

Pissis, West Glacier. The West Glacier of Pissis, Argentina, is 40km square, the biggest in the region. It can only be reached after a difficult 200km off-road ride. The only attempt on the route was by Mexicans in 1994. In March a team led by Guillermo Almaraz, with Eduardo Namur, Nicolás Pantaleón, and Daniel Pontín, erected base camp at 5,000m (S 27 43 04.5, W 68 54 00.8) in the valley that accesses the West Glacier. They made Camp 1 at 5,600m beside the glacier (S 27 44 03.1, W 68 51 40.8), and the next day traversed the 7km glacier, camping at 5,950m near the ridge used by the Polish on the 1937 first ascent (S 27 44 48.3, W 68 48 45.5). The final summit bid was made by Almaraz, Namur, and Pantaleón, ascending the snowy face and reaching the ridge that is the final part of the original route. They continued to a minor summit (Gendarmería Nacional, 6,675m), then to a col between it and the main summit, which they reached shortly after midday on March 14. The group believes the last unofficial measurement, 6,795m (official is 6,882m), to be accurate.

MARCELO SCANU, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*

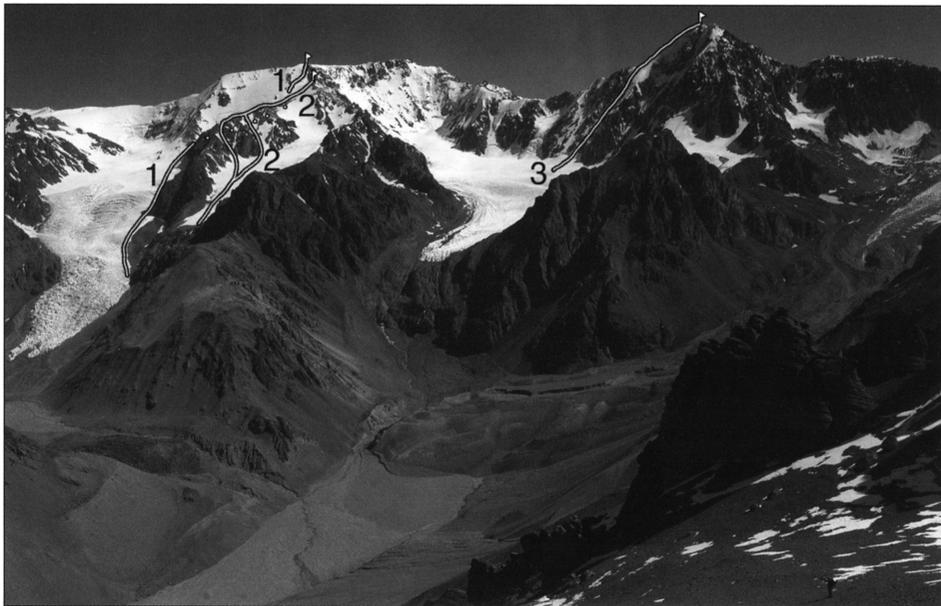
CENTRAL ANDES

Cerro Presidente Perón, first ascent; Cerro Bifurcación, south face and ridge. In February 2010 Pablo González and I accessed the Quebrada San Lorenzo at 4,200m, in the Cordillera de Olivares, Agua Negra zone, in Argentina's San Juan province, near the border with Chile. The next day, February 8, we followed a destroyed mining trail to camp at 4,625m. On February 9 González climbed a new route on the south face and south ridge of Cerro Bifurcación (5,223m), first ascended by friends and me in 1991 (AAJ 1992, p. 161). On the 11th we climbed the west face of a fine 5,774m virgin summit, finding terrain similar to the Normal Route on Aconcagua and naming the peak Cerro Presidente Perón, because the three-time Argentine president was a climber and supported expeditions in Argentina and abroad.

MARCELO SCANU, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*

La Ramada Range, Rio Colorado Valley, ascents. La Ramada is a remote, little-visited range in Argentina, 200km northwest of Mendoza, without a precise map. With Argentine climbers, I've climbed in this area, specifically the Rio Colorado Valley, three times. Access involves a four-hour drive from Mendoza to the nice village of Barreal and then the *gendarmerie* post of Santa Anna, the beginning of the walk. Then a two-day, 30km, trek with 1,400m elevation gain, to base camp (3,600m). In 2005, with an Argentine climber, we repeated two existing routes: the South Face of Pico Negro and the East Face (Serac Route; French D) of Pico Polaco, considered the most beautiful mountain in the area. Then, in January 2008, Anibal Maturano (Argentina) and I climbed a 5,700m peak that had no known previous ascents; Anibal called it Pico Franco-Argentina. Our route, St. Jean de Passy, begins at 4,100m, above the upper valley, and climbs the east-northeast face. It was nice, but not technical (French PD). We made two camps above base camp (4,300m and 4,900m; a porter came with us to our highest camps on these trips), explored the glacier, and climbed two parallel couloirs (45°) en route to the summit.

It was a pleasure to return in December 2009 for 10 days, with Gabriel Fava (Argentina) to the valley's fantastic landscapes, home of the agile guanacos, and our calm base camp dominated by the impressive south face of Mercedario and the pyramid of Pico Polaco. Above base



(1) Veronica y Seis Hijos, on La Mesa (dots for hidden portions). (2) St. Jean de Passy, on Peak 5,700m (Pico Franco-Argentina). (3) The Serac Route on Pico Polaco. The first two were new routes, and (3) a repeat. *Anibal Maturano*

camp we established two camps on the Italian Glacier to reach the base of La Mesa, distinguished by its long summit ridge. We climbed a direct route to its central summit (6,130m) on December 15, gaining 1,130m on the northeast face near a ridge, difficulty D-/D. It was 45°/50° max, with a final 10m of 60° to reach the ridge. In the absence of previous known ascents, we named the route Veronica y Seis Hijos, dedicated to my wife and six children. The best time to climb this mountain is usually November and December; November could be colder, and in January the Italian Glacier can be impassable and the faces icier.

HENRY BIZOT, *France, AAC*

Aconcagua (6,962m), 2009–10 overview. This season had fewer climbers and more trekkers than last season, with 3,712 attempting the summit, compared to 4,048 last year. Foreign climbers rose to 89%. The first two weeks of January 2010 were the busiest for climbing. There were fewer evacuations and only one death. The historic summit cross was stolen. On past occasions the wind had taken, but it was found. This time anonymous thieves made off with it. Now there is a new one.

In addition to Chad Kellogg's solo (below), the massive south face saw other ascents. Young Argentine climber Mariano Galván soloed the Messner variation of the French Route, beginning February 11, 2010, and taking 34 hours. He went without a tent, in very low temperatures. Also in February, Argentines Gabriel Fava and Anibal Maturano ascended the original 1954 French Route.

MARCELO SCANU, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*