
LINDSAY GRIFFIN

The Alps 2022

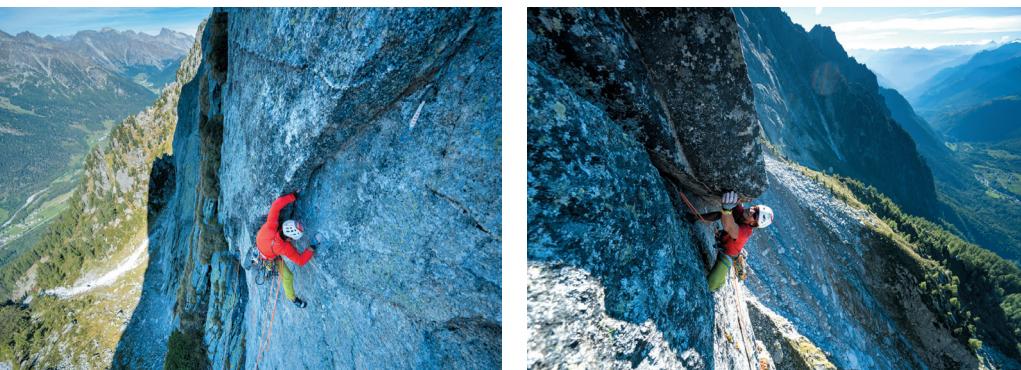


The north-west face of the Roda Val della Neve with (1) *Jack Canali*, (2) *Niedermann* and (3) *Tierra del Fuego*. See p218 (*Romano Salis*)

With an odds-on prediction that before 2027 our overheated world is likely to surpass a key 1.5°C global warming threshold, three publicised incidents in 2022 produced sober reminders that climate change remains ever present in the Alps.

On the first Sunday in July, a large section of the diminishing Marmolada glacier below Punta Roccia collapsed. Sadly, it did so at the wrong time, sweeping down smooth rock on the face below and across the normal route, where it killed 11 people.

In late August, the area of blocky granite ridge around the Col de la Fourche bivouac hut collapsed, precipitating the small building onto the glacier below.



Two views of Roger Scháli rope soloing on the north-west face of the Roda Val della Neve, high above the Val Bregaglia. (Romano Salis)

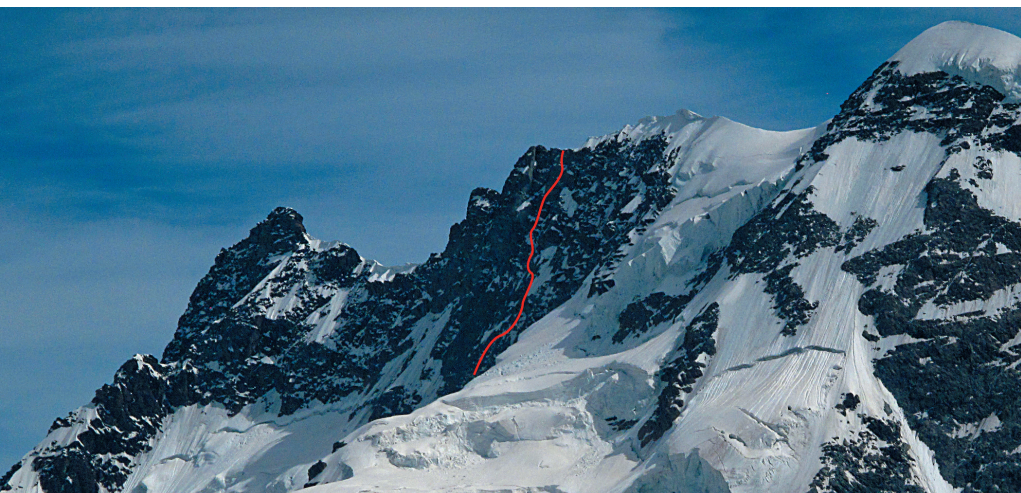
The hut was located on the Brenva side of the Frontier ridge, which that summer was completely denuded of snow. The original shelter, constructed in 1935, was replaced by a newer model in 1985 and gave access to routes on the Brenva face of Mont Blanc.

A few days later a large section of the south flank of the ultra-popular *Cosmiques Arête* also collapsed. Fortunately, a party on the glacier below was to one side of the fall line and no one was injured, though climbers on the adjacent *Rébuffat* route got a fright.

The Solo Ascents

One of the most notable winter ascents of the year was the first solo of *Rolling Stones* on the north-east face of the Walker spur, **Grandes Jorasses**, by Charles Dubouloz. This somewhat enigmatic route, which has seen few repeats, was first climbed by a four-man Czech team in 1979. The second overall and first winter ascent was made in 1984 by Benoît Grison and Eric Grammond. It was climbed free for the first time in the winter of 2014 by Slovenians Luka Lindič and Luka Krajnc at M8. Conditions for Dubouloz's back-roped ascent in January were unusually hard, with temperatures down to -30°C and a north-easterly blowing directly onto the face. He carried a small hammock and made five bivouacs, sustaining a little frostbite. The route is known for its loose rock (the clue's in the name) and due to dry conditions during the ascent, this was one of the biggest problems faced by Dubouloz, though apart from two crux (aid) pitches, he managed the route free.

