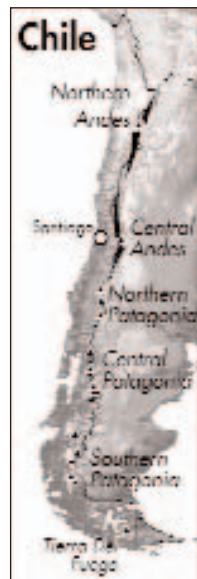


Chile

NORTHERN ANDES

Puna de Atacama, Peaks 5376m and 6070m, Veladero, Bonete, Reclus. On the high-altitude plateau of the Puna de Atacama, in November 2000, Britain John Biggar led a group (Brits G. Biggar, P. Clarke, P. Gilbert, and B. Powling and Peruvian D. Aurelio) that made many ascents. They used a 4WD vehicle to establish a base camp at 4700m southwest of Bonete (6759m). In windy weather and with base-camp temperatures never exceeding 0°C, they made five ascents of non-technical peaks, walking on scree and occasionally snow. Peaks 5376m and 6070m (which could logically be called Veladaro Northeast) were climbed, probable first ascents. There were no signs of previous visits. The ascent of Peak 6070m was by the southwest ridge. They also made ascents of Veladero (6436m) and Bonete (6759m; FA 1913, Walther Penck, Germany). On Bonete several members were blown off their feet on summit day. To the west of Bonete, the group made a repeat ascent of Reclus (6335m).



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Sierra Nevada de Lagunas Bravas. Three years ago John Biggar's book *High Andes* came out, listing three 6000+-meter peaks in South America as having "no known ascent." "No known ascent" is not the same as "no ascent," and I figured these peaks were probably already climbed. They are technically easy—make that technically trivial: volcanic desert peaks formed of low-angle rubble without snow. Two of the three are on the Chile-Argentina border, which was surveyed long ago. Incas visited summits all over the place. Still, it was a good excuse for a trip. I hired a Chilean driver to check out the access and wrote Santiago for permission.

Paul Morgan, Paul Doherty, Tony Brake, and I spent five days climbing Sierra Nevada de Lagunas Bravas (6155m), one of the last three South American 6000-meter peaks with "no known ascent," per Biggar. We began from a base at about 4400m and put camps at 5100m and 5550m. Sierra Nevada is a typical Atacama Desert volcanic peak, with very little snow and ice. The footing was high-altitude dirt and scree from base camp to summit, though some route-finding was involved. We summited on December 12, 2000 and found no sign of a previous ascent on the rock-strewn summit. We checked both summit hillocks, which are on the international border—the named summit and one of identical height a few meters to the northwest. (Both hills are shown on the Chilean topo map, where the one is named.) After checking with John Biggar and with locals in Copiapo and Caldera who would be likely to supply transportation for modern climbers, we believe this to be a first ascent.

ROBERT AYERS

CENTRAL ANDES

Peaks in the Cepo and Quempo chains. I accompanied Fernando Montenegro (Santiago) in several forays into these two rocky chains located in the Santiago hinterland, east of the ski resort of Farellones. The peaks we chose were small by Chilean standards but were hitherto unclimbed. On January 24 we started from the Arenales valley and traversed Alto de la Jarilla (4050m) and Salazar (4020m). The latter peak demanded rope work under its summit. Both are in the Cepo chain. In December we went to the Quempo chain and climbed Sargento del Quempo (4156m). A week later we re-entered the Arenales valley and on December 28 traversed Lagruca (4109m) and La Laguna (4182m), five first ascents in all. In January 2002 I went, now alone, to the ski resort of Portillo and from the international border pass of Lomas Coloradas made the second ascent, and first by the unstable east flank, of Charqueado (4515m). An attempt on unclimbed, unnamed, and quite difficult Peak 4587m failed.

