

on the north-east spur. They had to descend from 100m before the summit because of soft snow. Although they felt it might have been feasible to climb this ground, getting down again would have been a problem due to the lack of any belay or anchor. During the 10 days of their attempt, snow and hail transformed the limestone wall into mixed terrain. The team fixed ropes to the Italian bivouac in the middle of the face, and above overcame mixed sections with difficulty from 6a, 6c+, A1/WI5+ and 6-.

In July, Saskia van der Smeede, Elly van der Plas, Vincent van Beek, Bas Visscher, and Bas van der Smeede climbed a new route on the north face of **Puscanturpa Este** (5410m). They were inspired by the ascent of Pavle Kozjek and Grega Kresal (see *AJ* 2008, 338-339). On 15 July, they installed base camp under the south face of Puscanturpa Este. For a few days they climbed nearby 5000m peaks to acclimatise, among them **Puscanturpa Sur** (5500m) by a possible new route at UIAA IV+ on good rock on the east face. They had planned to climb the east face of Puscanturpa East, but found unstable snow accumulated on the steep access wall and hence decided on the imposing north face. The first 100m were difficult crackless columns, so they began by climbing the first pitch of the Slovenian route on the north-east spur. On the second pitch, they traversed onto the north face. In the middle of the face, they descended because of wind. On 30 July they returned, but Saskia and Elly again descended because of the icy wind. The remaining three climbed the steep columns with freezing hands. Higher on the face, a white wall forced them to move left to a broken edge, by which they reached the summit. This was a new route, the third ascent of the mountain and first on the north side. They named the route *Poco Loco* (TD, UIAA VI+) due to its generous sections of broken rock. Saskia and Elly returned and climbed the route on 3 August, in 16 hours out and back.

Correction:

In *AJ* 2010 / 2011, p.306, (Mariposa, Cordillera Vilcanota), please delete 'who died later on Huascarán'.

Main sources consulted:

Alpinist; *Desnivel*; *Mountain World (MW)* 1958-1959; *The Alpine Journal (AJ)*; *The American Alpine Journal (AAJ)*; *Ulcumayo Hoja 22-I, Instituto Geográfico Nacional del Perú*; *Report by Matt Balmer of the Cordillera Oriental Range Expedition*; *Libro de anotaciones de la Casa de Guías de Huaraz*; *Libro de anotaciones de la Casa de Zarela de Huaraz*.

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MARCELO SCANU

Argentine Andes 2012-13



Jabi Txikon reaching the summit of Cerro Bonete (6759m) for its winter ascent. (Arkaitz Ibarra)

Northern Andes

In early 2012, several parties made traverses in the **Ojos del Salado** (6879m) massif in Catamarca, on the border with Chile. This is the world's highest volcano and the second highest summit in the Americas. Basque climbers Jabi Txikon, Juan Noguerras and Arkaitz Ibarra made a 200km traverse from Ojos del Salado to Nevado San Francisco. After acclimatising in Las Grutas, on 6 February they travelled by car to Puertas de Aguas Calientes. Over four days, despite snowfall they reached Agua de las Vicuñas, then El Arenal and finally camp I on Ojos del Salado at 5750m. They reached the plateau at 6280m early the next day, struggling through soft snow. Juan retreated, while the others finally summited at 2pm in bad conditions. On 12 February, they walked the usually snow-free terrain towards **Volcán El Muerto** (6488m). On the 13th, they ascended the snow and ice-covered south face to the crater at 6120m. All three climbers reached the summit, after which they descended the normal route and traversed around the volcano to reach basecamp. Two days later, they summited **El Fraile** (6062m) via a new route on a steep snow face, calling it *Maddi* (girl, in French Basque), AD+, 55° ice canals, 400m height gain. They descended by scree. On the 17th, they summited **Volcán Incahuasi** (6638m) by the steep south ridge, again with much snow. On the 19th they climbed **Volcán**



The glacier climbed by Jabi Txikon and Arkaitz Ibarra on the first winter ascent of Nevado Tres Cruces (6749m). (Arkaitz Ibarra)

San Francisco (6016m) via the south face, which has had only one ascent (Marcelo Scanu, solo, more than 10 years before). They climbed a steep ridge to reach this final summit of their epic traverse.