Raphaël Georges, a 31-year-old guide, made the first solo ascent of the 900m *Lesueur Route* on the north face of the **Grand Dru**, free at M7. Beginning from the valley on 21 March, he finished up the top section of the Dru couloir on 23 March, finding conditions very dry. The route, which was ahead of its time when first climbed in the summer of 1952, did not see a second ascent until 1975 courtesy of Rab Carrington and Al Rouse. Andy Parkin and Thierry Renault made the first winter ascent in 1983. It was eventually climbed free (at M8+) in 2012 by Ueli Steck and Jon Griffith, using several variants.



The three summits of the Zermatt Breithorn seen from the north-west. From left to right: Breithorn East (4141m), Central (4160m) and West (4165m). Marked is the new mixed route *Essere o non Essere* on the Breithorn Central. See p223. (Lindsay Griffin)

One of the most accomplished speed soloists currently operating in the Alps is the Italian resident Filip Babicz from Poland. On 23 September Babicz made an un-ropped solo of the *Swiss Route* on the **Grand Capucin**, taking the *O Solo Mio* finish. He scorched up this popular combination, which at 6a/6a+ is the easiest line on the Capucin, in a remarkable time of 49 minutes. Babicz started at the bottom of the face, rather than near the top of the gully on the left where the original route begins, giving him 570m of climbing. Preparing for this ascent, he climbed the route seven times, three of these alone. While he did not carry a rope for the speed ascent, he did use aid in a few places. However, the difficulties would have been well within his comfort zone: one of his notable ascents from 2022 was a roped solo of *Appointment with Death* (E9 6c) on Wimberry: his first ever gritstone route.

A notable winter achievement in the Écrins took place on 9 February when Arthur Sordoillet made the first solo winter ascent of the 1975 *Cambon-Francois* (1,000m, ED1 6a/b A1 WI4 M4) on the north face of the **Pic Sans Nom** (3913m). After fixing the first pitch the day previously, Sordoillet climbed the route in 14h 30m, alternately free and aid climbing. Conditions were favourable, with dry rock in the lower section and the freezing level at around 3,500m. The first winter ascent of this steep and superb line was not made until 2012.

On 25 March, statistically just a few days after the end of the official winter season, the Austrian Laura Tiefenthaler made what is likely to be only the second female solo ascent of the *1938 Route* on the north face of the **Eiger**. On 8 March, with the German woman Jana Moher, she had made a winter ascent of the route in one day. Starting at 1.30am from Eigergletscher the two reached the summit at 6pm. On 24 March she tried it solo. However,



Line van den Berg climbing the 1,600m *Phantom Direct* on the north face of the Grandes Jorasses, completed with Fay Manners in a 31-hour push during the winter season of 2022. See p226 Tragically, van den Berg died aged 30 in an apparent avalanche while on her way to climb the Grosshorn in May 2023. Her two companions died with her. (*Fay Manners*)

despite previous knowledge, she made a route-finding error, lost two hours and decided to retreat. Next day, starting at 1am and back roping all the hard pitches, she was on the summit at 4pm. Such is the popularity of the face when in good winter conditions that she shared the climb

with three other parties. The first female solo in a 17-hour day and in winter was famously made in March 1992 by Catherine Destivelle.

The **Roda Val della Neve** (2626m) in Bregaglia is a mountain of two halves. From the Albignia valley to the east it is no more than a low, broad, grassy ridge, but the north-west face, high above the Val Bregaglia overlooking Vicosoprano, is a 600m compact granite wall. It feels remote yet is easily reached from the Albignia dam via the Passo Val della Neve. Classic routes include the *Jack Canali* (600m, D, V A0, Bozzi-Canali-Merendi, 1959) on the far left and the Niedermann (600m, TD VII, Frei-Hurlimann-Naf-Neidermann, 1975). On the far right the steepest rock, a 350m pear-shaped buttress, rises to the west-north-west ridge and holds the *Nigg Route* (Blattler-Neeracher-Nigg, 1968, VIII- but generally climbed with additional aid). Over five days during the summer, Roger Schäli rope soloed a new route up the centre and steepest part of this buttress at 6c A2+. *Tierra del Fuego* was climbed ground-up, with traditional protection throughout (though the belays were bolted). Once above the buttress, 250m of III/IV led up the west-north-west ridge to the summit.

