



## AAC Publications

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### **Gasherbrum II, First Ski Descent of French Spur; Gasherbrum I, Ski Attempt**

Pakistan, Karakoram, Baltoro Muztagh

**Following acclimatization with climbs and ski descents in the southern Rakaposhi Range and Eastern Hindu Raj (see report here)**, Boris Langenstein, Aurélia Lanoé, Guillaume Pierrel, and I transferred to Skardu, trekked up the Baltoro Glacier, and on June 26 were installed at Gasherbrum base camp at 5,040m. Our plan was to ascend and then ski the rarely climbed French (central) spur on the south face of Gasherbrum II (8,035m).

Our first foray on the south spur, at the end of June, only took us to 6,560m instead of the hoped-for 7,000m. On July 8, we returned to this elevation and spent the night. Deep snow and technical ground prevented us from reaching the plateau at 7,200m next day, and we camped at 6,949m. On the 10th we continued to the plateau; the exit from the top of the spur was a 50° couloir of thin snow over ice, and a rotten rock ridge. We continued a little further and camped at 7,321m.

On the morning of the 11th, snow driven by a westerly wind had buried the tents. Breaking trail through deep snow, we reached the summit at 11:30 a.m. and spent two hours there before starting our ski descent. The snow on the way back to our top camp was horrible. Once there, we decided to keep going. The couloir was the technical crux: There was barely any snow on the top section, and we had to make a 30m rappel to access it. We returned to our 6,949m site, camped for the night, and the following day were able to ski all the way to base camp.

With only a little time left, Boris and I made a lightweight attempt to ski the Japanese Couloir on Gasherbrum I (8,080m). On the 17th we tried to make a summit push of 1,600m, but ground to a halt at 7,720m, too fatigued to make the top that day. We skied from that point with one 30m rappel and the next day were in base camp.

— **Tiphaine Duperier, France**

**Editor's Note:** In 1975 a 14-member French expedition climbed the central spur on the south face, with Marc Batard and Yannick Seigneur first to reach the top. This was the second ascent of Gasherbrum II. The first ski descent of Gasherbrum II took place in August 1984, when Patrice Bournat (France) and Wim Pasquier (Switzerland) descended the complete Normal (Austrian) Route on the southwest ridge. The following year Thierry Renard skied the south face from the summit, west of the central spur.

## Images



Skiing the French Spur on Gasherbrum II with Baltoro Kangri in the distance.



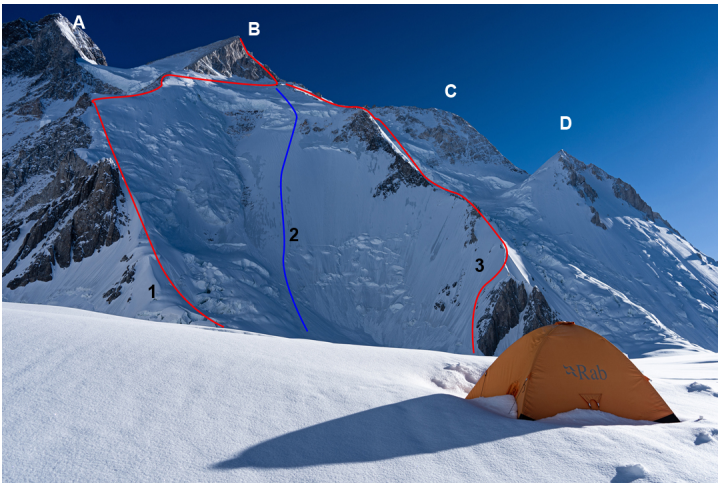
Climbing the French Spur of Gasherbrum II. Across the glacier is the northeast face of Gasherbrum VI and behind it the trapezoidal summit of Chogolisa.



High on the French Spur of Gasherbrum II with Gasherbrum I behind.



Descending from Gasherbrum I. The peak in the foreground, right of the skier, is Gasherbrum V. The distant high peak directly above the skier is Masherbrum.



(A) Gasherbrum III (7,952m), (B) Gasherbrum II (8,035m), (C) Gasherbrum II East (7,772m), and (D) Peak 7,103m. (1) The Normal (Austrian) Route (1956). (2) the line skied by Thierry Renard (1985). (3) French Spur (1975). Approximating the right skyline is the route used in 1983 by Jerzy Kukuczka and Voytek Kurtyka to traverse Gasherbrum II East and Gasherbrum II.



Descending the west-southwest ridge of Gasherbrum II with part of the northwest face of

Gasherbrum I behind.



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