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mountains which you can ski all around. Our local friends knew the best hidden stashes! Steep trees, steep trees, a little opening, and steep trees again. Anthony, one of the locals and owner of a great barn accommodation in Rosslund, went through the trees on his European-sized skis (i.e. short and narrow) like a ghost. The only chance to keep up with him was to follow the sound of the bell attached to his pole. The golden rule of tree skiing is to look in-between the trees unless you want to hug one. The golden rule of après-ski is to hit the best bar according to the Ski Canada Magazine, which happened to be in the Red Mountain. We followed both rules and

the latter was a great finish to our eight skiing days in a row, four places visited and two thousand kilometers in our van.

Skiing in Canada differs in many aspects to what we are used to in Europe. First of all, it's often about steep tree-skiing. Trees are great and fun, and there are no longer bad weather days. Secondly, all large freeride areas around ski resorts are avalanche controlled, i.e. no avalanche gear is needed. And finally, small kids drop cliffs and rip down moguls as if they were a piece of cake!

Jakub Chleboun

NEW MIXED CLIMBS IN ALASKA'S REVELATION MOUNTAINS

Ever since Clint Helander's feature article in the American Alpine Journal in 2013, we kept reading about the wild mountains, fickle weather, and good climbing in Alaska's Revelation Mountains. But as the years went by, many of the objectives identified by Clint were being ticked off. One valley, however, seemed to have been spared the attention. After looking at the maps and Google Earth, Frieder Wittmann and I decided to explore the south fork of the Fish Glacier. Having checked the landing feasibility with Talkeetna Air Taxi, we were soon loading their plane with food and fuel for three weeks.

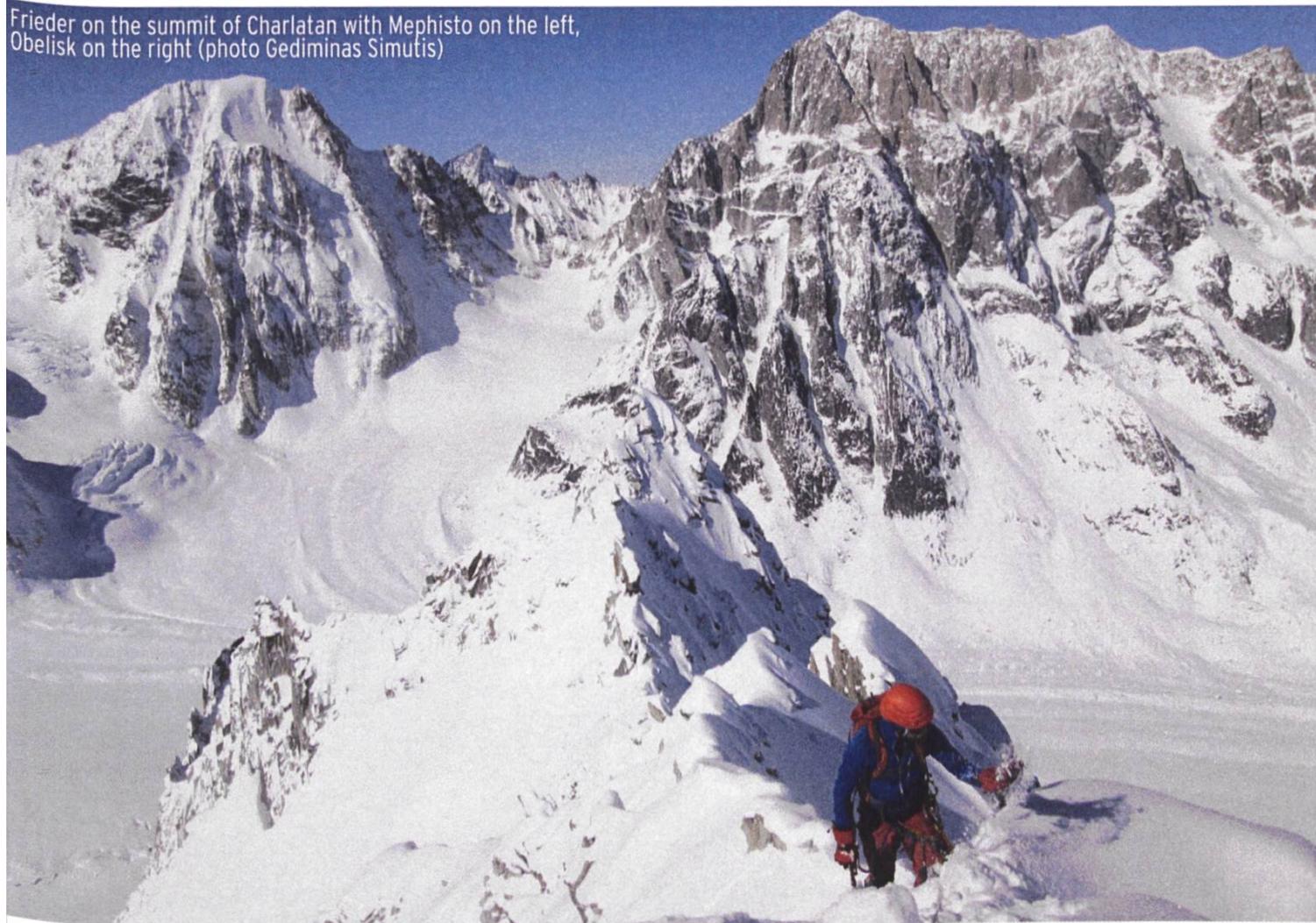
Flying over the Alaska range in a small plane was spectacular. Landing roller-coaster style in the soft snow on a beautiful