In September 2002, Christoph Hainz made a redpoint ascent of his own route *Moulin Rouge* on the **Roda di Vael** in the Catenaccio group, climbed a few months previously with Oswald Celva at IX- or 7b/7b+. The 11-pitch route, which has sections of friable rock, lies to the right of the classic *Buhl Route* (Brandler-Hasse, 1958, VI A2, or VIII) and is considered one of Celva and Hainz's best ascents. Twenty years later, on 20 June 2022, the route was audaciously free soloed by Jonas Heinz, son of Christoph. Widely considered the most outstanding free solo in recent years, it took Hainz just an hour and five minutes to complete his ascent.

Sadly, this one climb will remain his greatest legacy, as just a few months later the 25-year-old died trying to solo a peak in the Reiserferner Group, Hohe Tauern.



Tom Livingstone climbing the Quartz Vein pitch on the free ascent of the *Guides Route*, on the Petit Dru. See p226. (Tom Seccombe)

The Traverses

In early May, two rapid crossings of the Mont Blanc range were made on ski. Bastien Fleury and Bastien Lardet began in the Swiss village of Champex, crossed various cols, including the difficult Col des Cristaux, to reach the Vallée Blanche, then continued over Mont Blanc. Crossing the Col de Miage they arrived in Les Contamines after 21h 47min (65km, 6,450m of ascent). A week later, starting in Les Contamines and progressing eastward over the Dome de Miages, Aiguille de Bionnassey and Mont Blanc, Mathéo Jacquemoud and Benjamin Védrières crossed the Cols des Cristaux, du Passon, and Supérieur du Tour to arrive at Trient in a little over 20 hours (70km, 7,300m of ascent).

Traversing the Mer de Glace skyline has been in the minds of alpinists for many decades. Martin Moran and Simon Jenkins tried it several times in the late 1980s starting up the Aiguille Verte, their best attempt reaching the Aiguille de l'Eboulement. Subsequently, François Damilano would cover much of the ground during his solo traverse of the Mont Blanc range. Frédéric Degoulet and Benjamin Ribeyre attempted the skyline traverse in 2021 but poor weather and conditions stopped them less than halfway. On 8 July 2022, they left the church in central Chamonix and during the following nine days crossed the Aiguille Verte, Droites, Courtes, Triolet, Aiguille de l'Eboulement, Petites and Grandes Jorasses, Rochefort, the Frontier Ridge over the Tour Ronde and Mont Maudit, and finally a complete crossing on the Chamonix Aiguilles before returning to the church on 16 July. The heat-wave meant they could travel lighter and faster but also meant negotiating more loose rock. At that time of year, during the voyage from the Verte to the Torino hut, they met only two other parties.



Tom Seccombe climbing the big corner above the niche on the *Guides Route*.
(Tom Livingstone)

Another most impressive traverse, this time in the Eastern Alps, was Simon Gietl's three-day crossing of the entire **Catinaccio range**, solo and in winter. This south to north ridge traverse is eight kilometres in length and involves 5,000m of ascent. It includes such famous summits as the Roda di Vael, Vajolet Towers, Punta Emma, and the Cima Catinaccio itself. A complete crossing of the main ridge had never been achieved in any season but a colleague of Gietl's, Egon Resch, had climbed many sections in summer with a friend, Daniel Habock. The three decided to give it a try in late February. They were going well until the second day when Resch was hit by stone fall that fractured his hand, forcing a retreat. Undeterred, Gietl returned on 1 March to try it solo, an audacious undertaking as he had very little previous knowledge of the massif. Setting off with an 18kg rucksack and climbing in high mountain boots throughout, he back-roped and sack-hauled the difficult pitches, thought to be VI, and negotiated sections of very airy ridge work and rappels. He saw no one during the journey, which as the South Tyrol guide stated was 'exactly what I wanted.'

The Valtournenche Effect

The guides of the upper Valtournenche are increasingly active opening hard new routes and making significant repeats in their back garden, taking opportunities as they arrive. In recent years the most prolific have been François Cazzanelli and Francesco Ratti. Apart from the selection reported below, Cazzanelli notably fitted his personal Alpine climbing around his guiding profession and an expedition to Nanga Parbat, where he first climbed a new start to the standard *Kinshofer*, then later made a record speed ascent of the *Kinshofer* to the summit.



Tom Seccombe climbing one of the final tricky pitches on the third day of their climb. (Tom Livingstone)

On 9 February, Cazzanelli, Ratti and Jerome Perruquet created a new mixed route on the north-east face of the **Becca di Salé** (3,107m), a locally well-known peak with a mix of older traditional routes and facets that have been developed more recently for sport climbing. It overlooks the Cignana dam, south of the Grandes Murailles and is approached directly from the Valtournenche. The three took advantage of the lack of snow on the 1,200m approach to reach

the base of the new line, climb it to give *Su per Cignana* (600m, M6 75°) and negotiate the tricky descent of the south-east ridge in the same day.

If that wasn't enough, by next morning Cazzanelli and Perruquet were in the Vallée Blanche, Mont Blanc range, where they climbed a new mixed route towards the right side of the north face of **Pic Adolphe Rey**. The Italian pair was after the second ascent of *Changing Corners*, a line put up on 25 January by Christophe Dumarest and Tom Livingstone. This takes a series of corners up the wall immediately left of the obvious crack and chimney line in the centre of the face climbed in 1962 by Bernezat, Revillod, Riboud and Robbe (250m, VI obl and A2, first winter ascent over three days in 1990). *Changing Corners* (250m, seven pitches, M7) gives thin dry tooling.

Arriving at the bottom of the face, Cazzanelli and Perruquet found a Swiss party already engaged on the second ascent, so moved to the far right side of the face where they climbed *Impulso Geniale* (250m, seven pitches, M8), starting up the broken corner system leading towards the Brèche du Pic Adolphe before moving left onto the face. Near the top they came across a couple of ancient pegs and although details of previous lines on this part of the face are lacking, it is known to have been climbed in 1961 by Cesare Gex and Franco Salluard. From 27-29 February, Cazzanelli, Ratti and Emrik Favre made the first winter and second integral ascent of *Padre Pio, Echelle vers le Ciel* on the south face of the **Matterhorn**.

In 2002, after three previous attempts with different partners, Patrick Gabarrou, France's most prolific Alpine new router, teamed with Cesare Ravaschietto to climb the crest of the Pilastro dei Fiori, completing a 650m climb on generally sound and compact rock at 6c+/7a, 6c obl. Their exit point was close to the Furggen ridge, on which they finished. Reflecting Gabarrou's religious nature, the line was named *Padre Pio Pregga per Noi*.

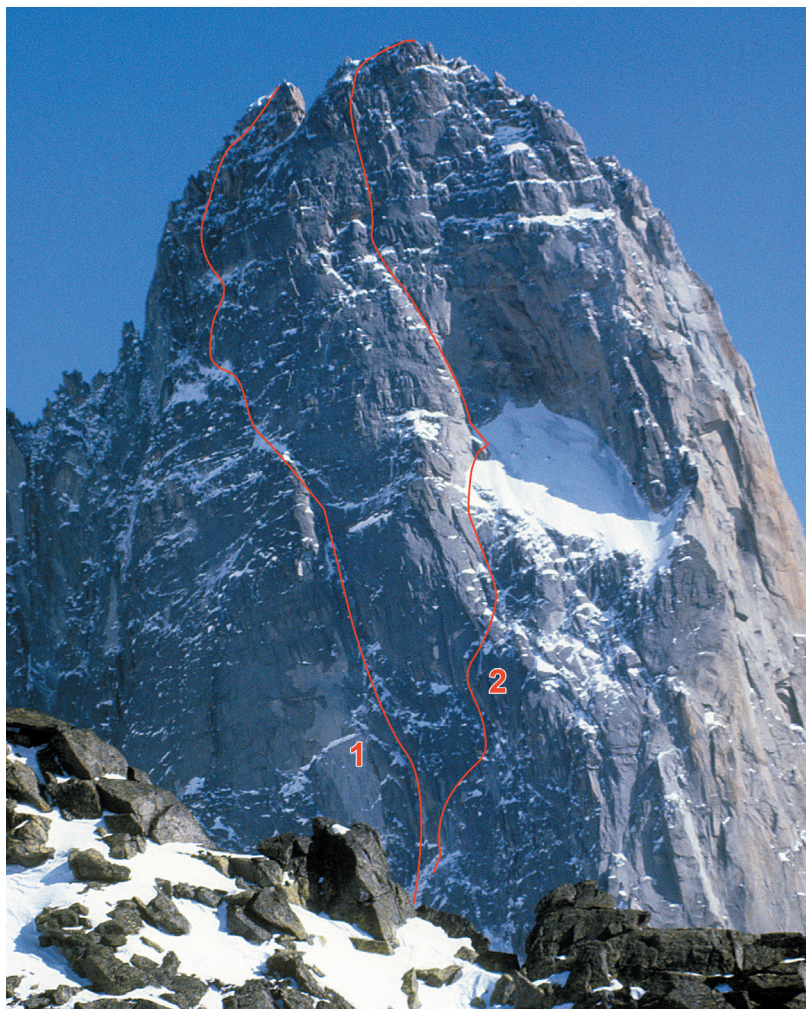
Over the next 13 years, with seven different partners, Gabarrou returned



Two views of Les Drus: (1) *Lesueur* to the Grand Dru and (2) *Guides Route* to the Petit Dru. (Lindsay Griffin)

to force a direct finish up the steep rock above, left of the crest of the Furggen Nose. The result, in 2015, was *Echelle vers le Ciel* (650m, 7b). It was finished with his old friend Pierre Gourdin but the line had been pieced together either by traversing in from the Furggen Ridge or rappelling from above. Gabarrou returned the following year with Pierre Gourdin and Nicolas Magnin to make the first integral ascent of *Padre Pio, Echelle vers le Ciel* (1,300m, 41 pitches, 7b, 6c obl), one of the longest and most demanding rock routes at altitude in the Alps.

The lower *Padre Pio* has been repeated on several occasions, including a first winter ascent in 2004 by Hervé Barmasse and Massimo Farina, but the



entire 1,300m line had not seen a second ascent until Cazzanelli, Favre and Ratti were able to profit from the dry winter to make their three-day climb in daytime temperatures of around -10°C .

Guiding and expeditions now intervened but on 13 October Cazzanelli, Perruquet and Stefano Stradelli climbed a new route on the north-north-east face of **Breithorn Central** (4159m). The sustained *Essere o non Essere* (550m, A15 M7 85°), lies between *Settro Glauco* (TD, Grassi-Ravaschietto-Siri, July 1985) and the *Gabarrou-Steiner Direct* (TD, September 1979). A demanding climb with steep runnels, thin smears and a crux in the final exit corner on very steep rock, the new route takes similar but independent ground to the 1980 Italian rock route *Via della Torre Maggiore* (TD/TD+, V+ A1, Castiglia-Crivellaro-Manera-Persico-Pezzica).



Full winter conditions on the north-east face of Piz Badile. Marked is the *Isherwood-Kosterlitz*, rising out of the north couloir of the Col della Cengalo. See p226. (David Hefti)



On 27 November, Cazzanelli, Perruquet and Stradelli made the 900m approach from Cervinia to the east side of **Punta Sella** (3878m) in the Grandes Murailles, then climbed the 900m *Hyper Couloir della Grandes Murailles* at AI4+ M4. The new line lies to the right of *Banana Sprint* (850m, V/4 M4, Cazzanelli-Ferraris, March 2014) and arrives on the ridge immediately north of the col between Punta Sella and Becca di Guin (3805m). Descent was made by rappelling the route.

On 1 December, Cazzanelli, Perruquet and Ratti climbed a new line on the east face of **Cresta Albertini**, the ridge that runs south from the large snow shoulder at c4,040m on the east ridge of the Dents d'Hérens. *Triplo Zero* rises around 600m from the Mont Tabel-Chérillon glacier, directly above Cervinia, to finish on the Albertini ridge not far south of the Col des Grandes Murailles – technically the north ridge of **Punta Margherita** (3903m) in the Grandes Murailles. The line lies right of two established routes: *Petit Lumignon* (600m, IV/4 M4), climbed in 2003 by Hervé Barmasse, Massimo Farina and Ezio Marlier; and *Bonne Année*, climbed in 2017 by Barmasse and Stefano Perrone. The new line has 13 pitches with difficulties up to AI4+ M7 and was descended via 60m rappels. It was first attempted in 2017 by Cazzanelli, Ratti and the late Roberto Ferraris and at that time given the proposed name *Triplo Zero*. The zeros are the final digits of the three climbers' birth years: Cazzanelli was born in 1990, Ratti in 1980 and Ferraris in 1970.

The Repeats

Over five days in January, Léo Billon, Sébastien Ratel and Benjamin Védrynes made the first alpine-style winter ascent of the entire 1966 *Harlin Route* on the north face of the **Eiger**. This demanding route has rarely been repeated, and most of those repeats have exited via the classic 1938 Route, rather than take the original and harder finish up the Fly.

Ten days later the same three were standing on top of the **Grandes Jorasses**, having made a three-day ascent of *Directe de l'Amitié*. They had climbed the 1,100m route free at M8, except for one pitch of A3 on the second day. This is another rarely repeated route on the north face of Pointe Whymper, noted for sections of difficult climbing on rotten rock. It was completed over most of January 1974 by Louis Audoubert, Michel Feuillarade, Marc Gally and Yannick Seigneur; the final ascent lasted nine days. The second ascent was in September 1977, carried out in just five days, alpine style, by Roger Baxter-Jones and Nick Colton.

To complete their trilogy on the three great north faces, on 9 February the three Frenchmen made the first known one-day ascent of the original 1969 *Cerruti-Gogna Route* on the Zmutt Nose of the Matterhorn. To date the route has received no more than a dozen ascents, around four of these in winter when successful parties have quoted grades of VI+ M7 A3.

Since January 2020, when Yann Borgnet and Charles Dobouloz made the much acclaimed and long-awaited second ascent of Giancarlo Grassi's *Phantom Wall* on the south face of the **Grandes Jorasses**, there have been three more ascents, all taking place in January 2022. A Spanish team climbed

it on 19 January, and on 26 January a Belgian-Italian pair and the Chamonix-based British climber Fay Manners with Line van den Berg from the Netherlands, the latter pair making the first female ascent. Remarkably, these two teams completed the route in a single push from the car park in the Val Ferret, the first in a round trip of 21 hours. After a difficult bergschrund, which cost them time, the two women made consistent progress, reaching the crucial traverse at 1.45pm. As always with the upper section of this route, it was a race for the top. Moving together, they climbed the upper funnel with increasing tiredness and blustery cold wind, taking a variant out right to the upper Hironnelles ridge, and eventually reaching the summit at midnight. Seven hours later, and 30 hours after first setting out, they collapsed into the Boccalatte hut.

