



## AAC Publications

---

### **Cerro Catedral, East Face, First Free Ascent**

South America, Chile, Torres del Paine

Cerro Cota 2000, east face, first free ascent. Stephane Hanssens, Merlin Didier, and I spent January 14 to February 12, 2013, in the French Valley, living in a cave and climbing big walls. We did not see anybody except for the one day we went to the ranger station to ask for a weather forecast; the rest of the time it was just the three of us in the upper valley. Without a consistent weather forecast, we did get shut down hard by the weather a few times.

We free-climbed two routes of exceptional quality. The first was the first free ascent of the east face of Cerro Catedral (1,000m, 7c+), finishing off a project called Los Fabulosos Dos, a variation of La Escoba de Dios, which was attempted by our friends Mason Earle (U.S.), Peter Rhodes, and George Ullrich (both U.K.). Unfortunately they had to bail due to bad weather, but all credit goes to them for envisioning this line. We fixed ropes for two days before spending a week on the wall capsule-style. The weather was exceptional, with only two days of bad conditions during our ascent. There were even days we had to wait for the shade because it was too warm for technical climbing! I never thought that would be necessary in Patagonia. Our summit day, however, was cold and icy, and required some suffer-fest battles.

Our second climb was the first free ascent of the east face of Cerro Cota 2000 (500m, 7c+), the big rock face left of Cerro Catedral. At first we thought we were doing a new line, but we found bolts and pitons from the 1993 Italian route (Canzan-Moreolo-Pancierera-Raccanello-Valmassoi). Without any pre-fixing, we spent a week on the wall. The weather was really bad this time—we only had two decent days. Many days were spent just hanging in our portaledge, being levitated and beaten against the wall by the strong winds. With almost no food left, and mentally prepared to bail, we got our good day, climbed to the summit, and then walked out of the valley with no extra food. Both lines had impeccable rock with perfect cracks and dream dihedrals.

## Images



Cerro Cota 2000 (left) and Cerro Cathedral (right). Both routes were climbed free (difficulties to 7c+) and ascend high-quality cracks and dream dihedrals.



A clean corner on Cerro Cathedral.



Steep climbing on Cerro Cathedral.



Villanueva leading a hard, thin corner on Cerro Cathedral.



Good weather and clean cracks on Cerro Cota 2000.



Good weather and clean cracks on Cerro Cota 2000.



Starting the crux dihedral on Cerro Cota 2000.



High-quality cracks and dream dihedrals define the two free routes. Villanueva stems up the crux corner on Cota 2000.



Climbing a steep corner on Cota 2000.



The worst weather on Cota 2000 came on summit day.



Villanueva resting in the French Valley.



Heading into the French Valley.



Relaxing in the bivy cave in the French Valley.



## Article Details

Author	Sean Villanueva
Publication	AAJ
Volume	55
Issue	87
Page	222
Copyright Date	2013
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions