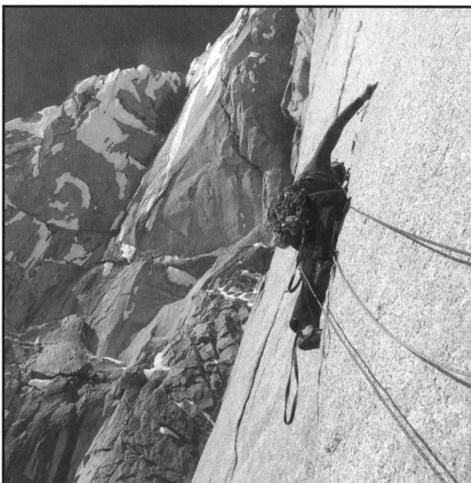


West faces (left to right) of Aguja Standhardt, Punta Herron, Torre Egger, and Cerro Torre. Italian attempt on Egger to just short of Col de Lux marked. *Matteo Bernasconi.*



Della Bordella on Christmas Day 2011 during first attempt of season on Torre Egger's west face. Walls of Punta Herron behind. *Matteo Bernasconi*

*Torre Egger (2,850m), west face, attempt.* In December 2011 and January 2012 Matteo Bernasconi and Matteo della Bordella made attempts to climb the west face of Torre Egger. They followed the large corner system on the left side of the face, which was climbed for 300m in 1997 by Adriano Cavallo and Ermanno Salvaterra, who retreated due to objective danger. (A previous attempt by unknown climbers reached 150m from the ground.) Bernasconi and della Bordella had tried the line during the 2010-2011 season and left ropes in place.

The pair fixed ropes, but found that the central section, starting with pitch 12, was dangerously exposed to ice falling from the vicinity of the Col de Lux (Herron-Egger Col). They tackled part of this section, before retreating to their snow cave on the glacier, where they sat out nine stormy days. Due to increasing temperatures, on their return they found the glacier changed. Enormous crevasses had opened, and it took a very long time to reach the face. They descended to Chalten and came back with an aluminum ladder to bridge gaping gaps.

By the time of their final attempt, for which they received a forecast of four days' good weather, they had fixed ropes to pitch 17. They opted for a lightweight push to the summit, taking no real sleeping gear, just

bivouac sacks and food for five days. Passing their high point they made a cold bivouac and the following day reached the top of pitch 23, 20m below the Col de Lux. They had climbed difficulties of 7a and A2 and placed two bolts. A little after 8 p.m., hoping to bivouac on the col and reach the summit the next day, della Bordella had just moved off the belay when he fell, pulling most of the anchors. Climbers and haul bags were left dangling from a 0.3 cam. Shocked and with no workable bolt kit to pass this section, they retreated, leaving ropes in place. They also abandoned the ladder.

They had planned to climb capsule style, with a portaledge, but once they saw how exposed the section from pitch 12 to pitch 17 was to falling rock and ice, they changed tactics. However, Bernasconi felt that in the prevailing conditions it was still Russian Roulette, even siege style. The two chose this line in preference to the center of the west face (attempted in 1996 by Italians) because it offers greater free-climbing potential.

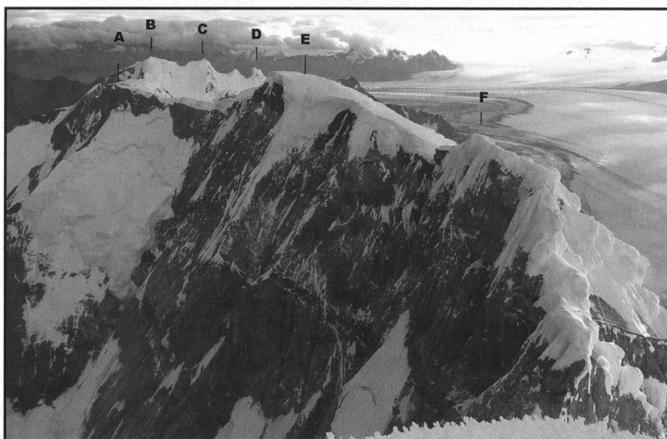
LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO*, from information supplied by Fabio Palma and Matteo della Bordella.

*Torre Egger (2,850m), south face, Venas Azules.* Norwegians Bjorn-Eivind Aartun and Ole Lied climbed a spectacular ice route on the left side of the steep south face of Torre Egger, overlooking the Col of Conquest. They first climbed 600m (6a A1) of El Arca de los Vientos to the col, where they bivouacked. Next day, after an initial pitch of M5, they continued for six pitches to the summit, up very steep, ephemeral rime and blue ice plastered to the granite. They rappelled the face to their bivouac. Venas Azules gains a total height of 950m, of which 350m were new, at AI6 (95°) M5 A1. This is the first time the face above the col has been climbed since the original ascent in 1976.

The ascent was one of six nominated for a 2012 Piolet d'Or, but just days before this was officially announced, the popular, well-respected Aartun was killed attempting a new ice route in his home country. Venas Azules was later awarded a special mention by the Piolets d'Or jury, which felt it achieved a new level of technical ice climbing in an alpine environment, only possible due to the team's opportunism. Aartun's account appears earlier in this *Journal*

*Cordon Adela-Cerro Torre traverse.* In a seven-day roundtrip from Chalten during January 2012, Agustin and Juan Raselli and I made a south-north crossing of the Cordon Adela to finish on the summit of Cerro Torre. We bivouacked at Laguna Toro, then, via the Rio Tunel Inferior Glacier, reached the start of a 400m, 60° ramp that led to the shoulder of the first summit on the ridge. This ice- and mushroom-covered tower, west of Punta Luca, was not named and had had no previous ascent. We've called it Mini Torre. From the shoulder a beautiful pitch of 90° ice, then a section of easy mushrooms, led to a difficult mushroom pitch. We had to clean a lot of rime on this pitch, which forced us to bivouac below it and reach the summit in the morning. It was a good warm up for the west face of Cerro Torre.

We then traversed the west flanks of Punta Luca (2,790m) and Cerro Grande (2,751m), before continuing over Cerros Doblado



South from Ragni Route on Cerro Torre. (A) Adela Sur. (B) Cerro Grande. (C) Punta Luca. (D) Mini Torre. (E) Adela Central. (F) Adela Norte, with convoluted corniced ridge descending toward camera and Col de la Esperanza. Viedma Glacier to right. Max O'Dell