EVELIO ECHEVARRÍA

Northern Patagonia

LAKE DISTRICT

Cochamo, Cerro Trinidad. I climbed in Cochamo in 1999 and 2000, staying two months each time. The first year four Brazilians and I put up a new line on Cerro Trinidad (800m, 5.11 A4), calling it Mucho Granito Arriba. The follow year we visited the area again, but climbed in two teams. Two of the strongest climbers in Brazil, Sergio Tartari and José Luis Hartman, opened Tabanos na Cara (700m, 5.10c A3+) on the central pillar of Trinidad and Além da Laca (400m, 5.12c) on the lower Trinidad tower. They also opened another four routes: Mister M (500m, 5.10a), Velho Alerce (300m, 5.11, A3), and two two-pitch crag climbs. Stanley Costa and I opened Vozes da Grota (330m, 5.11c A2+) and made the first repeat of the just-opened Basque route Euskal Perestroica (900m, 5.10b A3) on Trinidad's main tower, freeing five of its eight aid pitches, upgrading it to 5.12 A2+. After that we did the first repeats of Além da Laca and Mister M and made an unsuccessful attempt on another tower.

MARIUS BAGNATI, *Brazil*

Cochamo, Cerro Trinidad and neighboring peaks. (Editor's note: In the 2001 AAJ, p. 300, Ian Parnell gives a summary of a traverse of many ridges in the Cochamo area by Lucy Regan, Brian Bigger, and James Marshall. More information on the traverse is presented here.) In January, after attempting to complete the right side of the central pillar of the north face of Trinidad (we tried in April 2000 but retreated from pitch 9), we decided to concentrate on an alpine traverse of the Trinidad horseshoe. Skirting the base of Cerro Trinidad, we scrambled up the loose descent gully on the mountain's north side. With much cursing James led the HVS pitch of Stirling Moss in very cold conditions to breach the difficulties on the east face of Trinidad. Meanwhile I climbed the northern subsidiary peak (unnamed, 1479m, almost certainly climbed) and returned to second Stirling Moss. With inquisitive attention from a condor, we scrambled to the summit of Cerro Trinidad (1720m). The summit domes of Trinidad and its neighboring

peaks are relatively flat but are separated by deep gullies, requiring abseils onto knife-edge ridges, then easy but exposed climbing and scrambling up the other side. Heading south along the crest, we climbed two peaks (1703m and 1717m) in this manner. They had probably not been climbed, and we named them Cerro Concepcion Torre Norte and Cerro Concepcion Torre Sur. We then reached the unclimbed final southeastern peak of the horseshoe near the col at its center, and here we bivouacked.

In the morning we scrambled easily to the southeastern summit (1678m), which we named Cerro Romané, before descending its west ridge and reaching the southern col (1390m) by about midday. Views south revealed an apparently untouched and hidden valley with great potential for big wall and alpine routes. To the southwest an incredible curtainlike wall of rock links the southwesternmost peak of the Trinidad horseshoe to an unclimbed and snowbound peak (1897m) and eventually to Cerro Torrecillas (1809m) and Cerro Estraido (2098m), both unclimbed.

At about 2:00 p.m. the team crossed the col and started up the first mountain on the west side of the horseshoe. After crossing deep banks of snow, which contained fresh puma tracks, we encountered a 15-meter step. An excellent VS pitch up the rightmost arête of the buttress provided the solution, with great exposure from the deep gully below. Lucy returned to the col feeling ill, leaving James and me to continue the traverse. Easy scrambling led to a second step, giving a corner pitch of Severe, before we broke right up a lieback crack and through a short overhang at about HVS and HS. It was a short distance to the first summit (unclimbed, 1747m), which we named Cerro Alerce. We then traversed to the remaining subsidiary summit, Cerro Laguna (1708m). A cairn was discovered, which we later learned marked the first ascent of this peak, by its slabby northeast face. The final northern peak in the horseshoe, Pedro de Gorila (1761m, previously climbed by the northern wall) was protected by a south-facing wet, overhanging 80-meter wall. Aid climbing was not feasible with our lightweight rack. We retraced our route, descended to the col by about 7:00 p.m., and slept there. In the morning the team descended north into the valley and followed the river, with some entertaining wading and jumping.

BRIAN BIGGER, *United Kingdom*

CENTRAL PATAGONIA

Bahia Murta Region. Between December 30, 2001, and January 12, 2002, David Wood and I climbed several unclimbed summits in the Tres Arroyos region near the small Chilean town of Bahia Murta. This area offers extensive climbing on heavily glaciated peaks, and to the best of our knowledge had not received previous climbing attention.

We established a base camp in Estero Sur at the lake (elevation 1100m) marked at the head of the drainage on Chilean IGM maps. During our two-week stay we climbed three summits from this base, despite generally poor weather. On January 2 we climbed the obvious high point of the ridge-like summit located southeast of the lake. We climbed this peak by following the northwest ridge through moderate terrain, which we later rappelled in a blizzard. We estimated the altitude of this unmapped peak as 2042m. High pressure moved in on January 4, allowing us to climb the beautiful triangular peak at the head of the drainage. Our route followed the north ridge, climbing through generally solid fourth- and mid-fifth-class granite. Both the route

and the summit provided spectacular views of the northern ice cap and Monte San Valentine. We estimated the elevation of this unmapped peak at 1950m. Following five days of low pressure and poor weather, we climbed Peak 1942m directly southwest of the lake. We followed the northwest ridge, which offered enjoyable climbing over easy snow and rock.

SCOTT NUISMER, AAJ

Southern Patagonia

TORRES DEL PAINE

South summit of North Tower of Paine, Maury the Jewish Tapeworm; Central Tower of Paine, Bonington-Whillans Route first free ascent; South Tower of Paine, Andrea Oglioni. This was a season of prolific activity in Patagonia, in both the Torres del Paine and Fitz Roy massifs. As Timmy O'Neill put it, it was Camp 4 South. Slack lines and alcoholism enhanced rest days, just as Yosemite-style techniques added bold, fast, and free alpine ascents to the history of these amazing mountains. This generation of climbers was inspired by accounts of early ascents in Patagonia. While these accounts have fueled a quest for enlightenment in the mountains, this generation has added their own elements of style: fast, clean, free, and most important, fun.

Shortly after returning from South America I was at Whitney Portal talking to fishermen who had ventured up to see the sights. My partner mentioned I had just come back from two months in Patagonia. "Oh, rich parents, huh?" was the response. I find it indescribably admirable and enlightening, not to mention admirably irresponsible, that people living on less in a year than some people's monthly car payments can scrape together the means to provide an experience that will last a lifetime. I guess you can explain it as willingness to sacrifice material need for spiritual necessity. Maybe that's part of the reason for the new style. Can't afford ropes? Bring just one. Can't buy pitons or bolts? Climb without them. Luckily, promotional credit card rates abound, and airfare is cheap.

This was the story for Zack Smith and I, who, lacking rich parents, were forced to explore the less-agreeable alternative of menial labor for pittance wages. Still, we rolled our dice and won—left LAX on January 10, 2002, and summited the North, Central, and South towers of the Torres del Paine by the 17th. Our first climb was a new route to the south summit of the North Tower. We took a line just to the left of Cornwall up a fantastic system reminiscent of the Enduro Corner on Astroman. Four pitches of offwidth, finger, and hand cracks deposited us on the South Ridge, which was about 1,000 feet of mostly easy climbing to the summit. We named the route Maury the Jewish Tapeworm (IV 5.11) in honor of Zack's ravenous parasite. Our second was the 2,500-foot Bonington-Whillans (V 5.11) on the Central Tower. This was the first route to the summit, full of history and wooden pitons. Thanks to warm, windless weather, a late start, and Drum cigarettes, we accomplished the first free ascent of the route and of the formation. Instead of a thin nailing roof midway, we took a 5.11 face variation to the left. Although definitely the trade route, the Bonington-Whillans features impeccable granite and an amazing locale. Two days later we climbed Andrea Oglioni (VI 5.11-), the ultra-classic 3,000-foot north ridge of the South Tower. All pitches were climbed onsight in blocks, with some short-fixing and lots of simulclimbing. The North Tower took three and a half hours, the Central four and a half, and the South six. A testimony to splitter weather: we were able to roll and smoke on every summit. You know you're trad when you smoke the topo.

After an interim including lots of chess, box wine, and a basecamp asado, Zack and I attempted a free variation to Adrenalina Vertical on the North Tower. Unfortunately, Zack violated the first rule of trundling (do not trundle on yourself) and injured his hand. Consequently we were forced to retreat to the comforts of base camp and the med kit. A few days later Brittany Griffith and Annie Overlin joined me in the French Valley, and we climbed the standard route up the Shark's Fin (V 5.9). It was their third day in Chile.

Lots of talented climbers made good use of this sunny season, and I'm sure our efforts will be lost among a multitude of ascents. However, there is one important issue I want to share. As climbers we gain an amazing reward in our pursuit of mountain adventure. Ideally, this is a pure nature experience in which we push our physical and emotional limits for a brief glimpse of our connection with the earth, while pacing our creativity to the rhythm of mountain processes. This requires a special interest in the natural world and a heightened awareness of its environs. What I'm trying to say is this: We get a lot out of being in the wilderness, and this, like everything else in nature, must result in an ebb and flow, a constant recycling of energies and balance. We are lucky to see nature unclothed but must also be aware of our role as its stewards. It is up to us to carry out our trash, remove fixed ropes and unnecessary gear. Become aware, and act appropriately. There are too many mounds of shit and wads of toilet paper adorning base camp forests. Take a small shovel, bury your waste, and burn your toilet paper. If you must fix ropes, remove them when you leave. This is an appeal that benefits us all. We must show respect if we are to be respected. Preserve the experience for others and help our world maintain its natural balance.

SEAN LEARY

North summit of North Tower of Paine, free ascent. On February 17, 2002, Allison Pennings and I climbed a new route on the west face of the north summit of the North Tower of Paine. Our route follows the route Adrenalina Vertical for two pitches before traversing left 40 feet into the obvious body slot. Above the body slot the route continues straight up. We both free climbed the entire route, which went at 5.11+, and was done in a day without bolts or pitons. On the previous day, February 16, we managed to free climb the Bonington-Whillans route on the Central Tower, with Michael leading all pitches. The crux pitch was a variation to the original route. Instead of climbing out the roof to access the Red Dihedral, we continued up to the left of the roof for about 35 feet before moving right into the dihedral. I believe this is different from the way Sean and Zack went on the first free ascent (it sounds like they traversed right 5 or 10 feet above the roof). Our variation was 5.11.

MIKE PENNINGS

(Editor's note: Allison Pennings was likely the second woman to summit the Central Paine Tower. Italian Ginella Pagani summited the tower in 1987, with Ermanno Salvaterra.)

North, Central, and South Towers of Paine, solo link-up. On February 16, 2002, I awoke in Campamento Japanese at 2:00 a.m., got caffeinated, and departed camp at 3:00 a.m. I intended to make a solo link-up of the Towers of Paine. With just over a week to go before my departure to home in California, I knew this would be my final try. I planned to climb all three towers by

their normal routes in as continuous a push as possible. I started climbing up the North Tower via the Monzino route at 8:30 a.m. and summited at 9:11 a.m., for a time of 41 minutes. (Two weeks earlier I had made the climb in 35 minutes.) I roped up only for the initial 70 meters.

After descending the North Tower I began climbing the Central Tower via the Bonington-Whillans route at 9:55 a.m. and summited at 5:14 p.m., for a time of 7:19. On the summit ridge I encountered newlyweds Mike and Allison Pennings, who were on their way down after summing a few minutes earlier.

