

face, which they climbed by a succession of dihedral, terraces and cracks to 100m below the summit, completing the most exposed pitch of the route. After this, a series of terraces led to the summit. Here they joined their companions in descent of the N ridge.

Conchamarca Machay 4960m

This is P 4922m situated S of Pistag lagoon and SW of the Huatay (Huatay-cocha) lagoons on ING Peru sheet 22-j. On 27 July, Garcés, Zubimendi, Olabarrieta, Barrutia and Bárcena set off to the S looking for high valleys to the north of 'Cordillera Callejón' on the Peruvian map. They reached a col SE of the Conchamarca (possibly Cochamarca) lagoon and E of Cerro Yanamachay. They continued south and ascended the N ridge of the twin rocky peaks (north 4947m and south 4922m) 4922m and unnamed on the above map. For this reason, they proposed to ING Peru the name Conchamarca Machay taken from the largest lake at the foot of these peaks. They descended to the north-west to skirt the W and N edges of the lake and hence to base camp.

Ashcac Oriental 5204m

This is P 5165m on ING Peru sheet 22-j. On 28 July, the seven approached it by Hualmay along the E and N of Pistag Machay. From the col north of Pistag they descended to the Cuchpanga lagoon and continued N, entering the gully that divides and forms the spurs of Ashcac Occidental (Western) and Oriental (Eastern). They climbed a gully with rock, talus and snow, which climbs in its final part to smooth, rounded boulders and to the SW of the glacier snout. They divided into three ropes to cross the glacier, climbed the S slope, and at the steepest point of the climb, overcame a crack. They reached the summit at 11.15 am and descended by the same route.

Tuganga Machay 5030m

This lies NNE of the Pistag lagoon and S of Cuchpanga on ING Peru sheet 22-j. On 1 August at 7.15am, Barrutia, Olabarrieta, Iriondo, Zubimendi and Bárcena left by the road they had taken as far as Cuchpanga. They then turned SE at the northern end of the Pistag lagoon and, at another point SE of this, turned NE to reach the foot of the S ridge. They climbed with little difficulty (UIAA III+) without using the rope and reached the W summit, recorded by GPS at 5030m with a 4m margin of error. They did not continue to the E summit of similar altitude, because this would have meant an abseil to the ridge connecting the summits with overhanging climbing on one side and snow to the S. They down-climbed their ascent ridge, descended to the S shore of the Pistag lake and returned to base camp.

MARCELO SCANU

Argentine Andes 2009-10

NORTHERN ARGENTINE ANDES

The 6029m volcano **Volcán Salín**, Salta, was first ascended by pre-Columbian Indians. Hans-Martin Schmitt from Germany and Adrian Germishuizen from South Africa climbed it on 20 May 2009, opening a new route on its NE face. This is the 5th overall modern ascent, the first being by Argentineans Sergio Bossini and Carlos Mas in 1960.

The west glacier of **Pissis** is the largest in the region, with an area of 40km², and before 2009 had not been ascended in its entirety. It can only be reached after a difficult 200km off-road ride. The only previous attempt was in 1994 by Mexicans who reached a point NW of the highest point. In March 2009, a team directed by Guillermo Almaraz erected base camp at 5000m (27° 43' 04.5" S, 68° 54' 00.8" W) in the valley that gives access to the glacier. The team was completed with Eduardo Namur, Daniel Pontín and Nicolás Pantaleón. The ascent continued by a penitentes-covered valley to a camp at 5600m beside the glacier (27° 44' 03.1" S, 68° 51' 40.8" W). Next day they traversed the 7km glacier, camping at 5950m near the ridge used by the Polish on the 1937 first ascent (27° 44' 48.3" S, 68° 48' 45.5" W). The final summit bid was made by Almaraz, Pantaleón and Namur ascending the snowed face to reach the ridge that is the last part of the Polish route. They continued via the W face of minor summit Gendarmería Nacional (6675m) to reach the main summit just past midday on 14 March. The group used the latest unofficial height measurement, 6795m; the official figure is 6882m.

Cerro La Coipa (5050m) is an elegant triangular summit on the access to Pissis. It has been known by this name (a kind of mineral) from long ago and appears on ancient maps. The Instituto Geográfico Militar Argentino marks as La Coipa a nearby summit some 100m higher that isn't well seen from the slopes. The locals point to the 5050m summit as the real La Coipa. On 23 November 2009, Jose Luis Querlico and Marcelo Scanu erected a base camp at 4150m its eastern slopes. On 27 November Scanu left alone from base camp at 7.45am taking the south-east ridge, and summited in windy weather at 2.45pm, completing the first ascent of this summit. There were no traces of other ascents. At 4.15pm he was back at camp and by 5.30pm the team was back in Fiambalá at 1500m.

