



AAC Publications

Acopan Tepui, Miss Acopan

Venezuela

In December 2011, Andrej Grmovsek, Tanja Grmovek, Matic Obid, and I were sitting in the first row of a chilled out Venezuelan bus, headed from the chaos of Caracas toward the small town of Santa Elena, the last stop before our jungle adventure. Before disconnecting from the civilized world, we used the Internet for the last time and received tragic news that Tanja's father had died, which sent a shockwave through all of us. After intense moments, hard decisions, and some logistical problems, Tanja and Andrej headed back home the next morning, after only two days in Venezuela, while Matic and I decided to stay and continue with the adventure.

We canceled our primary plan of canoeing for a week on the Karuai River and hired a small single-engine plane to reach the village of Yunek, situated under Acopan Tepui. After mastering sign-language communication with the locals, we established our base camp close to the wall and started focusing on the climbing. First, we repeated a few routes on the left side of the wall. As we gained confidence and overcame the fear we'd accumulated from others' jungle stories, we started scoping the wall for a new line.

Our first attempt ended without success because we encountered unclimbable muddy rock. Two days later, we started a bit more to the left and found good rock with free climbing passages that allowed the use of natural protection. Luckily the wall was steep enough that occasional rain showers didn't bother us too much. Four pitches later, the day came to an end, so we fixed two ropes and headed back to camp for dinner. After a rest day we juggled up and climbed the remaining four pitches, which offered steep climbing on good rock. We both had one fall on the crux pitch, but managed to climb all the others onsight. Two days later we climbed the whole route free, exchanging leads. We left minimal natural gear and pitons for the rappels, and all the pitches allow the use of natural protection with occasional runouts above good gear.

Following our climb, we spent New Year's Eve socializing with the locals in Yunek. It was nice to see the pristine smiles of people who are still not occupied with the problems of modern world. Before leaving the area, though, we decided to try one more climb, Purgatory (VI 5.12+, Albert-Calderón-Glowacz-Heuber, 2007), on the right side of the Acopan Tepui. The fact that we didn't have a proper topo made our experience even more interesting. However, we repeated the route free and onsight in two days.

After 23 days under Acopan Tepui, our adventure came to an end with the sight of a plane landing in Yunek, ready to take us back to civilization. Everything came together perfectly and created a memory that will be hard to forget.

Luka Krajnc, Slovenia

Images



Kranjc negotiates the climbing of Miss Acopan high on the eastern face of Acopan Tepui.



The line of Miss Acopan on wide eastern face of Acopan Tepui.



Kranjc relaxes at a bivy on Purgatory (VI 5.12+).



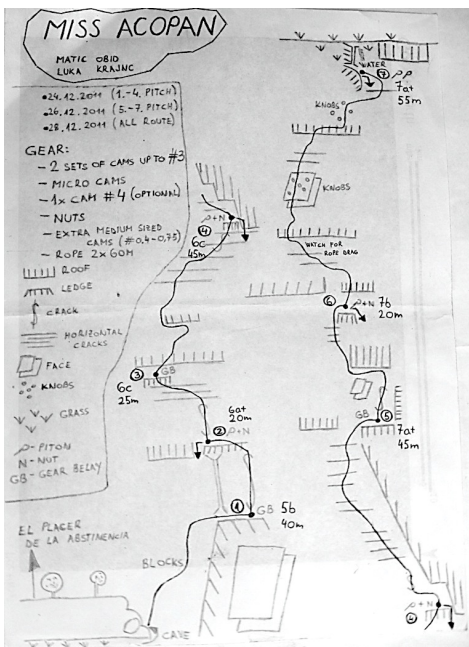
Obid reaches for crimps on the steep face of Purgatory (VI 5.12+).



Matic Obid jugs up Purgatory as the sun retreats behind Acopan Tapui.



After bad rock 200m, to the right of the line shown shut down their first new route attempt on the Acopan Tapui, Krajnc and Obid established the free line Miss Acopan shown here.



Krajnc's topo of the route he and Obid eventually climbed free.



A paddler waits to ferry Krajnc and Obid.

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