In the middle of March, Tom Livingstone with Tom Seccombe made what is likely to be the first free ascent of the *Guides Route* on the north face of the **Petit Dru**. The original ascent of this 850m line was something of a tour de force when it was climbed over a week in February 1967 by Michel Feuillarade, Claude Jager, Jean-Paul Paris and Yannick Seigneur. The French quartet used around 220 pegs and climbed at a grade of V+ A2. A German team repeated it over five days the following summer and then over three days in August 1975 by Bob Milward and Steve Parr. Livingstone either led or seconded every pitch free during his three-day ascent and felt the crux pitches somewhere between M7+ and M8+. From the summit the two descended the Dru couloir in 14 rappels.

On 17 March, Silvan Schupbach and Peter Von Kanel made a winter ascent of the 1968 *Isherwood-Kosterlitz* on the north-east face of the **Piz Badile**. While there have been previous winter ascents of this 600m line, which has difficulties of VI A1/A2 or VIII if climbed free, this recent ascent may be the first to free climb the route in modern mixed dry-tooling fashion. The two carried bivouac gear but finding no suitable ledges kept going to arrive on the summit 22 hours after leaving the Sciora hut. They found the rock to be solid, the climbing continuously steep, hooks and torques excellent, pitches easy to protect and difficulties up to M8.

Dick Isherwood and Mike Kosterlitz, both accomplished British rock climbers of their era, climbed the route by mistake, hoping at first to repeat the original 1953 *Battaglia-Corti* line on this part of the face. The first winter ascent of the British route was a landmark in female alpinism and still ranks up there with the most significant ascents in women's mountaineering. From 11-15 February 1982, Zuzana Hofmannová and Alena Stehlíková from Czechoslovakia battled full winter conditions to become the first unaided women's team to make a first winter ascent on a big alpine wall.

The on-form Federica Mingolla repeated *Bellevista*, Alex Huber's spectacular route on the north face of the **Cima Ovest di Lavaredo**. She tried the route over two days in August 2021 but was unable to free the crux (originally 8c but now thought to be 8b+). An accident that broke both heels then put her out for the season but she returned in mid June having not long before on-sighted 8a. Having just passed the crux, she fell and then retreated when

rain set in. Next day she made a flawless ascent, leading every pitch. Her celebratory scream on reaching the belay at the end of the 8b+ pitch was so loud it roused applause from occupants at the nearby Lavaredo hut. However, on joining the upper section of the *Cassin* route, around half-height on the wall, she found it streaming with water and made a difficult descent from this point. This is the third female ascent, after Sasha Digiulian in 2013 and Barbara Zangerl in 2015.

The Messner Routes

Simon Messner, largely with regular climbing partner Martin Sieberer, continues to explore the Eastern Alps and a few of his 2022 new routes are described. A line on the west face of **Lagazuoi North** (2,510m) in the Fanes group had attracted Messner for years but he had been put off by apparently compact and often yellow rock. He finally attempted it over two days in July with Barbara Vigl, the pair climbing to two-thirds height before being stopped by an overhang. Messner returned on 3 August with Martin Sieberer, straightened the line and free climbed all eight pitches to the ring band, giving a relatively sustained climb with an VIII- crux. A degree of boldness and endurance are needed to repeat this route, which the authors named *La Vita e Bella*.

Jonas Hainz's solo was not the only event of interest on the **Roda di Vael**. In July, Messner, Philipp Prunster and Sieberer climbed a new line on the right side of the face, which they spotted while repeating the *Casarotto* a few days previously. Described as a little gem, the rock on *Manner di auf Wande Starren* is good for most of the seven-pitch climb, and the crux (VIII obl) is where it should be, right at the top.

The **Sagwand** (3227m) in the Austrian Zillertal has made several appearances in these pages over the last few years, not least for the first ascent and subsequent free ascent of *Sagzahn Verscheidung*, climbed in 2018 after four previous attempts by the late David Lama with Peter Mühlburger (800m, M6, A2). Two years later, and in much better conditions, it was climbed free by David Bruder and Martin Feistl at M6, WI4. The route arrives on the col between the Sagwand and, to the left, the **Schrammacher** (3410m). On the north-west face of the latter, close to *Sagzahn Verscheidung*, Messner and Sieberer opened *Goodbye Innsbrooklyn*, having made four attempts spread over the previous five years. The pair originally envisioned it as a mixed winter route (there are numerous loose blocks that need to be frozen in place) but felt unable to climb the smooth granite slabs with axes and crampons. March 2022 was the driest on record for this area, so on 24 March the two skied to the base of the wall, used axes and crampons for the lower easier section, then climbed the upper 485m in rock shoes at VIII-, with the crux moves past a rounded roof some distance above protection. The route terminates just left of the Schrammacher-Sagwand col, and the name reflects Messner's move from Innsbruck to live with his girlfriend in the South Tyrol.

