



## AAC Publications

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### **Southern Patagonia, 2022–2023 Season Summary**

Argentina, Southern Patagonia, Chaltén Massif

**Weather wise, this was a statistically “average” season** in the Chaltén Massif, which means there were few weather windows and conditions were challenging. There were five fatalities in the Chaltén Massif.

In August 2022, during an attempt to climb Cerro Torre in the winter, Nicolás Gutierrez, Isidora Montecinos, and Alexis Rojas (all from Chile) climbed the northeast ridge (350m, AI3 M3) of Adela Norte from Col de la Esperanza, a line that had been descended but not climbed.

In February 2023, on El Mocho, Lise Billon (France) and Federica “Ming” Mingolla (Italy) repeated Bizcochuelo, doing the first free ascent of the original line, including a pitch estimated at 7b+ that Mingolla onsighted. A variation to this route was previously climbed free in early 2019 by Ondrej Huserka and Jozef Kristoffy (both Czech), who climbed the final three pitches to the right.

Only one of the Torres was climbed, Torre Egger. Attempts to climb the Ragni Route on Cerro Torre were stopped by the last rime mushroom, which, when in fresh condition, is a seriously difficult pitch.

In the middle of January 2023, Jeremías Castaña, Facundo Saubidet, and Santiago Scavolini (all from Argentina) climbed *Andá pa’ allá!*, a new nine-pitch line on the west face of Aguja Guillaumet; they stopped upon joining a variation of Padrijo. In late February, Seán Villanueva O’Driscoll (Belgium) and Pete Whittaker (U.K.) repeated the route, all free, and continued to the summit. Whittaker redpointed the crux pitch on his second try. In the upper part, they climbed a beautiful 65m corner right of Padrijo, which they then joined three pitches from the top. Seán described it as a “queen line” offering high-quality climbing (500m, 8a).

In late January, Alessandro Baù, Claudio Migliorini, and Francesco Ratti (all from Italy) climbed *Wake Up!* (430m, 7a A2), a new line on the far left side of the east face of Guillaumet. The crux pitch required three aid moves using Peckers, and a number 5 Camalot was useful.

On the east face of Aguja Mermoz, Matteo della Bordella and Leo Gheza (both from Italy) and Villanueva O’Driscoll climbed *¿Que mirás, bobo?* (500m, 7b), immediately left of Pilar Rojo, finding the rock quality underwhelming.

On the east face of Rafael Juárez, Pedro Odell and Tomás Odell (both Argentine) climbed a line following vertical splitters with two wide sections. After seven independent pitches, they joined the De Klerk–Brugger variation. The crux pitch required a few aid moves, but they left no gear on the route except for a piton on pitch three. A week later, Villanueva O’Driscoll and Whittaker free climbed it at 7b. They used one number 5 Camalot and one number 6, but for a more comfortable journey, Pete suggests doubles.

On Aguja de l’S, Naoki Komine and Keisuke Ohkura freed Haizea, originally 7a A0, now 7b. The crux requires micro-stoppers. They report excellent climbing.

Farther south, in Torres del Paine National Park, Imanol Amundarian (Spain), Cedar Christensen, and Tyler Karow (both U.S.) pulled off a team-free ascent of the South African Route on the east face of

Torre Central. It took them ten days. This is only the second free ascent of the route, the first being by Ben Ditto, Nicolás Favresse, and Seán Villanueva O'Driscoll in 2009.

The five fatalities in the Chaltén Massif were varied: One climber lost his footing descending from Col Standhardt, one got caught by a storm on Aguja Guillaumet, two were in a wet slide on Glaciar Superior, and one was hit by rockfall on El Mochito. There were also a number of serious non-fatal accidents. One stands out: A climber, not wearing crampons, slipped on the summit snowfield of Aguja Guillaumet, slamming into rocks and breaking his leg. Luckily, three Austrian mountain guides were on the scene and were able to carry him to the base, where other climbers and the local rescue team took over.

The peaks in Southern Patagonia are a remote wilderness where there is no professional rescue team or helicopter support. Body recoveries are costly affairs: Be sure to carry adequate rescue insurance. Register your climb and carry a communication device with the pertinent frequencies and phone numbers saved. If you have an inReach, avoid pushing the SOS button—contact the local authorities directly. Self-rescue skills are essential.

— **Rolando Garibotti**

## Images



The new route *Andá pa' allá!* on the west face of Aguja Guillaumet, put up in January 2023 and freed a month later at 8a (5.13b).

## Article Details

Author	Rolando Garibotti
Publication	AAJ
Volume	65
Issue	97
Page	246
Copyright Date	2023
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions