



## AAC Publications

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### **Cerro Punta Yamakawa, South Face, Ski Descent**

Chile, Central Andes

**On October 13, Diego Saez Beros, Adam Fabrikant, and I made a ski descent of the south face of Cerro Punta Yamakawa (4,967m). This was the first leg of our annual, autumn pilgrimage to the Central Andes**

We began our trip on October 10, leaving Santiago early in the morning for Valle de Las Arenas. Four of us—Diego, Adam, Aaron Diamond, and I—crammed equipment, food, and ourselves into Diego's tiny two-door Fiat. We arrived at Arenas later in the morning to wet snow and low visibility, so we opted to spend the night in the climber refuge instead of drenching ourselves with a walk up the valley.

Fortunately, we awoke the next morning to beautiful weather and a fresh blanket of snow that allowed us to begin skinning from the refuge. With a few days of food in our packs, we made our way up the valley with a variety of objectives in mind. However, by midday, the weather had turned for the worse, and what should have been a single-day approach to a high camp at the base of the Cortaderas Glacier took two days. The second day allowed us to study the south face of Yamakawa, our primary objective. A small, nighttime storm on the 12th delivered a few more inches of snow to the valley. Light winds all night kept our minds at ease.

The idea to ski the south face of Yamakawa had come from a trip that Adam and Diego did to the area in 2016. (Diego had previously made descents of the Cortaderas Glacier and the tamer northeast side of Yamakawa. Adam had previously made a descent of Cerro Cortaderas on its eastern flank but not from the summit. To our knowledge, there has not yet been a descent of Cortaderas (5,197m) from the top of its summit pyramid.) The proposed descent of Yamakawa grew in significance for us after our good friend Caleb Ladue tragically passed away in a crevasse fall on the Cortaderas Glacier, directly beneath the south face of Yamakawa in fall 2017.

On October 13, the four of us left our camp at 3,900m just before sunrise. After an hour ascending the Cortaderas Glacier, Aaron made the decision to stay behind; he was feeling a bit sick from the altitude. The rest of us reached the summit before noon and were treated to cloudless blue skies with little wind.

(A) Cerro Punta Yamakawa, showing (1) Morales-Mondragón, 2004. (2) The line of the first known ski descent. The line mostly follows the 1979 Pardo-Peña climbing route. (3) Ben Dare, 2011. (B) Cortaderas. Photo by Billy Haas

**We began our descent of the face directly from the summit and roughly skied down the 1979 Pardo-Peña climbing route.** (There are at least two other technical routes up to M4+ located left and right of this route, climbed by Morales-Mondragón in 2004 and Ben Dare in 2011; see AAJ 2012.) **We found 50cm to 60cm of stable, fresh snow on the face. The fresh snow made the skiing secure, but hidden rocks kept us cautious. On the upper headwall, we were fortunate to find an improbable yet clean line through the fluted rock bands that separate the upper and middle slopes—an incredible experience in downhill route-finding. Once on the middle portion of the face, clean fall-line skiing at around 45° brought us down to the Cortaderas Glacier and, eventually, our camp.**

The total descent was around 900m to the bottom of the face. Afterwards, we remarked at this being the deepest snow we had ever skied in technical terrain. It was a special honor to have made such a fun descent of a beautiful mountain with good friends in honor of Caleb.

– Billy Haas, USA

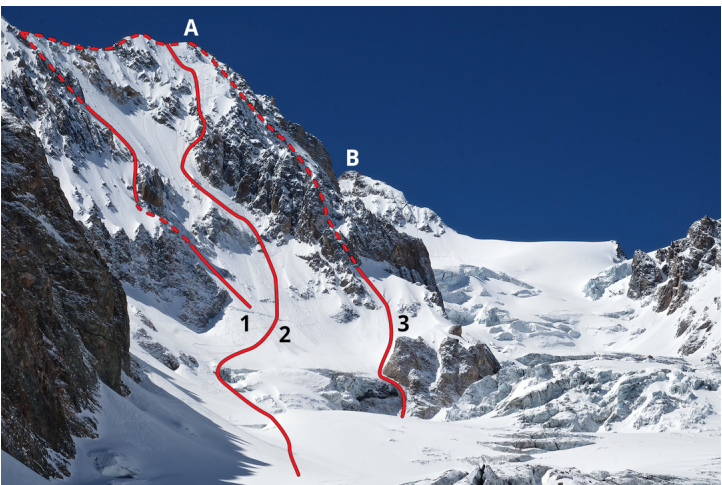
## Images



Steep, fall-line skiing on Cerro Punta Yamakawa's south face.



Looking up at the technical, fluted rock bands on Cerro Punta Yamakawa.



(A) Cerro Punta Yamakawa, showing (1) Morales-Mondragón, 2004. (2) The line of the first known ski descent. The line mostly follows the 1979 Pardo-Peña climbing route. (3) Ben Dare, 2011. (B) Cortaderas.



Skiing on the south face of Cerro Punta Yamakawa.



Approaching up the Cortaderas Glacier with plenty of fresh snow.

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