In March 2012, Cristian Mur (Argentina) and Liam Suckling (Australia) made the traverse from Ojos del Salado to **Tres Cruces Sur** (6749m). They departed on 25 March and approached via the Arenal camp (5446m) and a further camp at 5750m. On Ojos del Salado they found easy terrain until the glacier, where in places they found waist-deep snow. They continued via the south ridge and the south face to the Argentine summit and then the Chilean summit and back to camp. The next day they continued the 27km traverse towards Tres Cruces Sur, which they summited on 1 April. They also went to a 6723m summit north-east of the main one.

Basque climbers Jabi Txikon and Arkaitz Ibarra (the latter living in Argentina) climbed a new route on **Nevado Tres Cruces** (6749m), also making the first winter ascent of this summit as well as several others. This was the last 6500er in the American continent without a winter ascent. After acclimatising in Las Grutas, on 5 September they camped at 5000m due to high Zonda winds, which also pinned them down the next day. On the 8th, they ascended **Cerro Solo** (6240m) from a camp at 5400m, making its first winter ascent. After another day at camp in high winds, on 10 September they set off for Nevado Tres Cruces. The glacier was hard to gain, with 10m of steep bad ice, and had many ice balls (fallen ice shaped by the wind). They picked a direct route on the right side, which turned out to be 70° with dirty ice, falling rocks, and wave-like ice formations made by ice pressure. They reached the top at 4pm, calling the route *Ruta Etixerat*. They had several days to spare, so they also made ascents of **Vicuñas** (6067m) and **Barrancas Blancas** (6119m). These lie in Chilean

territory and are certainly first winter ascents.

In January 2013, Txikon and Ibarra returned to make the 240km-plus traverse from Ojos del Salado to **Pissis** (c6800m) – the world's highest and second highest volcanoes. Most of their climbing took place from the 22nd to 31st. They set off in rain, and on Ojos were pinned down by intense snowfall which produced a rare snow-covered landscape. They broke trail through these conditions to summit in a gale, in the process losing a 'spot' device. After this, they climbed the volcano Walther Penck (6658m), also in snow and wind, and from here travelled by many near-6000m cols towards Pissis. En route via Valle Ancho, they passed the camp of the Tres Picos group (see below), where they had arranged to top up their supplies. Afterwards they made an early start on Pissis, which they climbed by a new route via a direct rocky ridge on the western slopes. They returned to the road the same day, completing their impressive traverse. Unfortunately, both had incurred some frostbite during the endeavour.

Also in January in the same area, Pablo Lukach and Esteban Pacheco made the first ascent of **Volcán Tres Picos** (6037m), north-west of Pissis. This was one of the last virgin 6000m summits in the Andes. Lukach had previously attempted it in 2010. They made a camp at 4850m near the Pissis-Pillán col and another near the Pissis West glacier. They crossed the glacier with its many crevasses, and walked along the crater to both summits. They called their route *Wallya Buena*.

On 10 December 2012, Argentines Galuco Muratti and Guillermo Bianchi reached the previously virgin summit of **Cerro Huayco**, a subsidiary summit 2km south-west of Cazadero or Walther Penck (6658m). They approached from the Río Salado, walking for several days and climbing the north-west face. They camped at over 6000m in an ancient crater with sulphur odour, undrinkable water and turquoise lagoons.

On 18 December, Christian Chávez, Carlos Lastra and Marcelo Scanu ascended a nice summit in a ridge parallel to the border ridge in the **Paso de San Francisco** area of Catamarca. They climbed this 5025m summit (26° 58' 01.87" S, 67° 59' 44.59" W according to Google Earth) by its south-west face. As expected, they found a huge cairn, likely erected by German geologist Walther Penck 100 years before (in 1912 or 1913). At the time of writing, they were unsure of the exact name Penck gave to this summit because he ascended and christened so many in this area.

