



AAC Publications

North Tower of Paine, Zuko Traverse

Chile, Torres del Paine

In December 2012, I flew to Patagonia with Andrej Grmovsek, another Slovenian. We arrived in El Calafate, but one of our bags wasn't that lucky, and we spent four days there, hearing exotic new stories about our missing bag every day. We managed to carry all of our food and equipment to base camp in two heavy loads. At the time, it was snowing and there were no climbers to be seen. A few days later the weather improved; however, I now had a fever. I knew the days of good weather were rare, so I started packing.

We decided to try Riders on the Storm on the east face of Central Tower. On the first day we climbed 13 pitches with the second jumaring, and then bivied on an obvious ledge. The next morning, while fighting an icy offwidth on pitch 17 for more than an hour, we knew we were moving too slow to escape the incoming weather, so we rappelled and reached our tent in the afternoon.

A week later the weather cleared again, and this time we hiked to the west faces. New Year's Eve was spent on a nice flat bivy site below the walls, eating pasta and drinking Zuko. The next morning we started climbing an obvious non-icy line up the north summit of the North Tower, which we thought was an existing line called Armas y Rosas. After reaching the north summit, we made two rappels into the notch and climbed a few more pitches to the main summit. Our initial plan was to traverse the towers, but there was too much snow, so we rappelled the Monzino Route.

After talking with Steve Schneider, it was clear that we climbed a new line, which was a consolation prize for our failed attempt on the traverse. We named it Zuko Traverse (650m, V 5.10+), after the fizzy beverage we drank so much. It climbs a large corner immediately to left of Los Esclavos del Barometro and to the right of Armas y Rosas, joining both of these lines two pitches below the north summit of the North Tower.

Images



At an open bivy on Riders On The Storm.



Luka Krajnc leading on Zuko Traverse.



Grmovšek leading steep, broken cracks on Zuko Traverse.



The line of Zuko Traverse.



A seriously core-shot rope on Riders On The Storm.

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