



AAC Publications

Aguja Standhardt to Torre Egger Traverse

Argentina, Southern Patagonia

In January 2022, my husband, Jeff Wright, and I completed a successful Patagonian “smash ‘n’ grab,” when an excellent forecast prompted us to make an 11-day round-trip (Seattle to Seattle) to El Chaltén, during which we enchainned three of the four peaks in the Torre group: Aguja Standhardt, Punta Herron, and Torre Egger. This was the first time a woman has completed this traverse or climbed Punta Herron. [Editor’s Note: Priti Wright was the third woman to summit Torre Egger, after Steph Davis and Brette Harrington.]

This was our fifth climbing trip to El Chaltén. In 2019, we climbed Cerro Chaltén (Fitz Roy) in a 10-day smash ‘n’ grab from Seattle. In early 2020, during two months in Chaltén, we climbed Cerro Torre on the route Via dei Ragni. Urgency and several parties in line behind us compelled us to join the conga line and accept a top-rope on the final pitch of the summit mushroom. We now have stood on all four summits of the Torre skyline [another first for a female climber].

Our traverse from Standhardt to Egger took four days and three nights, with two bivouacs on Standhardt and then climbing through the third night up and over Torre Egger.

After arriving in El Chaltén, we approached the standard Niponino camp for the Torres the next day, spent the night, and cached our tent there; we carried a tarp and a double sleeping bag for the traverse. After a night at the Torre Glacier bivy site, waiting for icy conditions to improve, we started up Aguja Standhardt on January 18, climbing the route Festerville (400m, 6c 90°), which follows the spine of the north ridge for approximately 13 rock pitches. Another team of two (Michał Czech from Poland and Agustín de la Cerda from Chile) started up the route ahead of us, and we effectively joined forces, climbing symbiotically, with each team helping the other along the way.

We bivied 11 pitches up and then summited Standhardt via two more pitches and 30m of 90° ice and rime. Michał and Agustín rappelled the Exocet route while we bivied near the summit (a short day).

In the morning, we made seven rappels down the south face of Standhardt, then climbed 30m of the route Tobogán to gain the Col de los Sueños. The traverse continued up to Punta Herron via Spigolo dei Bimbi (350m, 6b 90°), with five pitches of fantastic rock climbing and another two pitches of beautiful vertical ice and rime to the summit. A single rappel led down to Col de la Luz under the north face of Torre Egger.

From here we continued up Espejo del Viento (200m, 6a+ 80°), often referred to as the Huber- Schnarf Route, in the dark. Three rock pitches ended in a long, run-out, and wet technical slab traverse under Torre Egger’s overhanging summit mushroom. Two more moderate pitches up the mushroom on 70° snow and ice brought us to the summit of Egger at 2 a.m.

Through the night, we descended along the route Titanic on the east pillar, with 27 rappels and downclimbing. We reached Niponino after 44 hours of continuous movement since our second bivy on Standhardt.

We collapsed in our tent, realizing we were too late to catch our planned flight home. Unfortunately, we neglected to notify anyone that we would miss our early-morning airport taxi ride, which led to the

driver waking climber Korra Pesce, who was sleeping in the room we had previously used. Korra notified the hostel owner and Rolando Garibotti, who proceeded to notify rescue teams. Later that morning, however, Rolo successfully contacted us via our inReach, halting any rescue plans and teaching us a valuable lesson.

A week later, a large team of volunteers attempted an unsuccessful rescue of Korra Pesce, who had been seriously injured on Cerro Torre. Jeff and I, who were already back in the United States by that time, just wished we could have been present to aid in the rescue efforts.

— **Priti Wright, USA**

Images



The Standhardt to Egger traverse (right to left), with the yellow line marking the descent from Torre Egger.



View along the crest of the Torres.





Priti Wright leads a traverse under the summit mushroom on Punta Herron during the Standhardt to Egger traverse.



Priti and Jeff Wright during the Standhardt to Egger traverse.

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