



AAC Publications

Ak-su valley, Slesova (Russian Tower), La Fiamma d'Oriente, first free ascent

Kyrgyzstan, Pamir Alai, Karavshin

After a long and eventful hike to base camp in August and a week of recovering from illness, Madaleine Sorkin and I set off for a warm-up on Perestroika Crack that ended in us coming down after the crux due to bad weather.

A few days later we started up what would be the highlight of the trip. Eric Decaria had told us about a free possibility to the right of Perestroika Crack called La Fiamma d'Oriente (7 A3+, Groaz-Pancheri-Zanetti, 1999). This climb followed Perestroika Crack for two pitches and then took a crack line up and right. This pitch was one of the gems of the route, with technical seam climbing and finicky gear (5.12a). The next pitches were in the 5.10 range and led up to the crux, which was on bullet rock but had minimal gear. The first "good" piece was 20 feet off the belay and required 5.11 moves. The remainder was difficult slab climbing with quarter-inchers as protection. This pitch was in the 5.12c R range. This led us to a lower-angle slab that went into a corner system. A few more 5.11+ to 5.12 pitches on steeper terrain brought us to back into Perestroika Crack after an incredible 200-foot, 5.10 hand crack. In all, we climbed 19 pitches on La Fiamma.

On the summit Madaleine and I could not believe we had completed a two-day ground-up onsight of the route. We placed no bolts and never brushed a single hold. This climb was a gift from the climbing gods.

Nik Berry, USA

Images

Article Details

Author	Nik Berry
Publication	AAJ
Volume	55
Issue	87
Page	269
Copyright Date	2013
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions