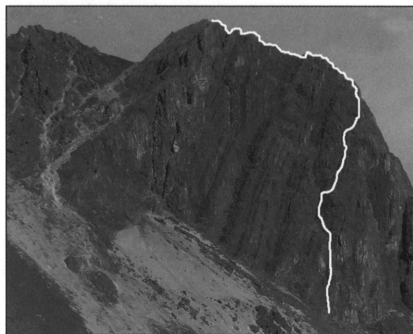


we made several attempts and ascents, including what we believe to be new route on Peak Austria (5,320m). It has a beautiful buttress—La Fortaleza Buttress (Fortress Buttress)—that offered a welcome change from snow-plodding, and MacCalum and I put up a superb rock route on its eastern arête. The line had lots of character, 350m long, V Diff, alpine grade AD, climbing ribs, towers, and a ridge crest, all on quality sedimentary rock, with a dramatic backdrop of the Cabeza and surrounding peaks. Naming the route was the hardest part. We settled on Caporales Celtica—*caporales* being a traditional Bolivian dance performed by African slaves in the court of the Spanish Conquistadors. Celtica being our version.



Caporales Celtica, on the eastern arête of La Fortaleza Buttress, Peak Austria. Gerry Galligan

GERRY GALLIGAN, *Ireland*

*Cordillera Real, Illimani, Pacha Brava.* Lionel Terray, French idol of the 50s, wrote about Illimani's huge south face: "The human being who succeeds in climbing this frightening and steep wall isn't born yet." Decades later the French Alain Mesili and the Japanese Giri-Giri Boys ascended several serious routes on the southeast wall. The south face is a challenge, it's dangerous, it's a great game, it's the longest face in Bolivia's Andes. It's 12km wide, up to 1,400m high, and very complex. [This face is around the corner, to the left, of the "southeast face" shown on p. 237, *AAJ* 2007 (called "south face" in the 2007 report).] Even villagers living in Pinaya, below Illimani's west side, don't know about the remote south side, other than that it exists. So I made an orientation trip: three days of perfect loneliness.

Shortly after my exploration I returned with Porfirio Chura. He is a young Aymara born below Illimani, and one of a few Bolivian extreme climbers living in La Paz. At 3 a.m. one day in mid-August, we started to climb. At sunrise we were high up the face, mostly simul-climbing 60–75° ice, with mixed passages connecting the icefields, on a wall with no end. Every step was clear and simple, life in its purest form. A steep but short icefield above a crevasse was the crux: 8m of overhanging ice (115°). At midday thick fog enveloped us, but, almost blind, we continued up. As soon as we left the south wall and traversed west we left the fog and our doubts behind.

"This wall is a bitch," said Porfirio.

"It was a bitch," I answered with a smile.

The long traverse to Illimani's south summit and the descent, westward near the Bonatti Route, stole the whole afternoon. At nightfall we passed Puente Rotto (base camp for the normal route to the south summit). Forty minutes later we reached Pinaya. Here we spent the night with Porfirio's sister and her family, in the tiny adobe hut where he was born.

*Pacha Brava*, "courage grass," is a tough pioneer plant that grows where no other plant could survive: between rocks and in the poorest traces of soil. We search for happiness in simplicity, and *Pacha Brava* makes a good symbol of that.

ROBERT RAUCH, *Germany and Bolivia*