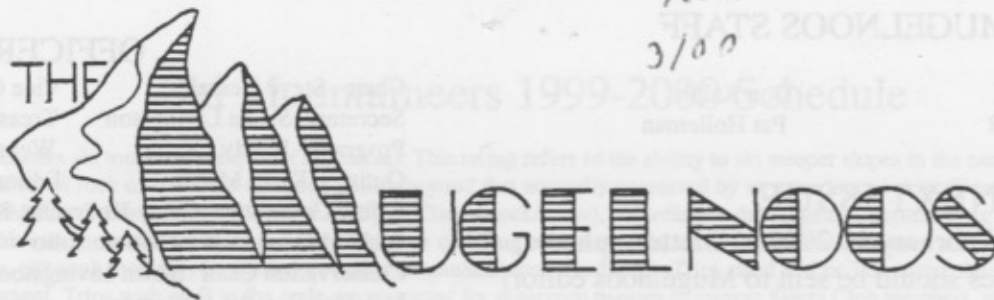


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THE  MUGELNDOOS

January 2000

Issue # 755



Ken Deemer and Don Pies w/ the Matterhorn in the back

Haute Route Part II 1999 Reiner Stenzel

by flashlight into a cloudy, humid morning luckily without rain. Down skiing was no fun due to poor visibility and breakable crust. Skinned up on Glacier du Fenetre to climb toward Mt. Avril. Left packs below the summit in the fog. While ascending we broke through the cloud level and stood on summit above the clouds. Fantastic views of peaks rising above the clouds. Stood adjacent to the impressive Grand Combin (4314m) and could follow the classic Haute Route over the steep Plateau du Couloir. Last 100 m of summit were rocks and not skiable, but below it was a great descent in wet powder down to the packs. Everyone in a great mood, but Ruedi cautioned us to slow down safely as the snow turned into grabbing cement. Descended toward the Italian village of Glacier. This included steep descent along a creek and eventually walking on a trail. Gordon, the dogsled racer from the Yukon, and I kept up with Ruedi's pace, the rest of the group got separated and waited elsewhere in the village, leading to a lot of frustration for our guide. The change from the high snowcountry to green valleys with flowers, old houses and castles was a delight. It had become a warm sunny spring day.

We drove through to our hotel in La Plud, right next to the Mt Blanc Funivie, the tram leading over the Mt Blanc range to Chamonix/France. But Murphy's law struck: The tram was closed for maintenance for three days. Of course, the Mt Blanc Tunnel was also closed due to the earlier fire. While Ruedi made contingency plans we relaxed, took showers, shaved, washed clothes, and had a great lunch in a nearby restaurant. The scenery of the high and steep Aiguilles (needles) of the Mt Blanc massive are impressive. Dining continued at 7:30 pm in our hotel with an abundance of excellent Italian food and wine: Prosciutto, salami, anchovies, mushrooms, salad, lasagna, meat, roasted potatoes, gelati, cappuccino, and plenty of local wine and a few bottles of fine Brunello. The mood was high till late in the evening. The decision was made to drive early in the morning through the Grand St Bernard Tunnel to Argentiere to ascend the Argentiere Glacier.

(Continued on page 5)

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue deadline February 10, 2000. All letters, photos, slides, or articles should be sent to Mugelnoos editor, Don Ralphs, 431 Alma Real Dr, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Materials can be sent by IBM disc or e-mailed to dralphs@attglobal.net. If you want your photos or slides returned after publication send a SASE. We can't be responsible for losses.

Meetings

3d Tuesday each month – November – May (except December) 7:30 PM Griffith Park Ranger Station Auditorium 4730 Crystal Springs Drive, Los Angeles, CA

Feb 15, 2000 Mike Harris "Tall tales from the top and Cyberspace resources for Ski Mountaineering"

March 21, 2000 John Lichterwardt a local ski mountaineer and photographer will give a slide presentation titled: "Local Backcountry Ski Mountaineering"

April 18, 2000. Kurt Wedberg: a presentation "Mountaineering in the Sierras"

May 16, 2000 (?) Porter Fox from Powder Magazine will be giving a talk showing slides from his trip to the India Himal: 1st Glisse Descent of Yamunouri Pass 17,600' in the Indian Himalaya. Photos by Wade Mckoy, Skiers Porter Fox and Jason Tattersall.

Avalanche Beacons and SMS Historic Video For Sale

The following items are available for purchase from the SMS.

- SOS F1-ND Avalanche Beacon, 457 KHZ, \$157.00. (only 3 left, then the price goes to \$168)
- SMS Video of members skiing in the Sierra in the 1960s, plus rare skiing footage of Section founder, Walter Mosauer in 1932. \$10.00 (only 3 left)

Contact Mark Goebel: 714-963-9384

SMS WEB PAGE

[HTTP:www.angeleschapter.org/skimt/](http://www.angeleschapter.org/skimt/).

Slide Show, Five years of trip reports, backcountry links and much more. Check it out.

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Avalanche info for Eastern Sierra

Phone: 760-924-5500

Web: www.csac.org/Bulletins/Calif/current

The Mugelnoos is a newsletter published by and for the Ski Mountaineers Section of the Sierra Club's Angeles Chapter since 1938. Send subscriptions and address changes to: Pat Holleman, 1638 6th Street, Manhattan Beach, CA. 90266 \$7 per year payable to "Ski Mountaineers" Due in October. Subscription payments are not tax deductible as charitable contributions

Ski Mountaineers 1999-2000 Schedule

All Ski Mountaineers ski tours are rated "T" (Technical). This rating refers to the ability to ski steeper slopes in the backcountry. It does not imply any level of rock or snow/ice-climbing ability beyond that normally possessed by an experienced skier. Tours are also rated I (Intermediate), M (Up to Class 3 rock/snow), or E (Up to Class 4 rock/snow), according to the Angeles Chapter rating system. Most trips are rated TI. This rating means that there is substantially no climbing except on skis, and that ropes and ice axes are not required for climbing safety, although they may be carried to deal with unanticipated conditions. Trips rated TM or TE require the use of ice axes and climbing equipment. Trips with an R in the code are restricted for insurance reasons to current Sierra Club members, and require a mountaineering resumé or a leader's personal observation, at their discretion. The Sierra Club and the SMS encourage qualified leaders to lead such trips.

Jan 22 Sat

TI: Mt Abel (Cerro Noroeste): Intro ski mountaineering tour in local San Rafael Mtns. Mtn bike 3 mi on road depending on snow conditions, then ski to summit. Metal edged skis w skins and bike req'd. Send sase or e-mail w/exper, phones, rideshare info to Ldr: Steve Hessen. Asst: Reiner Stenzel.

Jan 28-30 Fri-Sun

C: SMS Free-Heel Downhill Clinic: Develop and improve your skills on free-heel equipment. Clinics appropriate for all levels of skiers taught by professionals at a local area. Stay two nights at Keller Hut, with lift ticket and all day clinics on Sat. High quality rentals available at \$12. Reserve early. Send a check for \$95 and 2 sase to Res: Keith Martin (Active leaders to receive a 50% discount. Talk to Keith to see if you qualify)

Feb 5 Sat

TI: Local Tour. Intro ski mountaineering tour in local mountains. Metal-edged skis and climbing skins required. Subject to rescheduling due to snow conditions (see Mugelnoos or website) Leader: Mark Goebel. Asst: Kathy Crandall.

Feb 11-13 Fri-Sun

Natural Science Section Winter Ecology Workshop
June Lake: weekend cross-country ski trip to study and enjoy winter plants and animals with naturalist skiers. Intermediate cross-country ski ability required. Stay with local Sierra Club members; some meals provided. Group ltd to 12. LTC credit. Cost approx \$60, payable by Jan 15. Send 2 sase to Leader/Resevationist Ginny Heringer. Co-Leader Sherry Ross.

Feb 19-21 Sat Sun

TI: Snowshelter Course. Join us for a weekend of wilderness survival techniques. Sat build igloos/snowcaves. Sun ski and practice navigation techniques for white-out cond; review avalanche rescue. No tents. Bring snowsaw, shovel, avalanche beacons, metal-edged skis, and skins. Intermed or better skiing ability required. Send experience, h&w phones, email address, rideshare info to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Ken Deemer.

Feb 25-27 Fri-Sun

C:Free-Heel Downhill Practice Weekend: Clinic and or free-ski with us. Develop and Improve your skills on free-heel equipment. Clinics appropriate for all levels of skiers taught by professionals at a local area. Stay two nights at Keller Hut, with lift ticket and all day clinics on Sat. High quality rentals are available at \$12. Reserve early. Send a check for \$95 to include clinics, or \$65 without, and 2 sase to the Res: Keith Martin.

Mar 11-12 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI: Little Onion Valley: Explore Bighorn Sheep Country on skis. Sat am ski into lower valley, set up snowcamp, ski touring

Sat pm and Sun am. Metal-edged skis, skins, beacons, and intermediate or better skiing abilities reqd. Send Sase or e-mail w/ experience, h&w phones, rideshare info to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel. Asst: Tom Marsh

Mar 18-19 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI: Avalanche Awareness Training: Two day course in level II avalanche awareness taught by AMGA certified instructor Tim Villaneuva. Participants must have equivalent of level I training. Must have appropriate gear including transceiver. Bishop based day tours in eastern Sierra. Send \$90 (payable to SMS),H&W phones,2sase, experience, rideshare info to ldr Steve Hessen. Asst ldr Keith Martin.

Mar 25-26 Sat-Sun SPS & SMS

TR: Birch Mtn (13,602'): Ski the SE slopes of a cl2 SPS peak. Sat hike in via Tinemaha Crk, set up snowcamp, ski pm. Sun climb pk, ski out. For this restricted trip you must be a member of the Sierra Club and have suitable mountaineering experience. Metal-edged skis, skins, beacons, ice axe, crampons, and advanced skiing abilities reqd. Send Sase or e-mail w/experience, h&w phones, rideshare info to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel, co-ldr: R J Secor.

APR 1-2 SAT-SUN Ski Mountaineers

TI: Eldeberry Canyon/Onion Valley Ski: Join us for these classic Eastern Sierra ski tours. Saturday ski Elderberry Canyon, Sunday ski Onion Valley. Option to postpone to next weekend if conditions warrant. Car camp near destinations. Intermediate or better skiing ability, metal-edge skis, skins and avalanche beacons required. Send experience, H&W phone, SASE or email address and ride share info to Ldr: Tom Marsh, Co-Ldr: Mark Goebel.

Apr 29-May 7 Sat-Sun SPS & SMS

TR: Trans-Sierra Ski Tour: Join a 7day backcountry ski tour across the Sierra Nevada. Depending on snow/road conditions the trip may go from Onion Valley to Mineral King, or the High Route, or the Monarch Divide, or a tour along Eastern Sierra Crest such as Onion Valley to South Lke. Peak climbs included. For this restricted trip you must be a member of the Sierra Club and have suitable, mountaineering experience. Metal-edged skis, skins, beacons, ice axe, crampons, and strong skiing abilities and stamina reqd. Must have skied with leaders before. Send Sase or e-mail, climbing/skiing resume, h&w phones, rideshare info to Ldr: Reiner Stenzel, co-Ldr: R J Secor.

May 6-7 Sat-Sun Ski Mountaineers

TI:San Joaquin Mtn(11,600'): One day ascent and ski of north slopes via Fern Cr, 4320' gain, 8mi rt. This route features a variety of intermediate to steeper slopes, both above and in the trees. Last year we skied to within a short walk of the cars. Car camp Sat nite. Tour on Sun will be decided based upon conditions and group's interests. Must be an advanced skier and confident on steep slopes to participate. Send SASE and skiing experience to Ldr: Mark

May 13-19 SAT-FRI Ski Mountaineers

TI: Bishop Pass to Taboose Pass Ski Tour: Join us for this premier ski tour of the Sierra High Route via Dusy, Palisade and Upper Basins. Possible ski into Lake Basin and to the top of Split Mtn. Intermediate or better skiing ability, metal-edged skis, skins and avalanche beacons required. Send experience, H&W phones, SASE or email address and ride share info to Ldr: Tom Marsh, Co-Ldr: Joe McGuire

May 20-21 Sat-Sun SMS

TI: Mammoth Area Day Tours: Sat ski Blue Couloir off the Mammoth Crest. Sun 13000' Mt Dana above Tioga Pass. Intermed or better skiers; metal edges, skins reqd. Send SASE and exp to Ldr: Gerry Holleman. Asst: Paul Harris

May 27-29 Sat-Mon SPS & SMS

TR: Powell (13,360') and Thompson (13,494'): Enjoy a long weekend of cornsnow skiing and peak climbing. For this restricted trip you must be a member of the Sierra Club and have suitable mountaineering experience. Metal-edged skis, skins, beacons, ice axe and crampons, and advanced skiing abilities reqd. Send Sase or e-mail, climbing/skiing resume, h&w phones, ride-share info to

Jackson Hole Backcountry Opened

Starting for a one year trial run, there will be open access to Bridger Teton National Forest and Grand Teton National Park from the lift served Jackson Hole ski resort. Previously access was allowed only when the ski patrol opened the gates, usually not until February or March and even then only in times of low avalanche danger. Now, the gates will remain open at all times and the ski patrol will post signs at all the gates that include daily reports on snow conditions and avalanche danger.

The county sheriffs department and Teton County Search and Rescue have agreed to assume responsibility for responding to instances of lost or injured out of bounds skiers. This because of an increase in resources and experience.

It is expected that this development will lead to an increase in professional guiding opportunities in the area.

CREST TOUR TIOGA PASS TO TWIN LAKES

May 22-24,1999 Rich Henke

In the spring of 1999, skiing in the Southern Sierra suffered due to a low snow year. Reports of a heavier snow pack in the northern part of the Sierra encouraged Armando Menocal and I to try a late spring trip north of Tioga Pass.

We left a car in the trailhead parking lot at Twin Lakes and spent the night in the Tioga Lake parking lot just east of Tioga Pass. It was May 21 and the Tioga road was open to the pass. The following morning we started off skiing high toward Gaylor Lakes from the Tioga Entrance Station. We headed north, just to the east of Granite Lakes, and across Spiller Lake and then Green Treble Lake. Mt. Conness was just to the west. After climbing to a pass just south of Greenstone Lake, we had a good 1000-foot ski descent to the lake. This route has a lot more elevation gain than an alternate route, which would be to ski the road to and across Saddlebag Lake from Tioga Resort.

It was a long uphill grind toward Excelsior Mountain. We camped about ¾ miles south of the peak. The next day, we skied to the top of Excelsior Mountain and enjoyed wonderful views in all directions. The descent to the Northwest involved a lot of walking but we eventually reached Virginia Canyon. There was good snow cover as we continued up the canyon to the north. We turned west and crossed Stanton Pass at 11,160 feet, which lies between Virginia Peak and Stanton Peak. RJ Secor's High Sierra Guide describes the west side of the pass as class 3 and we had to work hard to find a safe way down. We encountered loose rotten snow as we descended toward Spiller Canyon. Our second night was spent in the upper part of this canyon. The following day, we continued north over Horse Pass and enjoyed a good ski run down Horse Canyon. As we finally ran out of snow, we found the foot trail, which we followed to our waiting car. We had originally planned to ski further north across Burro Pass and descend via Robinson Canyon, but Armando's broken ski boot and very threatening weather convinced us to stop one day earlier. However, another section of the crest from Horse Pass to the Sonora Pass road awaits.



(continued from page 1)

Approach to Cabane de Bertol

Thur 5/6 Courmayeur to Refuge d'Argentiere. Got up leisurely at 6:45am to a late breakfast at 7:45am and an even later departure at 8:30am. Drove for 3 hours through Aosta, St Bernard Tunnel, Bourg-St-Pierre, Orsieres, Martigny, Forclaz Pass to Argentiere. Saw a lot of avalanche damage in the villages near Argentiere. Planned to take the tram up to Aiguille des Grandes Montets but it was also closed for maintenance, another strike of Murphy's law. Randy S. and Don R. decided this was the end of the tour and went to Chamonix to play golf. With a stroke of luck a tram repair crew appeared at noon, started the lift to ride up to the mid-station Lognan (1974m) to eat lunch. We could join and ride up at least half of the way. From there we skinned up along a small road leading to the base of the Argentiere glacier. We climbed up the glacier and, at Ruedi's pace, arrived 2 1/2 hours later at the Refuge d'Argentiere (2771m). All along the way the South facing slopes below the Aiguille du Chardonnet and Aiguille d'Argentiere were repeatedly avalanching in the afternoon sun. The Argentiere Glacier is surrounded by an impressive wall of steep mountains with hanging glaciers: Aig. Verte, Les Droites, Les Courtes, Aig. de Triolet, Mt Dolent, Tour Noir, and Aig. d'Argentiere. The Refuge d'Argentiere is located at a ridge above the moraine from where one has an impressive view over the glacier and mountains. To get to the hut we had to ascend along a steep South-facing slope at

high speed due to avalanche danger. Indeed, in the later afternoon, the slope released and produced a massive wet snow avalanche. A late skier was about to climb to the hut but escaped certain death by a minute. It proved Ruedi's point that one has to be at the huts before the afternoon, requiring the early starts, a fast pace, and no idling. At 6:30 pm it was dinner time, then packing for the next day, and to bed by 8 pm for an early rise next day.

Fri 5/7 Refuge d'Argentiere to Chamonix

The routine wake-up call at 4:30am and an hour later we were on skis. Clear sky and a half moon over the aigouilles. Skiing down the frozen avalanche field was no pleasure. We contoured high along the Argentiere glacier and then ascended with skins and ski crampons the Glacier du Chardonnet to the Col du Chardonnet (3323m). The view of the first sun rays on the summits was great. The descent from the col was steep, the snow still frozen, and there were crevasses at the bottom. Thus, Ruedi set up another belay station, we clipped the rope into our harnesses and side slipped most of the slope down. Great icefalls were coming down from the Aig. d'Argentiere. Back in Italy again! Then we had a great run down on the upper Glacier de Saleina with distant view of the Cabane de Saleina. At a low point we turned North to climb the Fenetre de Saleina (3261m). Although there were good kicksteps, Ruedi put down a fixed rope and we ascended with skis on the back, one hand on the rope, a pole in the other



The team makes it's way through a serac field under Pigne d' Arolla

hand. We down climbed a short section on the other side and then continued to ski to the Col du Tour (3281m). After a lunch break we had another rope-assisted downclimb over steep rock and snow on to the Glacier du Tour. The ski run down the glacier started out on smooth and frozen slopes perfect for paralleling, then the terrain developed ripples which slowed us down, and as we lost elevation the snow became breakable, soft, slush and finally deep mush as we descended through the willows along creek beds below the glacier. At one point it was necessary to downclimb a ledge without skis and packs which were tossed down into the snow. This caused two casualties: Derek cracked one of his skis, Don P.'s pack took off and tumbled down a creek bed but was later retrieved. Finally, we skied over avalanche debris all the way into the town of Le Tour where we called for a car to be transported to Chamonix to our Hotel Le Manoir. Picked up luggage from the train station, showered and had lunch.

We explored Chamonix which is a charming and lively town with many tourists, mountaineers, and skiers from many countries. The view of Mont Blanc, Aiguille du Midi and the many glaciers is awesome. Unfortunately, high clouds began to cover the peaks in the late afternoon and we got concerned about our plan to ski the Vallee Blanche on Sat morning. The rest of the afternoon was spent with sightseeing, shopping, and picture taking. Don

P.'s family had joined him. Randy and Don R. rejoined after having spent a day golfing and sampling the local brews in Chamonix. By 7pm we all gathered to a final dinner to celebrate the completion of the Haute Route. Lots of good food and wine contributed to a great mood. Don R. gave one of his best entertainment shows which cannot be described but must be experienced.

Sat 5/8 Chamonix to Geneva A predicted bad weather front moved in during the night. High winds, 30cm new snow, and total whiteout in the mountains made it impossible to ski the Vallee Blanche.

Sun 5/9 Flew back from Geneva via Zuerich and Chicago to Los Angeles.

Experiences and Observations

(Terrain, Peaks Climbed, Weather, Snow Conditions, Skill Requirements):

The Western Alps are steep, rugged, and glaciated. Skiing is usually well above the tree line. Distances are often less relevant than the difficulty of the terrain. Icefalls and avalanches are major hazards. Skiing on glaciers requires experience of recognizing hidden crevasses from weak indentations in the snow line. Everyone was wearing harnesses with locking biners. In case of a fall into a crevasse, the guide would lower a rope to clip into to pull the person out. Downhill skiing on glaciers was unroped but strictly limited to skiing in the guides tracks. Rope-assisted downhill sideslipping was a common procedure on steep icy passes. Ice axe and bootcrampons were not required, but would be obvious necessities for more serious peak climbs or unguided tours. Ski crampons are an indispensable item for climbing steep slopes on hard snow. They prevent sideslipping on skins when the

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Traveling across the Glacier Mt Mine

The Ambivalence of Being Guided by Don Pies

We stood looking at the Matterhorn's north and west faces from the Schönbiel Hut's porch. The standard route up the east face/northeast ridge seen on every Matterhorn postcard only poses a Sunday afternoon stroll compared to the treacherous routes before us. I ask, "Ruedi, which routes have you done?" His modest response was simply "all of them."

Don Ralphs asked me to comment about Ruedi Beglinger's style of guiding and his SME, Selkirk Mountain Experience, operation in British Columbia. I couldn't begin to cover either topic with the depth they deserve, so bear with my brief overview (Craig Dostie captures the essence of this legend in "Profile: Ruedi Beglinger, Guide for the Hardcore" in COULOIR Vol. X, Num. 2, November 1997).

First off, what is meant by style of guiding? There's a short answer and a long obscure answer. The short answer is that Ruedi is tough, has high uncompromising standards, is extremely safe, likes gritty jokes (especially about lawyers and non-Swiss countrymen), is extremely safe, likes to push the guests to new limits (conditions permitting) and most important, is extremely safe. The trouble is that the short answer doesn't tell the whole story and the long obscure response brings up more questions than answers.

To address the latter, you need to consider the type of trip and do a self evaluation. I have been on ski mountaineering trips with Ruedi in the Selkirks plus an 8-day tour on the Alps Haute Route. The technical difficulty and physical demands were not greatly different between the two types of trips, however the modus operandi was clearly different. We were on a tight schedule in the Alps

that left little time to stop and smell the glaciers. No mistake was left within reprimand. But this was the Alps, where nature is without sympathy for mistakes. Although the Seikirk crevasses and avalanches are just as hungry for skiers, day trips from SME's base chalet run on a much lower key schedule.

Here's where the discussion of "style" gets a little muddy. What is the style of a guide versus what is the responsibility of the guide? Throw in the wide range of guest's skill levels, goals, egos and stamina, and you end up with a mixed group of unhappy and gleaming campers. To deal with this conflict, you have to come to terms with why you are hiring a guide instead of doing it all yourself. Face it, you're biting off a little more than you can chew, yet using help goes against the basic mountaineering experience of adventure and achieving self satisfaction. You were guided up the peak, but can you take credit for climbing the mountain? This internal struggle can easily taint your feelings toward the guide. There is no perfect solution, there's only a reasonable balance the guide can provide and an understanding that as a client, you don't get it all.

How would I rate Ruedi's style? On the Haute Route he was clearly more demanding than the other guided groups we encountered. Each day we were first out of the hut and were the first group to arrive at our next hut. Ruedi also led nine peaks (four optional) over the trip whereas guided Haute Route tours commonly only bag Pigne d' Arolla. Of the original fourteen people who signed up with our group, only seven toured everyday. Even though I was one of those seven, I still felt stressed because I had trouble keeping up with the 2,000+ feet/hour ascent pace. Was Ruedi the right choice for the Haute Route? My main priority was safety and the fact that I'm writing this article is testament on how it worked out.

edges don't bite or the skis are overedged. This can be a life-saver when making kickturns on a steep frozen slope. Most peaks were climbed on skis but on occasions, a rock scramble was necessary. Some peaks had glacial ice exposed. Several peaks had narrow ridges with exposed drop offs requiring no fear of heights. Some mountaineering skills were required to climb on rock assisted by chains and ladders. Skiing down 40deg slopes was nothing unusual.

Peaks climbed and skied: 1. Breithorn (4164m) 2. Tete de Valpelline (3799m)3. Tete Blanche4. Pigne d'Arolla, 2X (3796m)5. La Serpentine (3795m)6. La Lulette (3368m)7. Mt Blanc de Cheilon (3869m)8. Mt Avril (3347m).

Weather: The weather is unpredictable and can change day by day. Whiteouts are common, high winds (>100km/h) have been encountered, the humidity can be very high, skiing in pouring rain is common at lower elevations, when the sun is out it can be surprisingly hot, in the early morning it can be crisp and cold. Minimum clothing required were two layers and a goretex shell, warm hat, gloves, and goggles. Snow Conditions: Anything from black ice to water. At high elevations powder, crust, glacial ice but also superb hard-packed snow for paralleling, further below often breakable crust, wet and grabbing cement, and at low elevations very wet bottomless slush in which even my fat skis vanished when skied unevenly. By mid morning on a sunny

day, there can be wonderful corn snow. However, traversing large avalanche fields early in the morning is a random walk through ice blocks. Descending in a steep creekbeds involves sideslipping over willows, rocks, grass and cowpies.

Skill requirements: Skiing the Haute Route requires stamina, skiing and mountaineering skills. Ruedi's standards are high: One has to be able to skin ALL snow conditions, not just Sierra corn or Selkirk powder. Backcountry skiing experience is mandatory, it is not sufficient to be an excellent skier on a groomed piste. The pace of climbing and skiing is fast. Rest stops are rare and at most 15min. A typical day of 6-7 hrs includes at least one peak climb and one or more passes. Ruedi strongly recommends randonnee skis for the Haute Route. On the first day there were four telemarkers in the group, on the last day one. Telemarking takes more effort and skills. Free-heel paralleling and jump turns are a must. My fat tele skis did great in powder and slush, but shattered on icy snow. Since a guide's first priority is the safety of the group, which among other things requires reaching the next hut before avalanche time, speed and uniformity of the group are essential. Ruedi did not hesitate to send weak skiers home (without refund!). He requests cautious snow plow turns on bonebreaking heavy crust and strictly skiing in his tracks on glaciers. He has guided the Haute Route over 40 times. But one is certainly safe when following his advice.

Mugelnoos

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