



AAC Publications

Torre Egger, west face, Notti Magiche

South America, Argentina, Chaltén Massif

Three years ago, at a round table in Lecco, Italy, Mario Conti and Carlo Aldè showed Matteo “Berna” Bernasconi and me a few photos of the west face of Torre Egger. This little information was enough for Berna and I to tackle the challenge of opening the first route on this immaculate wall. With no experience in Patagonia, I had no idea of what to expect.

During the winters of 2011 and 2012, Berna and I tried our best. We learned a lot about Patagonia—its mountains and its unpredictable weather—and we also learned a lot about opening a new route on a big wall in such a remote place. In 2012, Berna and I arrived at a highpoint just 30m below the col that divides Punta Herron from Torre Egger (Col Lux), only to retreat due to a massive fall that left us hanging from one cam [AAJ 2012]. Little was missing to complete our route, but we had to go back in 2013 to properly finish the job. We decided to add a third person, in order to be lighter and safer on the wall. Luca Schiera, a talented youngster from Lecco ready for his first experience outside Europe, was the first to come to mind.

The 2013 trip started under the best omen. Arriving in Chaltén, the three of us immediately climbed Cerro Standhardt by the route Festerville. After that, though, the *suerte* flew away and we got more than three weeks of mostly bad weather. Thirty-five days after the start of our trip, Berna had to go to back to Italy. Luca and I decided to give it a last try. On February 20, we headed to Circo de Los Altares and then to Filo Rosso, where we pitched our tent. We waited for seven days in bad weather. Finally, on February 28, we received a forecast for four days of good weather.

The first day we climbed three easy pitches (UIAA V) and overcame the snowfield at the base of the wall (60°). We then reascended terrain from the previous Cavallaro-Salvaterra attempt (1996) for 300m (mainly slabs up to 6c), sometimes juggling fixed ropes left from our 2012 attempt. Above, the wall became steeper and we continued straight up on the right side of the obvious big dihedral. After two pitches on the right (6c and A1, maybe-free climbable at around 7b/7b+ if not icy or wet) we climbed the dihedral itself for five pitches through some icy sections (6c A1), until a tricky tension traverse (one bolt) led to a scary, long pitch on chossy, black rock (A2). After this, we climbed two brilliant crack pitches, mainly free-climbed but with few rests (potentially free at 7a/b). Eventually, we reached a belay under a small roof, two pitches below the 2012 highpoint, where we spent the night at the “Hotel Egger,” hanging in our harnesses with our feet in the haul bags.

Above, our 2012 attempt, which we called Die Another Day, goes straight up for two pitches, climbs a face (6c), and then goes directly up an impressive overhang, overcome with aid climbing on a tiny seam (A2); it stops 10m below an overhanging corner. The 2013 line, Notti Magiche, briefly follows Die Another Day from the Hotel Egger bivy, and then trends left, following a logical system of cracks. Unlike the year prior, the wall was free of ice and snow under the col.

On the morning of March 1, we climbed from below the roof (A1) and then straight up for 10m. We then climbed left up two steep but easy pitches (6c) to the last, thrilling pitch (7a A1), which leads directly to the col. We arrived at the col at 4 p.m., melted some snow, prepared the bivy, and finally took a little rest. We thought of opening an independent line to the top, but it seemed forced, so we followed the existing Huber-Schnarf route for the final 200m, and on March 2 at 11:20 p.m., Luca and I stood on the summit of Torre Egger. It was the moment I desired and dreamt of for three long years.

After many rappels down the route, we reached our tent at the Filo Rosso on March 3, bringing down all the fixed ropes we used. We called the route Notti Magiche ("Magical Nights," 1,000m, 7a A2 WI4), a name that ironically recalls the uncomfortable bivys and also those truly magical Patagonian nights. In total, we placed six bolts on the route (three belay bolts and three protection bolts), but Salvaterra and Cavallaro had previously placed another eight belay bolts in the first part. Some fixed gear remains as rappel anchors. The face is mostly free climbing on rock with some aid sections, but ice gear is essential for climbing the final snow mushroom. The 2012 attempt, Die Another Day, which stops 30m below the col, is waiting to be finished.

Images



Climbing a clean corner high on the west face of Torre Egger.



Ntti Magiche Topo.



Approaching an intimidating roof high on the route.



Avoiding the black diorite bands on Torre Egger.



Torre Egger summit mushroom.



Steep aid climbing on Torre Egger's west face.



Approaching the previously unclimbed side of Torre Egger.



Open bivy en-route.



Torre Egger west face route line.

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