A brief weather check on the summit revealed completely clear skies, with a view to the Pacific Ocean, so I began the committing rappels down the south face of the Central Tower. A 2,000-foot descent down the Grupo Ragni route, with 16 rappels and some scrambling, landed me on the big walkway that crosses the west face of the Central Tower at about 10:30 p.m. I hunkered down for the night in just my clothes. I do not think I slept, but I got some much-needed rest. At 7:00 a.m. on February 17 I got moving again under perfect skies. I continued my descent, pioneering a way down a 400-foot face that landed me in the large couloir between the Central and South towers.

At 10:25 a.m. I started up the Asti route and summited the South Tower at 7:50 p.m., for a climbing time of 9:25. After 15 minutes on top, with the weather still holding, I began my descent and arrived at the bottom six hours later at about 2:00 a.m. At 6:00 a.m. I staggered back into Campamento Japanese, for a round-trip time of 51 hours from base camp to base camp.

This was my fifth attempt to make the Tower Traverse (or link-up). Along the way I climbed the North Tower four times, the Central Tower twice, and the South Tower once. I also endured three open bivouacs, two full-blown epic retreats from near the Central Tower's summit, one life-threatening rockfall, and an emotional rollercoaster. It is the first traverse/link-up of the Towers of Paine, solo or otherwise.

STEVE SCHNEIDER, AAC

PINGO VALLEY

La Mascara, Ilusiones and Duncan's Dihedral; Paine Chico, West Face; Cuernos. In early January 2002 Englishmen Andy Cave and Leo Houlding did the second ascent of and free climbed the route *Ilusiones* on the east face of *La Mascara*. *Ilusiones* was first climbed in January 2001 by Spaniards Alonso, Martos, and Pelaez. Cave and Houlding found it not to be extremely hard, managing to free it all at around 7a (5.12a), with some bad loose rock. They fixed 140 meters of rope on a rainy, windy day and came back down, then two days later climbed to the summit in nine and a half hours, descending in four hours.

Also in early January 2002 Dave Hesleden and Simon Nadin (U.K.) did the second ascent of *Duncan's Dihedral* (700m, 6b+ A1) on *Mascara's* south face. This route was first climbed by J. Copp and J. Merriam (U.S.) in 1998. Hesleden and Nadin found very cold conditions upon turning to the south-southwest side, as well as much loose rock.

Later in January Hesleden and Nadin climbed *Paine Chico* (also known as *Almirante Nieto*) via a couloir on the right side of the west face and then a snow ramp leading back to the left. They also did a five-pitch route immediately left of the prominent gap between the *Cuernos*. They found belays in place for the first three pitches but not beyond.

ROLANDO GARIBOTTI, AAC, *Club Andino Bariloche*

SOUTH OF PAINE

Cerro Panchote. The first winter ascent of Cerro Panchote, a triple-summitted glaciated peak, occurred in September 2000, reports the Spanish magazine *Desnivel*. The peak was climbed in a three-day round-trip from the coast by Sergio Camacho and a partner. They used a fishing boat from Puerto Eden for the approach.

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TIERRA DEL FUEGO

Monte Ada. On Saturday, February 3, the rather grandly titled British Darwin Range Expedition 2001 arrived in the city of Ushuaia in Argentine Tierra del Fuego. For an expedition with such a large name we were rather short on members. In fact only Andy Parkin and I made up the climbing part of the team. Our objective was an unclimbed peak in the Cordillera Darwin in Chilean Tierra del Fuego. With the help of Celia Bull, her ocean-going yacht *Ada II*, Celia's sister Elaine, and my wife Jane, we were able to access this incredibly remote mountain range.