Argentines Andrés Martínez Infante, Fernando Arranz, Guillermo Bianchi and Glauco Muratti made the first ascent of the virgin summit **Gram Bicentenario** (5785m), which may be an old volcano, west of Volcán Pissis near the Argentine-Chilean border. They travelled to base

camp (4500m) by all-terrain vehicle. On 17 November 2010 they departed very early and climbed via the long N ridge, which has many terraces and a plateau that seems an ancient crater. They arrived at the top at 3pm and obtained a GPS reading very similar to the official map height.

CENTRAL ARGENTINE ANDES

A group has been very active in the area of **Cordón de la Jaula**, W of the Cordón del Plata, Mendoza, near to Aconcagua but much more isolated. On 17 October 2009, Pablo González, Gabriel Barral and Alcides Massa left from a 4000m camp on a moraine. They ascended the W face of a virgin 5147m peak that is christened as **Pico El Fede** in honour of Federico Campanini, who died on Aconcagua. They then traversed west and ascended two other peaks, making the second overall ascent of **Pico San Esteban** (5168m) and **Pico Rosa** (5165m). On San Esteban they found the first testimony, 45 years old. On all three peaks they had 40° snow slopes. To reach the area, they ascended the El Plata-Vallecitos col and Quebrada del Peine, taking after the Quebrada de la Jaula. Pablo González has made many other interesting first and second ascents in this area. With his brother Federico, he climbed **Cerro Aguila Blanca** (5250m), the highest summit in the north sector of La Jaula. They summited on 23 March 2008 and found the testimony of the first team directed by Peterek in 1956. Some days before Pico El Fede was climbed, a group formed by Gabriel Moretta, Matías Cruz and Pablo Ruiz made the first ascent of a peak that they called **Pico Campanini**, also in honour of Federico Campanini. The groups didn't know the existence of one another so the naming of the peaks was coincidental. Pico Campanini has a height of 5245m and neighbours El Fede. The group climbed a 700m, 40-70° ice couloir with a crux 20m sérac with 90° passages to a ridge that finishes on the summit.

In January 2009 Mercedes Garrido, Antonio Pontoriero and Marcelo Scanu tried to find access to a fine virgin 5774m summit in the **Cordillera de Olivares**, Agua Negra zone in the Argentine Province of San Juan, very near to the border with Chile. In February 2010, Pablo González and I reached the summit. On 7 February an old pickup of the road crew left us at 4200m in the Quebrada San Lorenzo. Next day we followed a destroyed mine trail to camp at 4625m. On 9 February, González climbed a new route on the S face and ridge of **Cerro Bifurcación** (5223m), first ascended by Scanu and team in 1991 (see *AAJ* 1992, p161). On 10 February we erected the last camp at 4850m, near the Portezuelo (Col) de Olivares. In 1817, a military group supporting San Martín passed by here, helping gain control of Chile. On the 11th we set off early in good weather, climbing the west face, which was reminiscent of Aconcagua. We reached the 5774m summit, naming it **Cerro Presidente Perón** because the three-time Argentine president was a climber and supported many expeditions in Argentina and abroad. This ascent was part of the programme '200 años de Patria, más de 500 de montañismo' (200 years of the country, more than 500 years of climbing) marking the Argentine Bicentennial and over 500 years since

the first Inca climbers on the highest South American peaks.

Argentine climber Gabriel Fava and Frenchman Henry Bizot climbed a new and interesting route on the Central Summit of **La Mesa** (The Table), in the Cordillera de la Ramada whose highest mountain is Mercedario (6770m). In December 2009, they reached the 6150m summit by its NE ridge, calling their route *Verónica y sus 6 hijos* (1100m, 35/55°, AD+/D).

The mountain now named **Cerro Comandante Cabot** (5865m) is located in San Juan Province near Cerro Presidente Perón (5774m), also ascended for first time this year. Comandante Cabot was a military officer who passed from here to Chile supporting San Martín's actions to free that country from the Spaniards. Late on 18 December 2010, Argentine Pablo González and his wife reached Pircas Negras in the Agua Negra Pass and ascended to camp at 4043m in the Quebrada de San Javier o de la Pirca. On 19th, González soloed the mountain via the east face, avoiding ice (this was a dry year with little snowfall), and reached the pyramid-like summit at 3.45pm.

