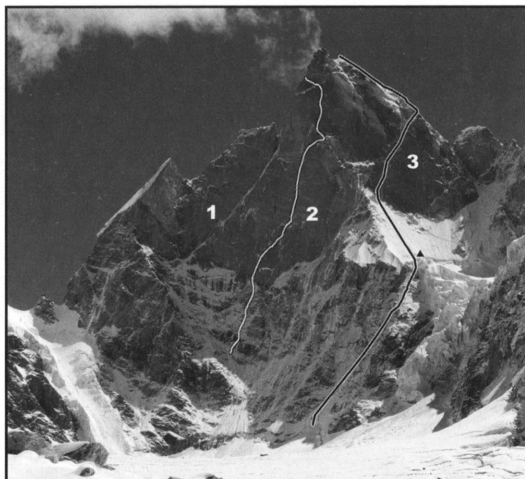


KISHTWAR HIMALAYA

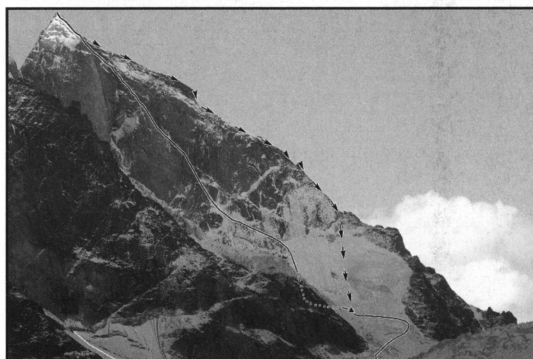
Cerro Kishtwar (6,155m), west face and south ridge, Yoniverse; White Sapphire (6,040m), west face, La Virée des Contemporains. At the end of September Denis Burdet (Swiss), David Lama (Austrian), Stefan Siegrist (Swiss), and American photographer Robert Frost made the second ascent of Cerro Kishtwar. This area of the eastern Kishtwar Himalaya, untouched by the mountaineering community for almost two decades, holds many unnamed, unclimbed summits. Limited information and outdated maps made planning difficult, and after approaching up the Haptal Valley the team faced initial problems when they realized that to make an alpine-style attempt they would need to move base camp closer. They established an advanced base at 5,000m.

Their first idea was to link the west and northwest faces, and on September 25th all four climbed north-facing slopes of loose rock covered with snow and ice to reach a glacier terrace at 5,400m, where they placed a camp. The day was long, as 40cm of fresh snow from two weeks previous had not consolidated. Next day they saw a logical line that had not been visible from below: a thin diagonal ice ramp/couloir on the west face that curved up for 200m toward the south ridge. However, they were unable to reach the couloir that day and rappelled back to camp, to have a rest day and then set out early for the summit.

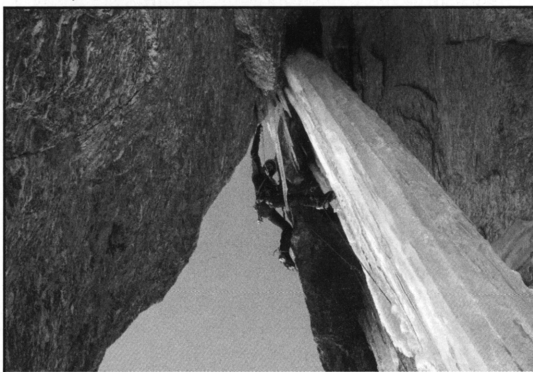
On the 28th the alarm went off at 3 a.m., and they left with light sacks. The first six pitches in the couloir were ice and styrofoam, good for climbing but less than ideal for placing pro. They were mostly reliant on rare rock belays. The couloir steepened to 85° before giving way to



Cerro Kishtwar from northwest. (1) Diagonal ice ramp followed by Fowler and Sustad on first ascent. (2) Murphy-Perkins attempt. (3) Yoniverse, on west face and south ridge. Visualimpact.ch/David Lama

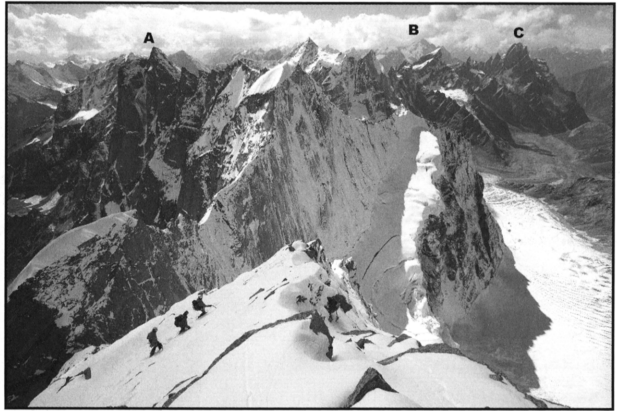


La Virée des Contemporains (solid line) on west face of White Sapphire. Arrows mark descent down south (Eagle) ridge. Visualimpact.ch/Denis Burdet



Burdet on a crux pitch of La Virée des Contemporains, west face of White Sapphire. Visualimpact.ch/Stefan Siegrist

vertical rock, which gave climbing up to 6a. The temperature was -25°C but on reaching the south ridge they were able to warm their feet in the sun. The crest above, difficult at first, then with easier sections on rock and snow, led to the southeast summit, which they reached at 1:15 p.m. The GPS gave an altitude of 6,155m, rather than previously quoted heights of 6,200m and 6,220m. All except Frost traversed for 15 minutes to the northwest summit (one rappel, then an easy snow ridge), which they measured as five meters lower. Twenty-six rappels brought them back to camp just after dark, and on the 29th they all descended to advanced base. They named the route Yoniverse (1,200m, WI5 6a).



Starting descent of upper south ridge of Cerro Kishtwar. (A) White Sapphire. (B) Agyasol (6,200m). (C) Kishtwar Shivling (6,040m). Haptal Glacier below. Visualimpact.ch/Robert Frost

Several days later Burdet and Siegrist left for an unclimbed peak south of Cerro Kishtwar, on the ridge leading to Sentinel Peak (5,950m). On October 4 after a long day in heavy snow, they camped at 5,200m below the western side of the mountain, the alarm set for 3:30 a.m. on the 5th. They opted for a narrow, deep gully on the west face, slanting left toward the summit. Being acclimatized, they climbed fast, and after an avalanche-prone traverse, found themselves in a chimney system similar to Exocet on Patagonia's Cerro Standhardt. There was dry-tooling, 90° ice, a difficult roof, and tricky protection. They topped out at a col to find the peak has a double summit. Leaving one sack, they traversed northwest, at first over horribly loose rock on the north flank of the crest, until after two pitches they discovered a hole leading onto the south flank, where the rock was much better. A couple more pitches led to the top, which they recorded as 6,040m GPS. Reversing their steps they continued over the southeast summit (5,980m) and down the south ridge (Eagle Ridge). Toward the end of the descent, they made four rappels down the southwest flank and reached camp at 7 p.m. They named the peak White Sapphire ($33^{\circ}20.532' \text{ N}$, $76^{\circ}34.430' \text{ E}$) and the route La Virée des Contemporains (850m, WI5 with two crux pitches of WI6, M6, and A2).

HANS AMBUHL, *Visual Impact GMBH*, and STEPHAN SIEGRIST, *Switzerland*

Editor's note: In October 1991 Brendan Murphy and Andy Perkins made a capsule-style attempt on the rounded rock pillar in the center of the northwest face. They had approached the region from Leh to the north over the Umasi La. After 17 days and 28 pitches, up to A3 and Scottish 6, they reached the north ridge, crossed to the northeast flank, and were 100m below the summit when their food ran out. Faced with more hard climbing, they bailed. In September 1993 Mick Fowler and Stephen Sustad (Fowler returning after a previous attempt with Mike Morrison in 1989) spent four days following a diagonal ice ramp left of the Murphy-Perkins line to a notch on the north ridge, where they crossed to the northeast flank and continued up mixed ground, passing the 1991 high point, to the northwest summit (1,300m, ED+). They traversed to the higher southeast summit before descending their route. The climbing was mainly ice and mixed, 25 pitches up to Scottish 6 and A3. The expedition was only allowed to approach this troubled area from the south via Manali, Udaipur, and along the Chenab River to Atholi/Gulabgarh—the route followed by the 2011 team. The mountain was named for its similar appearance to Cerro Torre.