In the province of La Rioja, Jabi Txikon and Arkaitz Ibarra made the first winter ascent of **Cerro Bonete** (6759m), the continent's fourth highest summit. On 9 June they reached an ancient hut at 4375m and waited until the 21st, the beginning of the southern winter. During this waiting time, conditions were almost too bad to get out of the tent. On the 21st they walked 28km to pitch a camp at 4960m. On the 22nd they departed very early but erroneously climbed the south summit (6668m) by a new route on the SW face they called *Ruta Mendizale*. Two days later, they repeated the route and went to the highest summit after more than 12 hours of ascent, returning to camp after 10pm.



Pablo Lukach crossing the glacier near camp II on Volcán Tres Picos (6037m).
(Esteban Pacheco)

Aconcagua

In 2013, Portuguese Carlos Gomes Dasa made a new speed record on Aconcagua, summiting from and returning to Horcones in 15hrs 42mins. He departed at 5am, summiting at 5pm and returning at 8.34pm, with times certified by the park rangers. The previous record was that of Peruvian Holmes Pantoja in 20hrs 34mins.

In all during the 2011-12 season, 6,989 people went to Aconcagua, 3,688 to ascend it and 3,301 for trekking (the preceding season the figures were 3,497 and 2,630). The climbers were 18% Argentinian and 82% from abroad; the trekkers were 57% Argentinian and 43% from abroad. One climber died and 203 were evacuated due to illness and accidents; 114 were evacuated from Plaza de Mulas. There was a major helicopter rescue from the south face. The park now has 50 rangers and supporters, an 18-strong rescue team and 22 doctors specialised in high mountain medicine. Fifty tons of garbage was removed from the park.

DAMIEN GILDEA

Antarctica 2011-12

Ellsworth Mountains: Sentinel Range, Vinson Massif

A total of 147 individual climbers reached the summit of Mount Vinson (4892m) in the 2011-12 season, with repeat summits by guides bringing the total to 158. Fourteen climbers also ascended nearby Mount Shinn (4660m), the continent's third-highest mountain. Guides from *Antarctic Logistics & Expeditions* (ALE) made several ascents of Knutzen Peak, a rocky summit that lies above the Vinson normal route, and did some reconnaissance on the eastern side of the massif. American climber Jordan Romero, guided by ALE's Scott Woolums, became the youngest to reach the summit – aged 15yrs 5mths 12 days – and thus the youngest to complete the Seven Summits.

Mount Tyree

The major ascent of the season was undoubtedly the long-awaited fifth ascent of Mount Tyree (4852m), the second highest mountain in Antarctica. Austrian climbers Hans Kammerlander, Robert Miller and Christian Stangl reached the summit via the 1997 French route up the eastern side, the 'Grand Couloir'. Stangl attempted the route in December 2010 but had to retreat from very high when his partner was injured by rockfall. This year the trio found very snowy and stable conditions in the couloir and accordingly their ascent was relatively straightforward. This year ALE installed the team at a base camp on the Cervellati Glacier, rather than the Patton Glacier, as used for previous climbs here. From the Cervellati the three spent the first day of 2012 climbing onto the rocky north-east ridge of Tyree, where they placed a camp in an obvious notch at 3247m. The next day they went a little higher up the ridge before traversing left into the couloir, which they followed all the way up to the broad saddle between the north and south summits of Tyree. Here easy ground led to the higher northern top, where clouds immediately obscured any views. Though the snow and ice in the couloir was in very good condition, the three still used a 200m length of 6mm cord to move together on the steeper sections and likewise used this to make eight 100m rappels on descent. They were back at their tent 13 hours after starting, having achieved the first ascent of Tyree since Conrad Anker and Alex Lowe in December 1997. Stangl joins Anker, Barry Corbet and John Evans as the only people to have climbed Antarctica's three highest mountains.

With this ascent Hans Kammerlander claimed to be the first person to have climbed the Second Seven Summits, a challenge long thought to be