Other New Routes

Two new routes were climbed from Combe Maudit in the Mont Blanc range. On 28 March Niccolo Bruni and Gianluca Marra climbed the north face of the **Col Occidentale de la Tour Ronde** in six pitches to give *Goulotte Desparados* (IV/4+ M7), where the last pitch crux on fragile rock was protected with two bolts. Then, over two days, 17-18 April, Gosia Jurewicz and Jozek Soszynsk put up *Resurrection* (nine pitches, M7+ A2), a dry-tooling route up the steep slabby wall to the right of the Androsace Pillar on **Mont Maudit**. The climbers descended by rappel from the shoulder at the top of the pillar where all its rock routes join. They found solid granite with good cracks and protection.

On the east-northeast face of the east ridge of **Aiguille Noire de Peuterey**, Jon Bracey and Matt Helliker climbed a deep couloir leading to a notch in the ridge. The 350m *Mad Vlad* gave steep mixed climbing, with sections of suspect rock and little protection. Bold climbing is reflected in the grade of M7 R, or Scottish IX, 8. Accessed via the lower Brenva glacier the new route was completed on 28 February.

The **Douves Blanche** (3664m) lie south of the well-known Aiguille de la Tsa on the east side of the Arolla valley in the Valais. The name is derived from large white rock scars on the north-west flanks. It is best known for the classic *Douves Blanche Arête*, the south-west ridge to the South Summit (3641m): a magnificent rock excursion on excellent gneiss (D, V). The north-west face of the South Summit is an austere wall and has been climbed on the right side by a hard rock route involving dangerously loose blocks and flakes. On 11 November Silvan Schupbach and Peter Von Kanel decided to try a right-slanting, central line of weakness in this wall, approaching from the left. The lower section was slabby, though not entirely straightforward, leading right to the line of weakness, which was steep and sustained. There were excellent pitches of dry tooling but as the pair approached the top, the rock worsened and the last two pitches comprised large loose blocks poorly wedged together. It was here they found old pegs. The two reached the top, Pointe 3582m on the south-west ridge, at dusk, then rappelled the route, arriving back in the valley 17 hours after leaving. The name of the line, *Frigo Combo* (450m, M7, 6a) refers to the fridge-size blocks in the upper section and the climb being a combination of new ground and an existing route.

From 6 August to 6 September Philipp Hans, Josef Pfnür and the now 57-year-old former competition climber and co-founder of the Red Chili brand, Stefan Glowacz, created a big new route on the north-west face of the 3,360m **Scheideggwetterhorn** in the Bernese Oberland. The new route takes a steep part of the wall between *Baston La Baffe* (1,100m, 34 pitches, 7c, Burdet-Zambetti-Zambetti, 1996-1998 and then 2004) and the classic *West Pillar Direct* (ca.1,000m, 5c/6a, Trachel-Von Kanel, 1970), still considered one of the best long rock routes in Switzerland. *Wirklich oben Bist du Nie* (1,100m, 33 bolt-protected pitches, 8a+ but not yet redpointed), which roughly translates as 'You're never really up there,' is a quote attributed to the late Reinhard Karl on reaching the summit of Everest.



In the Arolla: (A) Aiguille de la Tsa, (B) Douves Blanche North (3664m) and (C) South (3641m) from the west. The sombre wall below the south summit is climbed by the new mixed route *Frigo Combo*. (Lindsay Griffin)

In the Civetta group of the Dolomites, on the big south face of the **Torre Trieste** (2458m), home to the ultra-classic pre-war routes of 1934's *Carlesso-Sandri* (750m, VIII- VI+obl) and 1935's *Cassin-Ratti* (700m, VII+ VI+obl), two strong Italian teams independently created parallel lines. Alessandro Baù, Alessandro Beber and Nicola Tondini completed the 28-pitch *Enigma*, while Simon Gietl, Vittorio Messini and Matthias Wurzer climbed an adjacent 20-pitch line. It has been many years since new routes were added to the Torre, so it came as a surprise to both parties to find each other simultaneously attempting first ascents on this historic wall. Both routes were completed to the summit from September to November but the arrival of bitterly cold temperatures meant that free ascents will need to wait until 2023. Given the talent of respective parties, both lines will undoubtedly be hard and most likely climbed entirely with traditional gear.

