



AAC Publications

Cerro Buracchio, first ascent; Cordón Riso Patrón, numerous ascents

Argentina-Chile, Southern Patagonia

The Cordón Riso Patrón is a mountain range on the western edge of the Southern Patagonian Ice Field and is one of the most remote areas of Chile. In austral winter 2014 our team of Franz Goerlich, Paul Sass, Uwe Seifert, and I (all Germany) reached the area by traversing the ice cap from east to west via skis and successfully explored the Cordón Riso Patrón over 20 days. In addition to several first ascents of slightly lower peaks, we climbed the highest and virgin summit of Cerro Buracchio (2,767m) by an alpine-style route up its south face: Ruido Blanco (650m, TD- 70–80°).

The Cordón Riso Patrón is dominated by two mythical and rarely seen mountains. The first, Cerro Riso Patrón (2,550m, estimated) has had only ascent, in August 1988, when a strong Italian team approached the peak from Fiordo Falcón; Casimiro Ferrari, Bruno Lombardini, and Egidio Spreaficoreached the summit by the south-southeast face. The second mountain, Cerro Buracchio, remained unclimbed until now but not un-attempted. Camilo Rada and partners made three ambitious attempts but failed due to bad weather. During their best attempt, in 2002, Rada and Maria Paz were within meters of the summit when Rada fell and an incoming storm forced them to descend.

[Editor's note: Cerro Buracchio has been previously listed on several Chilean maps as "3,018." Additionally, the mountain was originally christened "Zen'ei-hou," which means "Peak Vanguard" (locally referred to as "Vanguardia"), by a Japanese expedition led by Hidetaro Sakagami in 1969. Because the Japanese name never became properly publicized, Rada and his team suggested the name Cerro Buracchio in 2002, in honor of the Chilean alpinist Cristián Buracchio, who died in a plane crash in 2001. See www.pataclimb.com for further climbing history and geographical information about Cerro Buracchio and Cerro Riso Patrón.]

Starting in mid-August from El Chaltén, our team had both of these mountains in focus. After several days of strenuous gear shuttles we reached the Southern Ice Field via Paso del Viento. From there we traversed the glacier by skiing around Nunatak Viedma, heading west to Paso Rokko. At that point there were two options for reaching Cerro Riso Patrón. One route leads southwest, descending an unknown and awful looking icefall. The northern alternative crosses Paso Rokko, heading due west toward the eastern summit of Cerro Burrachio.

Due to the outstanding weather forecast, the GPS track provided by Camilo Rada, and the unexpectedly long approach to our current location, we chose the northern route. On the southern end of this route is a lower elevation pass, which we called Paso Buracchio. The pass slopes steeply to the west and leads to the huge plateau below the south face of Cerro Buracchio. An unknown, corniced ridge descends due west, which would likely provide access to the north face of Cerro Riso Patrón. We reached Cerro Buracchio on August 24. The next day we explored the plateau and nearby hills, with breathtaking views to the west of Cerro Riso Patrón.

After fixing a rope over the difficult bergschrund below Cerro Buracchio's south face the day before, Paul Sass, Uwe Seifert, and I began our ascent the morning of August 26. Leaving the skis at the bottom of the wall, we started climbing the steep south face (70-80°) around 8:30 a.m. The excellent weather changed just before noon, and it snowed the rest of the day. After 12 pitches we reached the wind-exposed southwest corner in whiteout conditions, without any view of the onward route. Traversing downwind, we fortunately found a system of ice gullies leading through the headwall. Two

pitches later, at 6:30 p.m., we reached the top of Cerro Buracchio. Our route involved 650m of sustained ice climbing.

Descending our route, we reached the bergschrund around 2:30 a.m. Due to the heavy snowfall during the day and the steepness of the wall, our ski cache was completely covered with snow from a slab avalanche that had released on the lower slopes. Exhausted and in darkness, we quit the search for our skis after one hour. At 3:30 a.m., we arrived at base camp, where Franz welcomed us with a hot meal.

August 27 was dedicated to ski rescue. We finally found them buried under two and a half meters of fresh snow. Without skis it would have been an interesting walk back across the ice cap.

Once we had recovered our strength, our food ration had shrunken to three days. We had to give up on Cerro Riso Patrón and head back to a food cache we had left at Paso Buracchio. However, with some buffer, we decided to explore the unknown summits in the range due south of Cerro Buracchio. On August 28, Paul, Franz, and I climbed a small, tooth-like peak in this range. We belayed two pitches up an ice mushroom. On top I lost parts of my incisor teeth due to a confrontation with failed dead-man anchor. The next day Paul and I traversed the adjacent peaks to the east of the tooth-like summit. We climbed gentle slopes to the first summit and then followed the straightforward ridgeline, which does not deviate much in elevation. Up high, we belayed two pitches of climbing up a fragile ice gully. Due to bad weather in the late afternoon, we were forced to descend from the second peak summit-less and reached base camp by night.

On August 30 we left our base camp and climbed up to Paso Buracchio on a fixed rope we'd left, and then hauled up the sleds. Taking advantage of the good weather, we explored the eastern side of the Cordón Riso Patrón. Apart from a couple of minor summits southeast of Paso Buracchio, Franz, Robert, and Uwe climbed a peak likely to be the highest on that side of the range (2,746 m, 49°32'25"S 73°34'22"W)

On our way back to civilization we made a side trip to Cordón Mariano Moreno, ascending a snowy peak of the Gemelos Blancos mostly by ski. From 150m below the summit we could ski down the west face, finding powder conditions. We proposed the name Cerro Regreso (2,695m, 49°27'07"S 73°27'18"W) for this final unnamed and unclimbed peak, which offers an incredible of Cordón Riso Patrón to the west and of Cerro Torre and Fitz Roy to the east.

