



AAC Publications

Summary, various routes

South America, Argentina, Chaltén Massif

According to various estimates, more than 150 people climbed the Ragni Route (600m, 90° M4) on the west face of Cerro Torre during the 2012-2013 summer season. This is more than twice as many people as climbed it in the previous 40 years, since its first ascent in 1974. The conditions resulting from extremely dry weather were partly responsible, with the climb involving mostly well-protected ice climbing rather than the usual unprotected rime. It also appears that the removal of the bolts along the southeast ridge resulted in a rediscovery of the Ragni Route's obvious natural line to the summit. It turns out that the physical presence of the bolts was not nearly as important as their psychological impact, and their tendency to focus attention on the manufactured path, rather than on the mountain's natural features.

Austrian Markus Pucher blasted the second solo ascent of the Ragni Route, free soloing it in a mere 3 hours 15 minutes from a plateau 150m below the Col de la Esperanza. Immediately right of the Ragni Route, Argentines Gabriel Fava, Wenny Sánchez, and Roberto Treu climbed an impressive 350m variation, from the top of the Elmo to the base of the last pitch. The Directa Huarpe offers difficulties similar to those found on the Ragni Route, with one slightly harder section involving 15m of rime-covered ice (95°). Later in the season Fava, Sánchez, and Treu climbed Guasos on the Rock, a 450m variation (5.11 A1) to Mate, Porro y Todo lo Demás on the west face of Fitz Roy's Goretta Pillar, as well as a five-pitch variation on the north face of Aguja Rafael Juárez: Los Sanjuaniños (5.11).

The most creative ascent of the season came from the hands of Americans Josh Huckaby and Mikey Schaefer, who climbed Aguja CAT, then traversed south onto Aguja Cuatro Dedos and climbed all four fingers before descending to the col with Aguja Inti, and then climbed over Agujas Atchachila and Pachamama before descending. In all they climbed about 25 pitches (around eight of them new) and made close to 40 rappels. They took three days to complete this beautiful traverse, which they christened Manos y Mas Manos, referring to all the hand jamming involved as well as a play on the name Cuatro Dedos.

On the west side of the Cerro Pollone massif, German Carsten von Birckhahn and Argentine Martin Kroussotssi climbed No Entiendo, a new route on the southeast ridge of the Gran Gendarme. Later, Von Birckhahn and Lukas Pflug climbed a new route on the northwest ridge of the same tower, the Perfekt Day (400m 7a). Von Birckhahn and Pflug, with Sebastian Straub, also climbed Zigzag, a line that climbs seven new pitches on the west face of Aguja Tito Carrasco, to join the north face route (Kauffman-Toman, 2010).

On the east side of the Pollone massif, Japanese Katsutaka "Jumbo" Yokoyama and Ryo Masumoto established a 300m "sit start" to the east ridge of Aguja Pollone, climbing also a beautiful three-pitch direct start to La Granja. From the summit they rappelled west to climb past Aguja Stefan, traversing the ridge to join Re Puesto! on the ridge to Cerro Pollone's east summit. In all they climbed 29 pitches, all free (to 5.11+). Later, Yokoyama and Masumoto completed the first free ascent of Judgment Day on the south face of Aguja Poincenot, finding difficulties to 5.12.

A number of variations went up on Aguja Guillaumet. Americans Pete Fasoldt and Eli Simon climbed Dirigo (300m, 5.10 C1 50°) on the east face: seven new pitches between the Slovene route and the Anker-Piola. Just to the left, Argentines Charly Cabezas and Diego Simari climbed a three-pitch variation to the right of the Gambler.

The most important ascent on Cerro Fitz Roy, and probably in the entire range, was the first ascent of Un Mar de Sueños, a massive new route on the southeast face. [See feature article earlier in this AAJ.] Also on Fitz Roy, Argentines Iñaki Coussirat and Carlos Molina did the second ascent of El Corazón, a striking line on the east face. Americans Kate Rutherford and Madeline Sorkin completed the first team female ascent of Mate, Porro y Todo los Demás, for the fourth team female ascent of the peak. Previously unreported, the third team female ascent of Fitz Roy was carried out in late February 2012 by Argentines Cintia Percivati and Luciana Tessio, via the Afanassieff. (The first team female ascent of Fitz Roy was by Slovenes Tina Di Batista and Monika Kambic, via the Franco-Argentine, in 2004; the second by Milena Gomez and Dörte Pietron in 2012, via the Afanassieff.)

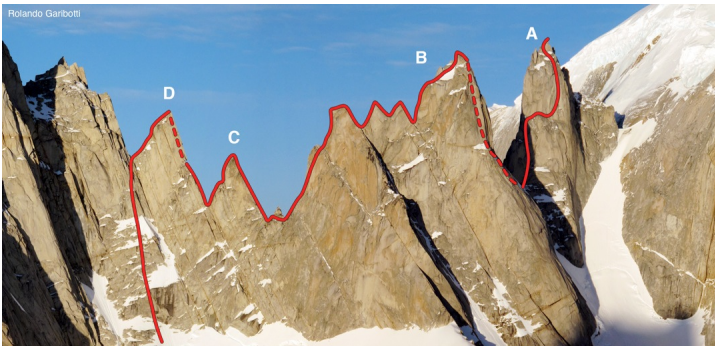
On the south face of Aguja de la Silla, Hungarians Tomas Kovacs, Bence Lam, and Aron Urbanics climbed Carril Rapido, a five-pitch new line (5.10).

Much has changed in this massif in the last few years. Climate change has affected the weather patterns to the point where long good-weather windows have been a common occurrence; the nearby town of El Chaltén provides an ever-expanding myriad of services and comfort; accurate weather forecasts allow parties to climb with little apprehension, while collective knowledge and plentiful route information have left few unknowns. The mythical "great range" where the likes of Jose Luis Fonrouge, Casimiro Ferrari, Jim Donini, Silvo Karo, Ermanno Salvaterra, and many others made history is no more. Today, instead, this massif is a phenomenal playground where hundreds of climbers are having deeply fulfilling experiences. We may shed a few tears for what has been lost, but it is hard not to have a big smile on one's face for what is happening. [Go to www.pataclimb.com for up-to-date information and topos for climbs on the Chaltén massif.]

Images



The Directa Huarpe (right), a new 350m variation to the Ragni Route (left). More than 150 people climbed the Ragni Route on Cerro Torre's west face during the 2012-2013 season, affirming its place as the standard line to the summit, once the bolts on the Compressor Route were chopped [AAJ 2012].



Manos y Mas Manos traverse. This creative enchainment was climbed by Mikey Schaefer and Josh Huckaby over three days from right to left: (A) Aguja CAT, (B) the four fingers of Aguja Cuatro Dedos, (C) Aguja Atchachila, and (D) Aguja Pachamama.



Fitzroy North Aspect.



Fitzroy topo.

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