

On March 6 we took a boat to the village of Vindstal, above which the peaks sport large, steep rock walls and give you the feeling of being in a big mountain range. Next morning we climbed a 40m icefall, Slush Puppy (WI3), on the east side of Polyhannaren. From the top we continued to the east face of Bisplua and climbed three snow pitches (60°) up the center, until below the summit rocks. Traversing a ropelength to the left got us to the crest of the south ridge, up which we finished to the summit, where we were greeted by one of the most spectacular views I have ever seen: stunning fjords and huge granite walls. The route was 300m, AD+.

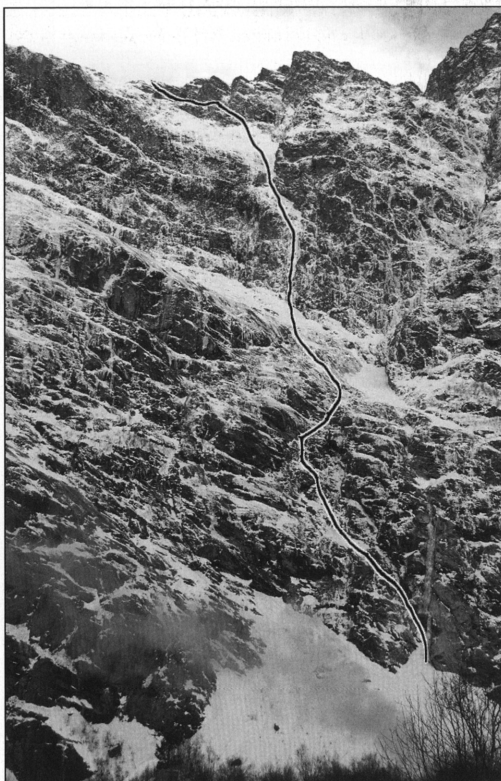
During our brief stay we also climbed several short new routes: on February 29, Great Steps (40m, WI3), on the south side of Kolgfjellet, and on March 5, after a three-hour uphill walk in deep snow, Sausages and Mash (30m, WI3), Mousakas (40m, WI2), and Baklavas (40m, WI3) on the south face of Gylttinden. The time passed quickly, and I suddenly found myself on the ferry, trying to take our final photos of the islands. It's a wild place in winter, and I'll be coming back soon.

CONSTANTINOS ANDREOU, *Cyprus*

ROMSDALEN

Oliskardstind, Ut i Vår Hage. For two years I'd kept an eye on an unclimbed line on Oliskardstind, but I'd never been in the right place at the right time. Sometimes we travel to far-away places in hopes of sending the climbs of our dreams and forget about those in our backyards. In early December an amazing line up a 1,400m face 15 minutes drive from my house in the Romsdalen appeared to be in. The route starts just 100m above sea level and tops out at 1,530m. The key section was finally there, a smear of ice on a steep wall linking easier sections of snow and ice.

My friend Eiliv Ruud lives just below the wall; he can see the line from his kitchen window. His answer to my question was concise: "I'm in!" We packed light and prepared for a full day. I met Eiliv at 7:00 a.m. In the dark we had problems getting off the ground when our planned start turned out to be a vertical 20m of more-water, less-ice. Instead, we began with a leftward-angling ramp, and by first light, after simul-soloing and some pitching, we reached easier ground. We knew that the smear halfway up would be the crux and were relieved to find that what looked like snow was actually perfect ice climbing, though not so easy to protect. The sun was just rising,



The ca 1,400m Ut i Vår Hage on Oliskardstind, Romsdal.
Nils Nielsen

and we experienced the alpenglow you only get on short winter days in the north. The smear gave 150m of 75-90° sn'ice, beautiful and interesting. More pitches and simul-climbing in easier terrain took us to the upper snowfield. We wanted to make a direct finish, but what we thought would be one pitch of easy rock now looked like 200m of hard mixed. We bypassed this section by a leftward traverse and joined the summit plateau at 3:00 p.m. The descent went smoothly, and we were home in time to enjoy beers with friends.

It's funny how we travel so much, using the little money we have, but don't always see the opportunities in front of our noses. We named the route *Ut i Vår Hage*, which is a popular TV comedy in Norway. In English it means something like *Out in Our Backyard*.

NILS NIELSEN, *Norway*

SOUTHERN NORWAY

STAVANGER REGION

Naeroydalen, Into the Wild and Fosslimonster; Eidfjord, Landplage. At the beginning of February 2009 Markus Stofer and I went to Naeroydalen in southwest Norway. On a visit in 1999 I had noticed big icefalls forming in the fjords close to Gudvangen (Aurland). These are probably some of the highest in the world, falling over rock faces the height of El Capitan. Situated close to the sea, these walls experience conditions far from perfect for ice climbing, with the mild Gulf Stream and westerly winds preventing the waterfalls from freezing. However, temperatures down to -30°C this winter froze everything in Norway; it was the chance I'd been waiting for.

On the February 3 we made the first ascent, on-sight, of *Into the Wild* (900m, but 1,300m of climbing up to WI6+ X). This lies behind Gudvangen on the left side of the valley; as far as we know it is the longest pure icefall climbed in the world to date. Our next stop was Eidfjord. Here, the valley of Mabodalen is home to a number of fine ice climbs, perhaps the most famous being the *Voringsfossen*. When properly frozen, as it was this year, it is a classic 180m WI6. On the north side of the valley we made the first ascent of *Landplage* (240m, WI7-), a fantastic mixed climb with free-hanging icicles. This route



Above the road to Gudvangen, in the fjords of Naeroydalen: (1) *Kjerrskredkvelven* (900m with eight pitches of serious roped climbing, WI6, Grimseth-Olsen, 2006). (2) *Into the Wild* (900m with 1,300m of climbing, WI6+ X, Jasper-Stofer, 2009). The lower section of (2) as far as the traverse of *Kjerrskredkvelven* was climbed by Johnston, Kihlström, McConachie, and Sandelin in 2005. *Archiv Jasper/Schaeli/Stofer*