Between Bonete and Pissis volcanoes in Provincia de La Rioja, there is a ridge called **Cordón de los Pioneros** with many unexplored volcanoes raising more than 6000m. A team consisting of Argentines Guillermo Almaraz, Eduardo Namur, Juan Labra, Lelio de Crocci, Claudio Valva and Daniel Pontín ascended one of these mountains during the expeditions marking the Argentine Bicentennial. Beginning on 31 October 2010, the expedition acclimatised by Laguna Brava, a salty lake with Inca ruins, old geysers and an old crashed airplane. First they made the second ascent of **Chepical** (4646m, see *AAJ* 2005 p276) and Cerro Pilar (5032m) with an Inca altar in its summit. Afterwards they travelled to base camp, crossing the Pampa (plateau) de Veladero and through the Quebrada del Medio to camp at 5100m. Next day they ascended a creek up to a plateau, camping at 5570m. Early on 7 November they began the ascent of the virgin N peak of the Cordón de los Pioneros, taking the SW ridge to the south col and continuing the S ridge in high winds. The summit was defended with great rock blocks. Finally they reached the 6092m summit, calling it **Pico Bicentenario** (Bicentennial Peak), 27° 55' 16.2" S, 68° 45' 12.2" W.

The impressive peak of **Pico Polaco** (c6000m) lies in the Cordillera de la Ramada, Provincia de San Juan, near the Mercedario massif, and is the nicest peak in the ridge and one of the best in all the Central Andes. It was named 'Peak N' by a Polish expedition in 1934, but was climbed for the first time in 1958 by Beorchia and Yacante from San Juan. They christened it Pico Polaco (Polish Peak) in honour of the 1934 expedition. The old height of 6050m has been lowered; some give the mountain 6020m, others 6001 or 6000m, or even less than 6000m. Two young climbers, Gabriel Fava from San Juan and Iván Rocamora from Mendoza climbed a new route on the NE wall. The expedition began on 5 October 2010, reaching base camp the next day in Pirca de los Polacos (3600m). On the 7th, the pair departed to the base of the wall with only one sleeping bag, using a precarious stone wall as a bivouac at 4750m. On the 8th they began the

climb at 6.15am, taking easy rock to reach an ice line through rock towers to a very steep 30m icefall with hard ice at 5400m, which they avoided on the left via 55m of poorly protected 4th class rock. They continued up a series of ice and snow couloirs steepening to 55/60°, with up to 4+ rock in between, to eventually reach the summit ridge. They finally ascended



192. The north summit of Pico Polaco (c6000m), showing the line of *Cheto Alpino* (1000m, D+, 75°, 4+). (Gabriel Fava)

some rotten but easy rocky steps to reach the N summit (Cumbre Norte) at 6pm. They named the route *Cheto Alpino* (1000m, D+, 75°, 4+). For the descent they took a couloir that falls directly east, with some steps of 60°, beside the 1958 route, to a bivouac at 4800m on the moraine. Unfortunately, Rocamora died on Mercedarios South Wall some days after. With Fava, he was trying to enchain the 6000ers of the range.

TIERRA DEL FUEGO

Activity near Ushuaia: **Torres del Río Chico** are rocky towers at the end of el Valle del Río Chico at 54° 43' 1.81" S, 68° 19' 5.02" W. Nacho González, Martin Steinhaus and Federico Ruffini made a new route, the third route and the third overall ascent to the Torre Inferior del Río Chico on 11 March 2009. They named it *Prefiero ser flogger*, 6b, 380m. It was snowing a little with a temperature of -7°C. On the Domo Blanco (White Dome, 1200m), Mariano Rodriguez and Ibai opened a new route that they called *Piedra, papel o tijera*, 250m on 90° ice. We don't have the exact date of the climb.

PHIL WICKENS

Antarctica 2009-10



193. The Three Pigs (Antarctic Peninsula) - the new line '*42 Balais et Toujours pas Calmé*' is the snow/ice gully on the left (Phil Wickens)

Despite an increase in the number of yachts visiting the Antarctic Peninsula, very few climbing parties have attempted new routes or unclimbed peaks. The major achievements of the 2009-10 season were by two French parties, led by Ludovic Challeat, aboard the yacht *Podorange*, and Patrick Wagnon, aboard Isabelle Autissier's *Ada II*. After unsuccessfully trying to reach Mt Francais (2822m) from the north via the Iliad Glacier, Challeat's team moved to Brabant Island, where they made the third ascent, on skis and over two days, of **Mt Parry** (2522m) from the south and east on 13 January. They then moved to the Antarctic Peninsula proper, where they climbed Scheimpflug Nunatak (1150m), and attempted Pulfrich Peak, from Andvord Bay. They then moved to the Penola Strait where, in addition to ascents of the frequently climbed Mt Demaria, Mt Scott, and Mt Shackleton, they ascended the Wiggins Glacier to make the fourth ascent of **Mt Peary**, which at 2080m was more than 200m higher