In the Brenta, the south face of **Campanile Alto** (2937m), Fabio Bertoni, Andrea and Antonio Zanetti put up *Via delle Mamma* (c500m, VII) with bolted belays and rappel points but only pitons and threads left in the individual pitches. The Alto lies opposite the famous Campanile Basso and the new route lies to the left of the historic but classic *Via Graffer* put up in 1927 by Giorgio Graffer and Renzo Videsott, a 500m V that was considered hard for the day.



The broad summit vista of the Argentine (2421m), see from the north-west with the line of *Sully* marked. (Claude Remy)

Not all quality winter new routing in the Dolomites has to be desperate. In mid March, Marco Longo and Pietro Simon noticed a wonderful rectilinear couloir splitting the middle of the west face of **Cima Immink** (2850m), immediately south of the Pale di San Martino. It was such an obvious line in a region steeped in climbing history that they were amazed to find it unclimbed. The two resolved this by creating what they felt to be a classic mountaineering route with no serious difficulties. Conditions were dry, meaning that a few of the rock sections encountered would be covered with snow and ice in a normal season. *Scivolo del Riky* (45°-75°) was climbed without placing a single peg. The summit is named after Jeanne Immink (1853-1929) from the Netherlands, who towards the end of the 19th century was consistently climbing grades III and IV with her guides, perhaps the first woman to do so. She shot to fame through her partnership with Theodor Wundt, a pioneer of mountain photography, who published images of her climbing steep, exposed Dolomite rock, which was more or less unheard of for a woman at that time.

The Pre-Alps

The centenary of the first ascent of the famous Miroir, on the **Argentine** above Solalex in Switzerland, was celebrated in May. A couple of months later Marcel Remy passed away aged 99. He had climbed on the 450m west face of the Miroir countless times and was noted for his last ascent aged 94



Claude Remy leading on the upper section of *Sully*. Jean-Michel Pauchard is on belay. (Gilles Damay/David Haefeli Coloria.ch)



Jean-Michel Pauchard climbing the upper section of *Sully* on Argentine Central, while Nicolas Bossard makes a wing-suit BASE jump. (Claude Remy)



Fred Moesner leading the diedre on the upper section of *Sully*. Jean-Michel Pauchard belays. (Claude Remy)

via a combination of routes up to 5b. Shortly before his death he was still leading 4c on a local climbing wall. Remy was the father of Claude and Yves, who themselves climbed many new routes on the Argentine and are credited for shaping modern climbing in the country, dubbed 'the heavy metal brothers who bolted Switzerland,' for their love of good protection and the powerful genre of rock music. During the summer there were second, third and fourth ascents of Claude Remy's latest addition *Sully* on the northwest face of the Central Summit (2422m) right of the Miroir.

There has been little climbing on this 500m wall: the lower section contains much bad rock, while the upper is vertical and compact. Remy and Jean-Michel Pauchard quickly decided that a ground-up ascent would, even with much aid climbing, prohibit satisfactory cleaning, particularly of large loose blocks. Instead, they opted to work the route from above using fixed ropes. It took 40 days, starting in 2019, until their first clean ascent on 20 August 2021 at 7a. More than 600 bolts were placed on the 27 pitches and statements from the parties repeating the ascent in 2022 include 'an incredible route – you must do it immediately.' During the ascent, 10 harder variation pitches were created to the right of *Sully*, and these have become *Sabaton* (6c obl, 7b/7c not yet freed).

In 2011 Stéphanie Bodet and Arnaud Petit began a new alpine sport climb to the right of the 600m east pillar of the **Pic de Bure** (2709m) in the Massif du Dévoluy. Since then almost a dozen climbers have nibbled away at the line, adding pitches and equipping. One of these, the French guide Aymeric Clouet returned in July 2022 with the young Italian Federica Mingolla. Over two days the pair made the first free ascent at 8a. The route is sustained, generally at 6c and above with two pitches of 7c+, two of 7c and the crux high on the route. *Voyage au Buristan* lies to the right of the *Desmaison Route* (Bertrand-Desmaison-Pollet-Villard, 1961, 20 pitches, VI with many pitches of aid, now 7a.) The second ascent of this classic line on the east pillar took place in June two years later, when it was completed over a couple of days by two talented rock climbers, the Scot Stewart Fulton and American Gary Hemming, whilst 'training' for their successful first ascent of the south face of the Fou just one month later. It is believed Desmaison discovered this area of the Dévoluy while attending the funeral of his great friend and climbing partner Jean Couzy, who was killed by stone fall on the peak next door to the Bure. Couzy put up many significant Alpine routes (often with Desmaison), took part in the 1950 French Annapurna expedition and later made the first ascent of Makalu.

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Fred Moessner in the lead with Jean-Michel Pauchard in the diedre on the upper section of *Sully*. (Claude Remy)



The east side of the Pic de Bure in the Massif du Dévoluy. The new route *Voyage au Buristan* climbs the steep walls to the right of the east pillar seen in profile.