

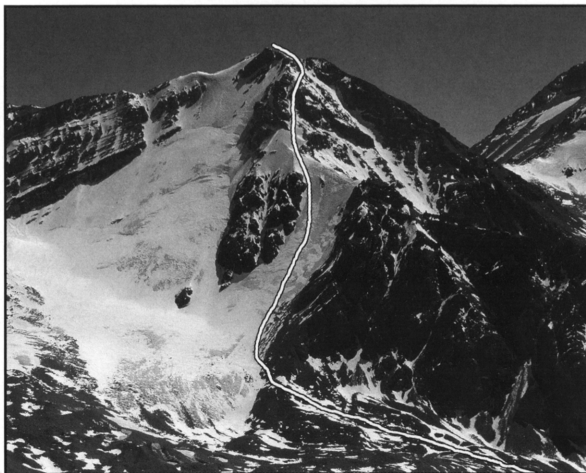
## Argentina and Chile

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### CENTRAL ANDES

*Ansilta 4, Seis Hermanos.* On September 19, during Argentina's dry 2010 winter, in the remote and little-visited Cordillera Ansilta, located 250km north of Mendoza and 50km from Barreal, Gabriel Fava (Argentina) and I climbed a new route on Ansilta 4 (5,116m).

From base camp (3,950m) we hiked along a moraine toward the mountain; early in the walk, in the Morillos hills, we found fantastic caves with ancient paintings. We continued to the base and climbed the 750m southeast ridge (French D in these dry conditions, 55° max), beginning with a 400m ice face and followed by 350m of mixed terrain to the summit. In the absence of previous known ascents, we named the route *Seis Hermanos*, dedicated to my six boys.

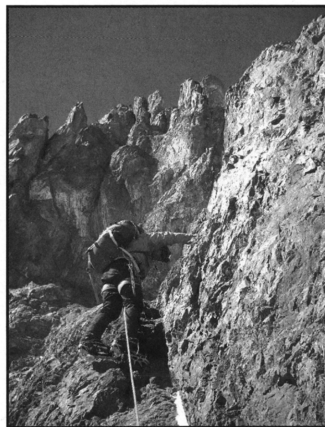


*Seis Hermanos, on Ansilta 4. Henry Bizot*

HENRY BIZOT, *France, AAC*

*Ramada Range, Pico Polaco North, Cheto Alpino.* On Tuesday, October 5, with the great enthusiasm and motivation of Ivan "Topo" Rocamora, we left his flat in Mendoza for the mountains, and with 23kg on our backs—no mules in our low budget—and three hours of daylight remaining, we started up the Rio Colorado gorge. The next day we continued the remaining 30km to the icy and very windy Santana Base Camp, "Pirca Polaco," at 3,600m.

Thursday started sunny and windless, so with some food and one sleeping bag we went to the base of the northeast face of Pico Polaco (6,000m), and shivered through a windy night at 4,700m. At 6 a.m. on October 8, we began climbing, first on easy rock and then into an ice tunnel between rock towers, leading to a 40m ice cascade at 5,400m. We bypassed the ice with 55m of hard-to-protect rock to the left, then reconnected with the ice, which led to about 150m of 50° snow, another step of rock, and



*Ivan Rocamora leading on Cheto Alpino, Pico Polaco. Gabriel Fava*



Cheto Alpino, the new route to the north summit of Pico Polaco. *Gabriel Fava*

more ice and snow finishing in some large towers. We navigated the towers via some rock on the right leading to a couloir that took us back left with a narrow strip of 70° ice. We continued connecting snow and ice gullies to the summit ridge, where we climbed some rotten rock and, after 18 hours of climbing, gained the North Summit and reveled in the colorful beauty of the desolate landscape.

It was a nice evening with some clouds rolling in, and we descended the route of first ascent, climbed by Antonio De Nigris and Edgardo Beorchia Yacante in 1958, carrying firewood with them up the mountain. We carefully descended the couloir, with some ice steps to 60° and excellent snow taking us to the glacier and the awkward moraines, where we could feel water running, and we spent a dark and quiet night with our one sleeping bag and no food. But still we were happy, having climbed a new route on a beautiful mountain. Cheto Alpino (1,000m, D+ 70° 4+(UIAA rock)).

We continued down on Saturday, and on Sunday we enjoyed a day of cragging by Los Colorados, with maté, food, and more food....

GABRIEL FAVA, *Argentina*

*Note: Soon after this ascent, Ivan Rocamora fell and died while he and Fava were climbing on the south face of Cerro Mercedario.*

*Aconcagua (6,962m), 2010–2011 overview.* This season fewer people visited Aconcagua and the weather was bad, with many days of snowfall. Unfortunately, there were six casualties (only one climber died last year). There were 197 rescues (46 of them complex), which is a decrease from recent years. The cost of rescue operations, however, has gone up, specifically due to the use of helicopters, and the climbing fee has increased. The cleaning of the park was completed and two new huts were constructed, one at 3,800m in the Quebrada de las Vacas and another at 6,000m. On another positive note, more climbers and trekkers are accessing the mountain by the Quebrada de las Vacas, leaving the Plaza de Mulas and the normal route less crowded.

Of 2,800 trekkers and 3,498 climbers, 85% were non-Argentinian. Compared to last season, this was 600 fewer trekkers and 300 fewer climbers. On February 3, Peruvian guide Holmes Pantoja Bayona broke Aconcagua's speed record, going from Laguna Horcones (2,850m) to the summit in 13 hours, and round-trip in 20:35.

MARCELO SCANU, *Buenos Aires, Argentina*