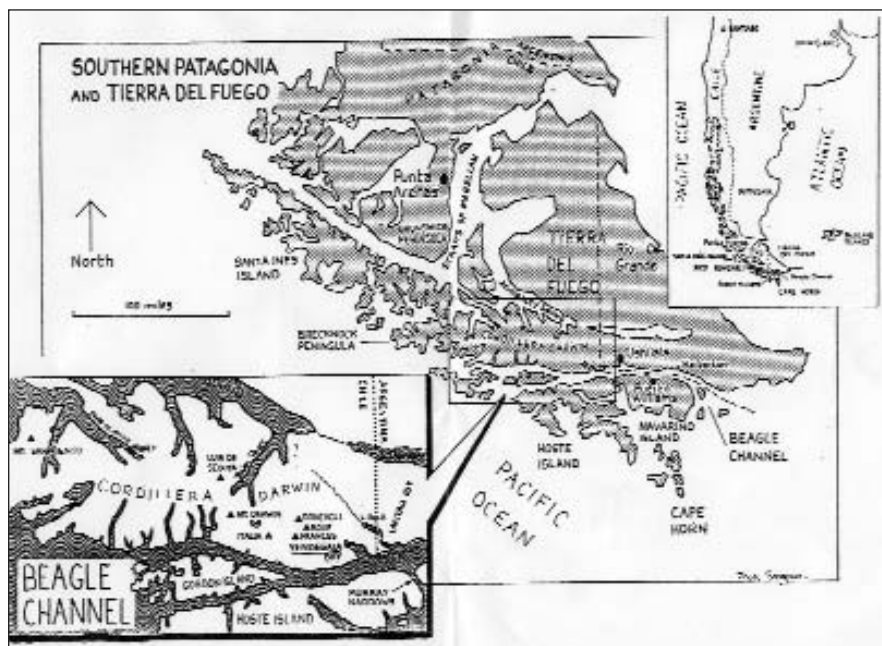
On the 13th we anchored the yacht at the head of a fjord next to the dramatically located Estancia Yendegaia, having battered our way west along the Beagle Channel. The Estancia's resident gaucho, Jose Alvarao, offered his services and horses to transport us inland to the mountains. By the 16th Andy and I had set up a base camp in dense southern beech forest on the Rio Neimeyer, about 10 miles north of the Estancia. A reconnaissance up the valley revealed the Bove Glacier with, at its head, Monte Bove (2400m) and the peak we had come to climb.

On February 18 it rained all morning, before clearing and allowing us to make a carry up onto the glacier. Once above the snout we moved easily up the gently angled ice, which was virtually free of crevasses and debris, to the head of the dry section of the glacier. We stashed our climbing kit, tent, stove, gas, etc. under a boulder and returned to base camp. Indifferent weather confined us to base camp for three days. Then we decided to go up regardless and get a feel for the mountains and our route.

On the 22nd the weather was showing no signs of improvement, but we left anyway, carrying personal gear and food for five days. When we reached our stash at the boulder, we loaded our rucksacks and headed for the upper part of the glacier. Soon it was necessary to rope up, and we went through a moderately crevassed section before the glacier leveled out. The weather had cleared, and we were treated to full views of our mountain and the route we wished to climb. The east side of the mountain sported a prominent buttress that dropped right to the glacier. The buttress was steep but offered many lines up systems of icy runnels, which led to a very steep rock headwall at the top, capped with rime. We spotted a couloir splitting the upper headwall; it looked like it would provide a climbable way to the summit. We set our alarms for 2 a.m. and went to sleep.

We were away at 4 a.m., leaving the tent, spare food, and gas on the glacier, intending to bivouac above. We crossed the bergschrund at the base of the buttress at first light and moved quickly up snow slopes to the right of a nose of rock. A little higher the ground steepened and we moved rightward, following the line of least resistance into a broad couloir. We roped up, and it began snowing. Spindrift avalanches started pouring down from above. I led a difficult pitch across to the right side of the couloir and up a steep corner. By now we were very cold and

wet. Andy led a particularly difficult traverse back left to regain the center of the couloir above its steepest section. Above there were many pitches of steep, insecure snow and ice climbing between interconnecting runnels, as avalanches continued to pour down. As the light began to fade we were forced to dig a hole into a small cone of snow. We dug a small chamber, which we could sit inside and escape the worst of the weather. Our feet protruded outside and were continually swept by avalanches.



