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Cerro Trono Blanco, South Face, Ultima Ronda

Chile, Southern Patagonia, Torres del Paine

Hernán Rodríguez and I awoke above a sea of clouds in Torres del Paine's French Valley. Freezing levels were low, and raging spring winds had buffed most of the snow and ice from our main objective, forcing us to descend. We gazed deep into the French Valley, searching for a consolation prize on the south faces that guard the head of the cirque.

Cerro Trono Blanco's rugged south face was unclimbed and crisscrossed with couloirs and ramps. On December 6, we pulled over the bergschrund at sunrise and began to simul-climb the sn'ice ramps that made up the majority of our route. Short mixed and ice sections separated simul blocks, with a variety of "choose your own adventure" options to keep things technical and engaging when we wanted.

We arrived at the ridge 50m to the east of the summit (2,197m) and continued up easy ground to the top. Sharp, frigid winds warned that our weather streak had ended, and we were lucky to have had a chance to climb anything at all. We downclimbed the south face, making three rappels, to descend our route before mid-day. We named the route Ultima Ronda ("Last Round," 700m, AI3 M4).

—Sebastian Pelletti, Chile

Images

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