

Seven months later I sat on a street corner in Bariloche with 75 kilos of gear, waiting for Paul. True to form he showed up, excited as ever, and stuffed my packs into a taxi. Canmore-based photographer Andrew Querner arrived the next day, and we were on our way.

After a boat ride across Lago Puelo and two days of gaucho-assisted horseback riding we arrived at Oswaldo Rappaport's hut. From there we made forays up Turbio IV to check out the Piritas, a tri-summited granite spike first climbed in February 2006 by Pedro Lutti and Bicho Fiorenza, via the easy east corridor on Pirita Central. A year later Bicho returned with Morsa Degregori to climb the 550m North Spur (6b+) of Pirita Left.

About a week in, in February 2009, the weather went from dismal Patagonian rain to absolute California blue sky. Caught off guard, we left our high camp at 9 a.m. After a few hours of hiking we were climbing white granite, perfectly glacier-scoured and splitter. By day's end we had made the first ascent of the Pirita Right, by the west ridge, and continued along, making the first traverse of the three summits.

Back in camp we realized one of our ropes had taken such a beating that climbing as three was out of the question. Paul nobly backed out, leaving the opportunity to Andrew and me. We settled on a line in the center of Pirita Right's north face, slightly right of the central corner. The route darts around on cracks and ramps, and a pitch below the top of the wall we jutted left on an exposed traverse, then climbed to the top of the wall. We estimate our route, Todos Los Caballos Lindos, at 350m high, including approach pitches, and it went all-free, to 5.11-, in a day. It was a wild feeling to be freestyling our way up a beautiful alpine face, in the middle of nowhere, that had never before been touched by human hands.

Afterward we headed down the Turbio River in rafts that were just a step up from the inflatable sea-horses kids use in swimming pools. After a day and a half maneuvering around submerged trees, we hit Lago Puelo safe and sound.

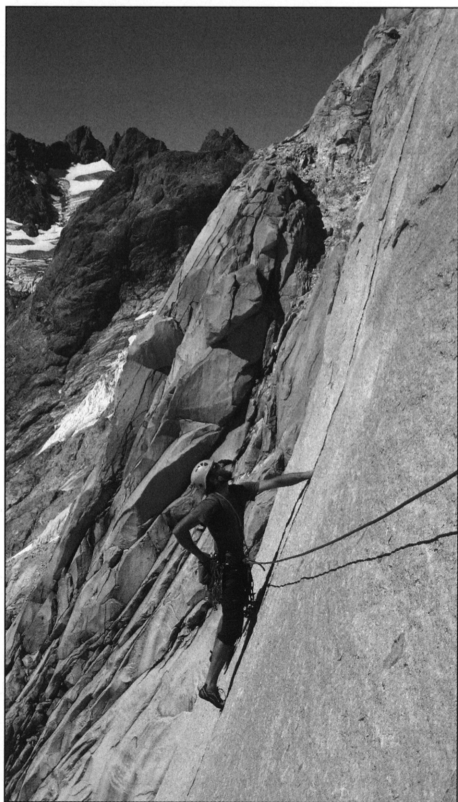
We extend our sincere gratitude to Bicho Fiorenza for his help. We also thank Mountain Equipment Co-op and Arc'Teryx for their support.

WILL STANHOPE, *Canada*



Pirita Right, with Voces en la Noche (left) and Todos Los Caballos Lindos. Dave Anderson

*Valle Pirita, Pirita Right, Voces en la Noche.* While exploring in 2008, Josh Beckner glimpsed a large granite wall in Argentina's remote Pirita Valley of the upper Rio Turbio drainage. On February 26, 2009, Beckner, Jared Spaulding, and I crossed Lago Puelo by boat and hired a gaucho



Josh Beckner climbing a laser-cut 5.10 hand crack on Voces en la Noche. Dave Anderson

to transport our gear 20 miles by horseback. Sunburned from the exceptional weather, we cached our gear at the convergence of the Rio Turbio and Turbio Quatro Rivers. The next morning we were awakened by Canadians Paul McSorely, Will Stanhope, and Andrew Querner, who'd just left the valley. They told us that a local Argentine climber had pioneered the difficult approach to the valley and done some routes there [see above report]. The Canadians had also done some climbs, and they told us about a striking unclimbed line on the right tower.

We spent the next week hauling our gear through dense stands of bamboo-like cana colihue, which required machetes despite passage of two previous climbing parties. We started our ascent of Pirita Right on March 9 with a 1,500' "approach" that included several 5th-class pitches (to 5.11) and a small but steep snowfield. Once to the base proper, we headed up a sweeping dihedral that turned out to be the route's crux. From there we followed a series of cracks on the left side of the tower. When the system ended, a short pendulum provided access to a splitter hand crack and another corner system. The direct sun and temperatures close to 80°F zapped our

strength and required the third to jug with extra water. Darkness caught us four pitches from the top, and we bivied on a tiny butt-ledge before topping-out the next morning. After one rappel down the south side we scrambled around to the north and downclimbed a series of complicated slabs (4th- and easy-5th class), rappelled across a snowfield, and returned to our high camp six hours after summiting. We ascended 2,200' of roped climbing (including some traversing pitches) between the approach and the actual tower, though it's hard to say where one ends and the other begins. Using our altimeter watch, we estimated the vertical height of the tower proper as 1,500'. The rock was excellent fine-grained granite with a host of crack systems, mostly tips to hands in size. We named our route Voces en la Noche (Voices in the Night, V 5.11 A0) for the human voices we thought we heard during our climb, most likely produced by the hundreds of waterfalls echoing throughout the valley.

Heavy rain on the hike out provided challenging river crossings and mandatory use of a sketchy Tyrolean. Back at our base camp we loaded everything into two tiny Kmart-style inflatable rafts, equipped with handmade paddles, and floated out along the Rio Turbio to Lago Puelo, to complete our adventure in 17 days. We received generous support from the Mugs Stump Award and the National Outdoor Leadership School.

DAVE ANDERSON, AAC