



You may already have heard about the world records and long flights flown in Argentina over the past two years. You probably haven't heard the story behind the flights. Much more than just a hunt for records, the OSTIV Mountain Wave Project was a serious scientific undertaking, examining the nature of wave formations with the end goal of better wave forecasting that could prove useful in civil aviation as well as soaring.

This is the story of how the Mountain Wave Project went from a "what if" notion to a real expedition in the span of less than six months – of a true adventure, and of how this group of intrepid German glider pilots managed to get themselves and a Stemme S10-VT to San Martin de los Andes, Argentina, in early November 1999 and again in 2000.

Klaus Ohlmann had been interested in the potential of the lee wave in Argentina for some time. He and his wife Sidonie had flown a 1030-km flight in Argentina in December 1998. Klaus Ohlmann and René Heise had been working together on wave forecasting research in the French Alps, creating wave flying maps by combining flight data from various glider pilots who were soaring on wave days. They agreed that there was great potential to collect data about wave in the lee of the Andes, with the end goal of developing better wave forecasting for long-distance, high-altitude flights, as well as for other areas of aviation.

In the summer of 1999, Heise approached Martin Just, Stemme factory service manager and former German Junior National Team member, about the idea. They agreed that the Stemme S10-VT – which is optimized for high speeds, has a roomy cockpit and a 115-hp turbocharged engine – would be the ideal aircraft for the expedition.

But first, Martin Just had to convince company owner Dr. Reiner Stemme to help with the expedition. Luckily, Dr. Stemme was as excited about the idea as the rest of the team, and he agreed to allow them to use one of the factory demonstrator aircraft. The entire group met at Lüsse, southwest of Berlin, that summer. The pilots drew up lists of what they would have to do to accomplish their goals. Martin Just remembers, "at first it was simply a dream and we made some general plans, but it got very serious very quickly. There were lots of problems to overcome – like arranging for customs paperwork, shipping, and prepar-