Tierra del Fuego and the Monte Ada region (Yendegaia Bay) visited by the British Darwin Range Expedition 2001. Monte Ada was climbed by Andy Parkin and Simon Yates. *Don Sargeant*

The night passed slowly, as somehow we slept. At first light the weather was no better, and we discovered a pool of water had formed under us. We were now both soaking but felt we should carry on. By the time we started climbing the morning had almost passed, but the weather had begun to improve. After two pitches the sun came out, and Andy suggested leaving the bivouac gear and going for the top. We debated for a while, as we would then have to abseil the face, and we had initially planned to descend another ridge. However, once we were free of the weight of bivouac gear we began to move much quicker, and the decision felt like the right one. Andy led two long pitches to the base of the headwall, which overhung as we had suspected. A steep gully, which gave a superb pitch of climbing, cut through the headwall. I had the pleasure of leading the gully, and then Andy continued to the top, which he reached at 6:30 p.m. on February 24.

The summit was windswept, covered in rime, and shrouded in mist. Slowly the mist began to lift, revealing the Cordillera Darwin in all its glory. We never had a complete panorama, but by waiting we eventually obtained views in all directions. To the north were the three summits of Roncagli, forming a definite chain. To the south was the squat mass of Monte Bove,



Andy Parkin climbing above the bivouac on the second day on Monte Ada. *Simon Yates*

to the southwest Monte Frances and Italia, and in the distance the northwest fork of the Beagle Channel, sparkling in the evening sunlight. The peak we climbed lay between Roncagli and Monte Bove and marked the watershed between the Bove and Dartmoor glaciers. It was on no map. The peak was somewhere between 2,000 and 2,300 meters high. It was previously unclimbed.

We soaked up the views for a full hour before turning our attention to getting down. We abseiled from the summit ridge, following the line we had climbed through the evening, continuing after it became dark. When we reached the steep section in the



Monte Ada: The Parkins-Yates route follows the rib dropping directly at the viewer in the center of the northeast face. *Simon Yates*

broad couloir that had given us problems on the way up, we abseiled straight down, hoping to gain the glacier quicker than by following the traversing line we had come up. We soon found ourselves on an open snow slope, which we down climbed until two abseils were needed to clear a band of seracs at the base of the face. Then we walked back across the glacier to our tent, arriving at 2:30 a.m. After a late start the next day, we slowly made our way down the Bove Glacier. The weather deteriorated once more, and we soon found ourselves walking in pouring rain, once again wetting all the kit that we had managed to dry during the previous day's sunshine. We finally reached base camp at 8 p.m.

For us the climbing was over, although we did spend two more weeks in the area, sailing farther west along Beagle Channel, exploring numerous fjords and the climbing possibilities they offered. The potential for ice and mixed climbs of up to 1,500 meters was almost limitless.

We were lucky in a number of respects. Only after we had made the decision to go did we find out that we would be able to use horses to get supplies to base camp. This saved us a lot of time shuttling loads. The site of base camp itself was determined by how far Jose could take the horses, not any decision on our part. In fact the camp and its relation to the Bove Glacier turned out to be perfect, as did the approach up the Bove Glacier. Finally, our decision to keep going through truly awful weather during the first day of the climb was crucial to our success. We could have waited a long time for a window of perfect weather!

We would like to name the peak Monte Ada, after Celia's yacht. The route is 900 meters, alpine ED, VI in grade. As such, it is the first technical route in this mountain range, where many peaks that offer walks to the summit wait to be climbed. The climbing itself felt very Scottish in terms of climate and conditions, but we have both spent time previously in the Paine and Fitz Roy areas of Patagonia and found the weather in this part of Tierra del Fuego to be much better than those regions.