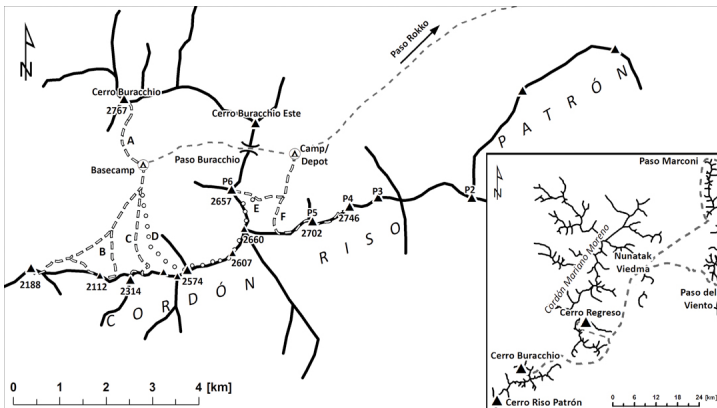
Back home we had time for more research about the peaks we climbed to the south of Cerro Buracchio. As far as we know, the only expedition exploring this mountain range prior to us was the Japanese team of 1969, which crossed the southern ice field by way of Fiordo Exmouth to the north and exited via Estancia Cristina to the south. They numbered the summits of Cordón Riso Pastrón in ascending order from east to west (P1-6). Based on mail contact to Shuji Iwata, part of that expedition, we figured out that our team did the second ascent of P6 (2,657m, Matsunaga-Maekawa, 1969) and the first ascents of peaks P4 (2,746m) and P5 (2,702m).

Robert Koschitzki, Germany

Images



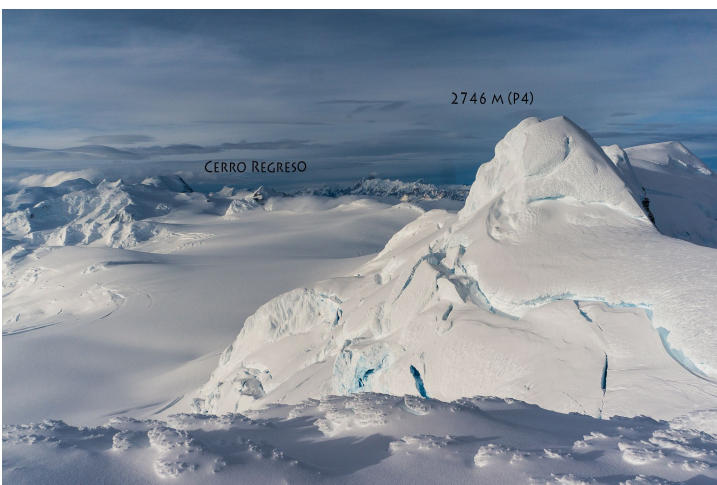
Cerro Buracchio's south face, showing the first-ascent route Ruido Blanco (650m, TD- 70–80°).

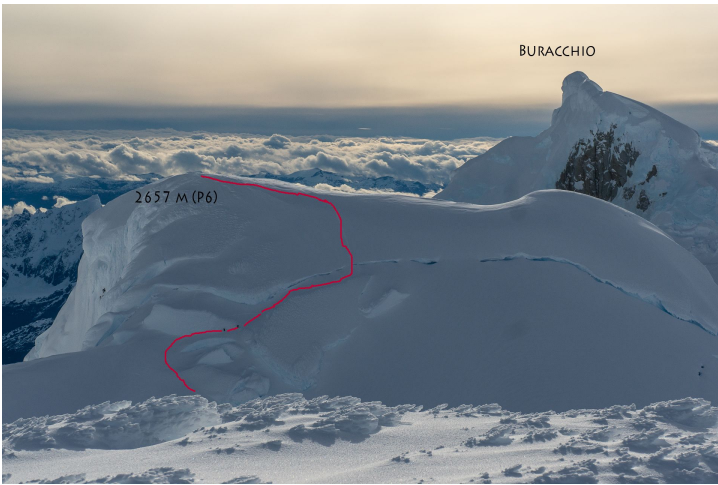


This map tells the story of the 2014 expedition. From Paso Buracchio, the team traveled west to a base camp south of Cerro Buracchio (2,767m), which they climbed by its south face: Ruido Blanco (650m, TD- 70–80°). After that, they climbed a number of peaks in the northern Cordón Riso Patrón, which is the prominent ridgeline due south of Cerro Buracchio. This ridgeline shows the peaks the 1969 Japanese expedition labeled P1-6. After making the first ascents of P4 (2,746m) and P5 (2,702m) and the second ascent of P6 (2,657m, Matsunaga-Maekawa, 1969), the team retraced their route east, back to their food cache ("Camp Depot"). From that camp, they made the first known ascent of the snowy peak Cerro Regreso (2,695m, S 49°27.127' W 73°27.304') in the Cordón Mariano Moreno.



Cerro Riso Patrón from the east; main summit (right) and south summit (left). The 1998 Ferrari-Lombardini-Spreafico route climbs a ramp out of view on the main peak's shaded south side. The south summit has been attempted but is unclimbed.





On Cerro Buracchio's south face, during its first ascent by the route Ruido Blanco (650m, TD- 70–80°).



Climbing sustained ice on Cerro Buracchio's south face.



Climbing the upper rime chimney on Cerro Buracchio's south face.





Sleds and skis were an integral part of moving across the remote southern ice cap.



On the southern ice cap with Cerro Torre in the distance to the north.



Article Details

Author	Robert Koschitzki
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	87
Page	0
Copyright Date	2015
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions