

free ascent of rarely formed Suntori (1,500m elevation gain from road, discontinuous climbing and approach steps, M7 WI6), a striking ice line on the massive south face of Mt. Wilson. In February, Walsh and I climbed the parallel line Living in Paradise (1,500m elevation gain from road, WI6+), continuing from the end of the water-ice pitches up snow and mixed ground to the summit ridge, making likely the first integral ascent of the route. Among Walsh's many other winter alpine ventures, in January he and Rob Smith made possibly the first winter ascent of Mt. Fryatt, via the Southwest Face.

Around the corner from the classic Curtain Call, climbers were lured by big unclimbed ice lines on the northeast side of Tangle Ridge. It was not until April, though, that Holeczi, Mills, and Mike Verway found the right combination of gumption and conditions and plucked the plum of the cliff, Undertow (600m, WI6). The route, with a long approach and endless succession of largely moderate but excellent pitches, received several repeats that confirmed it as one of the finest ice routes in the range. Walsh and I were then drawn to a less-obvious line to the right, resulting in Boobquake (600m, WI4+ M5). We returned the following weekend, finding Can't Touch This (600m, WI5+ M6) between Undertow and Boobquake. Who would have thought there would still be big unclimbed ice easily seen from the road? Those are the Canadian Rockies for you, a big range with still plenty of potential.

RAPHAEL SLAWINSKI, Canada, AAC

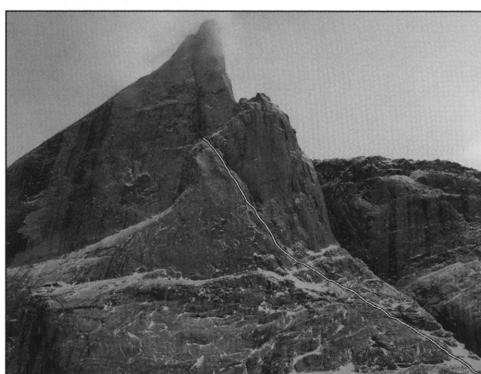
BAFFIN ISLAND

Broad Peak, North Face; Beluga Spire, attempt. Baffin is a landscape of frozen fjords, exotic wildlife, massive big walls, and sea ice as far as the eye can see. I went to the island in early April and did not leave until the second week in June, having the experience of a lifetime along the way.

I took the full arsenal of toys—big-wall and alpine climbing gear, ski-touring equipment, and enough food and fuel for a few months. My outfitter dropped me in the Walker Arm of the Sam Ford area, in a climber's and skier's paradise. I set up base camp in a central location, at the foot of the impressive Polar Sun Spire. I climbed or skied almost every day, despite -30° temperatures. The skiing was great, with an abundance of couloirs and chutes that had a deep layer of powder. I also made forays into other fjords, sometimes traveling 35 miles at a time. On

windy days I would kite-ski across sea ice, being pulled at 40mph!

Once the temps rose in early May, I started climbing. The biggest unclimbed wall in the area is the north face of Beluga Spire, situated between Polar Sun Spire and the Walker Citadel. The 1,400m monster had been BASE jumped, but never climbed. I slimmed my gear to a minimum, leaving portaledge, bolts, static rope, and partner (obviously). After three days of climbing, I retreated from halfway, due to cold affecting my toes, which I'd frostbitten a few weeks earlier while ski-mountaineering.



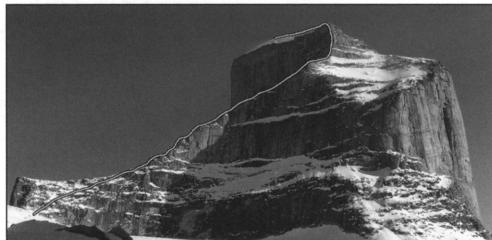
The unclimbed north face of Beluga Spire, with Turner's attempt. *Dave Turner*

I tried Beluga again a few days later, going even lighter—no second rope, haulbag, or anything extra—but got shut down again by my toes.

I switched objectives to a new route on the north face of Broad Peak, a 1,400m rock and mixed giant. I knew I could do it if I brought all the big-wall gear, but I wanted to continue my light-and-fast strategy and try a continuous ascent. I took one 70m rope, my one-man tent, and food and fuel for 48 hours. I spent 39 non-stop hours on the ascent, taking advantage of the 24-hour Arctic sunshine to keep going without a bivy. The line was beautiful—a few pitches of mixed to get onto a spur, then a difficult knife-edge arête that led to an easier hanging snowfield, the 400m crux headwall (5.10 A3), and a super-rad ice arête to the summit. It was one of my biggest climbs, set in the most beautiful area I have seen.

By the beginning of June it was time to go home, and my Inuit friend came to get me. But not before I got to see polar bears, seals, caribou, foxes, crazy big walls, super couloirs, virgin peaks, and so much more than words can describe.

DAVE TURNER, AAC



The new route on the north face of Broad Peak.
Dave Turner

Mt. Asgard, South Tower, South Face; North Tower, East Face; and other activity. Chris Brazeau and I spent four weeks in Auyittuq National Park, climbing the granite walls and ridges of the Weasel Valley. We left home with inspiring photos, vague beta, and a lot of excitement. In the fishing village of Pangnirtung in early July, we met Belgian friends and hired a boat to take us to the trailhead at the end of the fjord. Our main goal was to climb beautiful Mt. Asgard, which requires a 42km approach. As the Weasel Valley is stacked with amazing mountains, the objectives along the way were plentiful and the views always mind-blowing.

Of our 28 days in the park, we spent seven climbing, 11 schlepping loads, and 10 resting. We did our routes in light, clean style, trying to find challenging, aesthetic lines. Our two most significant climbing achievements were:

Asgard's South Tower, South Face (600m, 5.12-). We thought we were on a new route until we found a bolt at the crux, on the second-to-last pitch. Not sure, but we probably climbed 50% new terrain and 50% the Italian Route. After 300m of 4th-classing, we continued with nine amazing 60m pitches of mostly 5.10, except for the 5.12- crux pitch. It was probably the first free ascent of the South Tower, taking 16 hours roundtrip from a camp alongside the Caribou Glacier.



The South Face route on Asgard's South Tower. Jon Walsh