



AAC Publications

Fitz Roy, east face, The Real Kekec

Argentina, Chaltén Massif

After climbing the North Tower of Paine [see Chile section of Climbs and Expeditions], I was joined by Tadej Kriselj from Kamnik, Slovenia. When the morning bus dropped us in El Chaltén, the weather was perfect. We repacked our bags and headed to Paso Superior an hour later. It was our first time in Patagonia, so everything was new and interesting to us. Our plan was to climb Linea di Eleganza on the east face of Fitz Roy; however, when standing under the wall early next morning, we could see long streaks of water melting from snowy ledges. It was clear that free-climbing the route would be very difficult. But we had to climb something.

We started climbing toward an old Slovenian route called Hudiceva Zajeda (Jeglic-Karo-Knez, 1983). After sharing a pitch, we moved right to another crack system to avoid falling rocks and ice. We repeated the mantra of "let's climb one more pitch and see if it goes," and after 400m we reached our first bivouac. The next morning we woke to a cloudless day, and after the initial routine of shivering to get the blood running again, we warmed up and continued climbing. Good cracks and corners led us higher and higher into undiscovered terrain. In late afternoon we were in the middle of steep terrain with no ledges in sight. Just before night, an icy chimney with limited protection led us to a flat ledge for our second bivy. It seemed so surreal; we couldn't believe this was really happening. We had one light sleeping bag between us and spent those few hours shivering and waiting for the alarm to ring. The steep wall loomed above, and neither of us wanted to show our doubts.

On the third day the weather was less than perfect. The climbing was steep, and on some pitches our haul bag never touched the rock. As we were now 800m up, with no fixed anchors and a light rack, backing off didn't sound appealing. With the rain and wind, we really had to try hard, and after some intense pitches we could see the angle ease up a bit. Two pitches before the top of Goretta Pillar we joined the Casarotto route. Our third bivy was spent on the top of the Goretta, where we finished our last food.

On the fourth day, we followed the Casarotto to the top, summiting in the afternoon, only six days after Tadej left home. After a short break, we descended the French route. At three in the morning we reached the Brecha de los Italianos, where we crashed on the first flat spot we saw. On the fifth day we made the remaining rappels to the glacier. Our route, the Real Kekec (1,200m, VI 5.11+ A2), contains 800m of new terrain, and was climbed without bolts or jumars. We named the route after a legendary Slovenian movie and song that started playing on our music player during the descent.

Images



Tadej Kriselj heads up steep cracks high on the Real Kekec



The Goretta (north pillar), showing (1) The Real Kekec. (2) Diedro Del Diablo. (3) Casarotto.

Article Details

Author	Luka Krajnc, Slovenia
Publication	AAJ
Volume	55
Issue	87
Page	238
Copyright Date	2013
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions