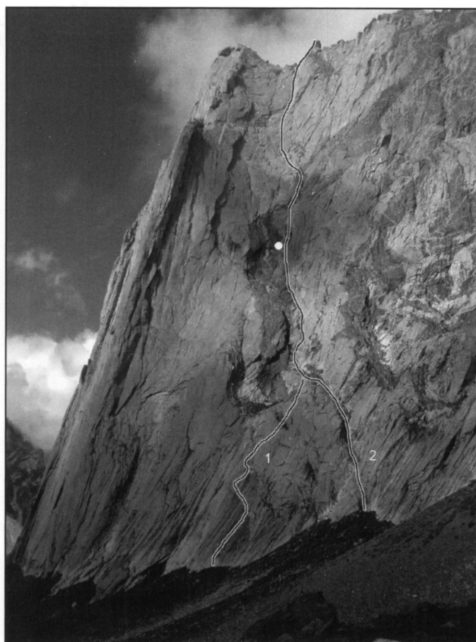
The first day of our ascent, September 19, was blessed with sunshine, and we added two pitches to the Czechs' initial three. Lilla won the day's crux with a tricky A2 butt-crack pitch. After waiting out a couple of bad weather days, which provided rest and a chance to scope the summit ridge and descent route, we charged back up to our

previous high point in deteriorating conditions on September 22. Wearing everything we had, we climbed mostly 5.10 A1 for the next six pitches. Actually, we didn't climb so much as extricate plants and harvest dirt. If extreme gardening were an Olympic sport, we'd be medal contenders. The rock itself was brilliantly clean, slightly featured granite. The cracks have the potential to be just as remarkable, with rigorous cleaning.

As we neared the summit ridge it snowed and got dark. We had to traverse the ridge in rapidly deteriorating conditions, climbing up and rappelling down several times before we were able to put the rope away. From the top we descended slowly, with a bit of backtracking, and arrived at base camp 16 hours after we began.

Lilla coined the name Czech Start Canadian Pinish for our route (500m, TD- 5.10 A2, 11 pitches) because our guide, Imran, was not used to the small appetites of picky white girls and would often ask if we had "pinished our dinner." This route would go free at 5.11-. You could replace the A2 pitch with a 5.10+ offwidth with a steep exit.

JENNIFER OLSON, *Canada*



The east face of Zang Brakk (4,800m), showing the Czech start (1) and Canadian start (2) to the route Czech Start Canadian Pinish (500m, TD- 5.10 A2). The circle marks the Czech high point. The new route Welcome to Crackistan (500m, TD- 5.12d A3) ascends the right side of the prominent pillar on the left. *Jennifer Olson*

Drifka, completion of southwest ridge to west summit; other ascents and attempts. The Czech expedition of Ondrej Baszczynski, Martin Klonfar, Ondrej Martinek, Petr Novosad, Martin Simunek, and Jiri Splichal spent most of August in the Nangma Valley. Three climbers repeated

Hasta la Vista David (2004) on Zang Brakk, and then Klonfar and Splichal climbed the 10-pitch Trihedral Route (450m, VII A2) on Denbor Brakk. Later they discovered that much of their line followed the German route Haulbag, Du Arschloch (Häbel-Sauter, 2006), with variations on the first and fourth pitches. In mid-August, four climbers attempted Drifika (6,447m), reaching 6,250m.

On August 23 Klonfar and Splichal completed the southwest ridge to the western summit of Drifika, calling their line Babba's Dead Cam (V M4, loose rock). From a camp at 5,300m the two climbed steep ice on the southwest face to reach the southwest ridge. This icefield had been climbed in 2004 by a Slovenian quartet, which retreated at 6,300m. From the cornice atop the ridge, Klonfar and Splichal climbed several pitches of icy loose rock to reach Drifika's western summit.

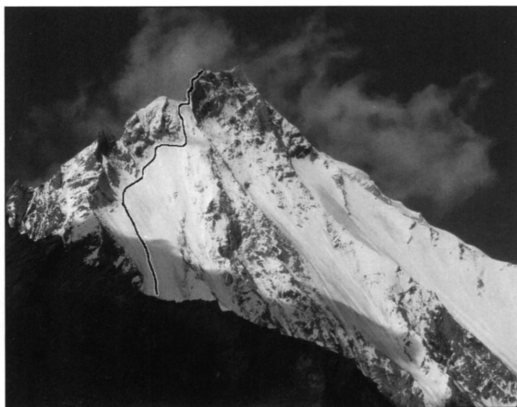
Baszczynski and Novosad started a route on Zang Brakk's east face that was completed a few weeks later by Lilla Molnar and Jennifer Olson (Czech Start Canadian Pinish, see note above.)

DOUGALD MACDONALD, *from a report at*
www.vsak.net

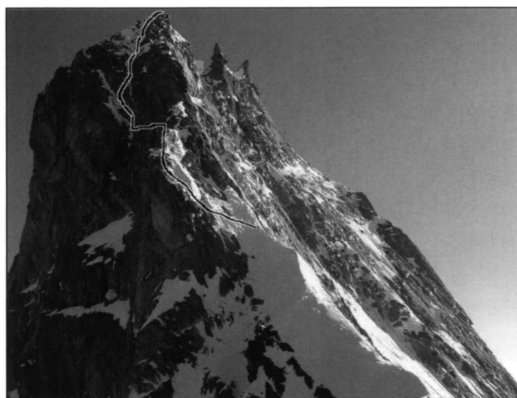
Igor Brakk, Inshallah. In July, Toni Caporale, Maurizio Felici, Alessandro Palmerini, and I opened Inshallah (610m, ABO- VII A0, ice 70°) on Igor Brakk (5,010m) in the Amin Brakk group of the Nangma Valley. The initial goal of our Abruzzo-based expedition was the ascent of a virgin peak in the Charakusa Valley, followed by an attempt on Broad Peak, but once in the region we found it would be impossible to travel to or from the Charakusa through Gondogoro Pass, and so we had to make a virtue of necessity.

We decided to visit the Nangma Valley, which we knew only through photos shared by friends. We had to be at the Broad Peak base camp by July 15, and time was tight. After six days in the Nangma Valley, five of which passed in the rain, we had only four days to climb. With our initial ideas for a big-wall route wrecked, we were forced to climb in alpine style, light and fast, although the peaks that surrounded us are not the best for this style.

After a sleepless night because of Toni's intestinal illness, which forced him to stay behind,



Martin Klonfar and Jiri Splichal completed the southwest ridge to the western summit of Drifika (ca 6,440m). A Slovenian quartet had climbed the southwest face to reach this ridge in 2004. The Czechs added several pitches of icy rock climbing to gain the west summit. *Jiri Splichal*



From the crest of the southwest ridge of Drifika, the Czech duo climbed a loose rock traverse and M4 icy corners to reach the western summit. *Jiri Splichal*