



## **Pico del Norte (6,050m), northwest face, Ñeq'e Ñeq'e**

Bolivia, Cordillera Real

On July 12, Argentinians Gabriel Fava and Carlitos Molina put up a new route on Pico del Norte, the rarely climbed northern outlier of Illampu (6,368m) at the north end of the Cordillera Real. Leaving the mining town of Ancohuma (a.k.a. Ancoma), they walked to the foot of the small but contorted glacier that bars access to the northwest face and pitched a tent at 4,900m. Leaving at 7 a.m. the following day, they quickly reached the bottom of the northwest buttress. Some sources describe a route up this buttress at a grade of TD+ AI4 UIAA III, but first-ascent records are unclear (possibly German, possibly 1984). This buttress lies to the left of the original line on the west face, the 1964 Slovenian Route (Golob-Mihelic-Savenc).

The Argentinians chose an unclimbed line up the left flank of the buttress, starting via a pronounced corner system. Three 60m pitches in the corner (11a, 10c, and 10b) led to a large snow terrace. The granite proved to be of surprisingly good quality, and above the terrace another excellent rock pitch (10d) led to an area of easier ground where the two could move together. To reach the upper mixed terrain, they climbed another steep rock wall via an enjoyable thin crack. Above, they moved together again, this time for around three rope lengths, to reach the sharp north spur, which forms the left edge of the face. Here, one and a half pitches of 5.9 led to easier ground and the summit dome. They reached the highest point at 5 p.m. and subsequently named the route Ñeq'e Ñeq'e (1,000m, 5.11a 60°); Ñeq'e is an Aymara word meaning "motivation."

Fava and Molina downclimbed the northwest ridge (first ascent unknown), running into darkness near the base. They made four 60m rappels down the west flank before contouring along moraine northeast to regain their tent at 10 p.m.

Lindsay Griffin, from information provided by Gabriel Fava, [Andeslimite.net](http://Andeslimite.net), Argentina

## Images



Carlitos Molina on the fourth pitch of Neq'e Neq'e.



Pico del Norte (6,050m) from the north-northwest, as seen when approaching from Ancohuma. (1) Northeast ridge (Hein-Horeschowsky-Hortangel-Pfann, 1928). (2) North spur. (3) Neq'e Neq'e (2013). (4) West face (Slovenian route, 1964). (5) Northwest ridge.



Gabriel Fava on the first pitch (5.11a) of Ñeq'e Ñeq'e.

## Article Details

Author	Lindsay Griffin
Publication	AAJ
Volume	88
Issue	56
Page	205
Copyright Date	2014
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions