

24th/25TH NOVEMBER - LOS ANGELES - PUNTA ARENAS

I was horribly jetlagged having flown in from London to Los Angeles the night before in order to attend a days worth of meetings. Hence, having gone to bed after dinner at about midnight i was wide awake at 3.00am and not due to leave for the airport until 9.30am. Unsurprisingly, i had the gym to myself at 4.00am and by 7.00am i was finishing off all my emails. At 9.30am i was feeling absolutely awful and bleary eyed as i lugged my huge 3 duffel bags into the suburban to join Luis's 5 bags. Travelling light was an understatement as the suburban had trouble pulling away from the hotel! We stayed at the Mosaic hotel in LA arranged by my sponsors Summit hotels and it was a really cool hotel located within close proximity to all the meetings that i had to get to on my one day in LA.

Luis and i were flying down to Punta Arenas together along with John Rost, who climbed with Adventure Consultants on Everest this spring. Vinson will hopefully be his last of the seven summits. He blames reading Dick Bass's book the Seven summits, which is a great read incidently, of costing him a huge amount of money to follow in Dick Bass's footsteps and tackle the highest peak on each continent.

I was really looking forward to returning to Chile. I have not been back since our incredible Everest expedition this spring. We had a lot of flying ahead, we were going from LA to Santiago and then connecting straight through to punta arenas at the southern most tip of Chile. After 17 hours of flying and stopping about 3 times en route we began our descent into Punta Arenas. The winds were incredible and blowing at 123kph and the plane was shaking and all over the place. I was screaming and clinging to Luis and John Rost said he could hear my screams from about 15 seats behind ours! how embarrassing. It was an incredible feat of the pilot to land the plane upright and we were then delayed as the steps to the plane couldnt get to us due to the winds! FInally we were all escorted off the plane one by one and almost blown off our feet as we precariously walked down the steps.

Hamish, my cameraman met us at the airport, he is tall and lanky with a wicked sense of humour. The rest of the day was spent doing gear checks, checking the tent, buying last minute items from the supermarket and getting our sledge bags and back packs sorted out. Luis was brutal on my weight that i was going to carry and it was with a long face i had to remove creams, extra clothes and other things that i thought were necessities from my bag. Hamish was there to capture my sulky face as my load was cut in half.

Kat and Rob, who are my friends climbing with Guys team, have been delayed in chicago due to bad weather so are scheduled to arrive in tomorrow night. The latest rumour is that we are going to try and fly to the ice tomorrow night after they arrive but it sounds too good to be true according to Luis. We are basically on standby here for the right weather conditions to fly down to the ice, some 6 hours further south where we land at Patriot Hills.

I saw the Russian illusion Jet at the airport, it looks hugely imposing and like it would look far more at home lifting military vehicles out of a warzone than flying our motley crew to Antarctica. How that beast of a plane is going to land on ice I have no idea, nor do I feel like being blown around up there again! We have to fly to Argentina after taking off from Punta Arenas as the runway here is being worked on and therefore we can't take off from Punta Arenas with a full tank of petrol. We fly to Argentina to load up on fuel and then take off for Antarctica from there.

We all had dinner last night in the smart hotel in town, myself being the token girl until Kat arrives. We all gave Luis a huge amount of grief at dinner when his appetiser arrived (this was after a lengthy conversation in Spanish I have to add) and consisted of a plate of onions and a side of lettuce.. thank God we weren't all sharing a tent tonight!! We went to bed around 11.00am and I still have a ton of organising to do tomorrow.