glacier was even better. Seeing a bunch of unclimbed walls and peaks around got us dizzy. I was already content with the trip and it was just the beginning. After landing on the Fish glacier on 28 March 2017, we spent a few hours digging trenches for our gear. As the afternoon came, I was getting tired and was about to go to bed early. Frieder, however, was keen to try to climb something immediately. I agreed to follow him and belay where needed. We chose a peak next to our landing spot. We skinned up to a col, and a pleasant ridge with a few rocky steps got us to the top. The mountain had two obvious high points, and because we couldn't be certain which was higher, we tagged them both. We named the route "It's A Girl!" (PD, easy snow and rock). It was midnight by the time we were

Ready for the take off (photo Gediminas Simutis)



Frieder on the summit of Charlatan with Mephisto on the left, Obelisk on the right (photo Gediminas Simutis)



back in our camp. Our jetlag compounded with the tiredness had us craving for some warm food. We set up our XKG stove, which however failed to start. After a few abortive attempts, we were both reminiscing about the view of our plane taking off from the glacier earlier in the day. The remoteness of the place sunk in. We melted some water with the Jetboil and crashed into our sleeping bags. When we woke up in the morning, the sun was warming us up, our heads were recovering and we managed to get the stove working. The game was on, the weather was holding and we picked the objective for the next day – a plumb line on the east face of a neighboring peak 8,568', which we called "Mephisto".

Perfect névé led us to the two crux pitches of ice climbing. Frieder quickly dispatched an ice pitch, which was more rotten than I would have wanted it to be. I got a few meters of thick and solid ice, which was followed by some tricky mixed climbing. Although feeling wobbly, I managed to get up the pitch which got us to the upper part of the gully. More of perfect névé led us to the summit. We named our route "Langstrasse" (800m, WI4 M4) after the training venue in Zurich where we prepared for the trip.

Bad weather rolled in and we were forced to rest. Nevertheless, we made use of our skis to get a few powder laps in. During a few half-decent days we made several attempts to climb a peak south of Mephisto. Despite checking out a couple of different options, we could not find a good passage through the many crevasses and avalanche-prone slopes. Instead, we turned our attention

to a rocky peak (ca 7,350') north of The Prophet. It took us three attempts to get to the top of the mountain we ended up calling "Charlatan". We named our route "Piled Higher and Deeper" (WI2 M3) after the light, fresh snow we encountered on the top and because we were both set to graduate from our Ph.D. programs upon returning home.

A couple more days of sour weather followed, during which we scouted a potential gully route between the granite towers of the Obelisk (9,304'). The peak's southwest face had first been climbed in 2015 by John Giraldo and Clint Helander (Emotional Atrophy, 1,000m, WI5 M6 A0, see AAJ 2016), but the southeast face, above our glacier, hadn't been attempted. Using binoculars and photos we took from the Prophet and the Charlatan, we pieced together a line of gullies cutting through the granite towers. When the skies cleared, we skinned up to the base of the face and started up a pleasant snow gully. We were warming up and getting excited for the day. The face was warming up too, however. As the sun touched one of the bowls with powder high on the face, it triggered a spindrift avalanche. I got knocked off and was carried down quite a bit by the time I could self-arrest. After recuperating and allowing the snow to settle, we were back on 11 April for a second go. A gully with good névé led us to a series of mixed pitches that turned out to be the crux of the route, and we had to aid through a couple of sections. A snow ramp then led us to a pitch of ice that looked deceptively fat, but the lower portion started to disintegrate as we were climbing it. Frieder made the most of his ballet skills to reach the fat

ice in the top section. He quickly romped up and set a belay to allow me to strip more ice as I was climbing up. Above the ice, the conditions played along and we were shortly in the exit gully. It went almost straight to the summit, allowing for an elegant finish of the climb. Soon we were brewing coffee on the summit as the sun started to hide behind other peaks and we dressed up for the long way down. We named our line “Alternative Facts” (900m, WI5 M6 A1) for the times we are living in.

Altogether, Frieder and I spent three weeks on the south fork of the Fish glacier. We climbed four new routes, three of them we believe to be on previously unclimbed peaks. Despite the recent activity in the

range, the Revelation Mountains still have many adventures stacked in the snow and granite. In particular, we regretted not having brought our climbing shoes for the imposing rock buttresses, as well as more technical skis for the many steep snow descents. We would like to thank Paul Roderick for flying us into the valley and the Academic Alpine Club Zurich for the generous financial support of our expedition.

*Gediminas Simutis,
Lithuania and Switzerland*

Excerpts of the article taken from “Between hangovers and overhangs” (June 2017) and “Planet Mountain” (Sept 2017)

Our line Langstrasse on Mephisto (photo Gediminas Simutis)

