



AAC Publications

Milluni, Southwest Face, Ya Pues!

Bolivia, Cordillera Real

For the past three years, while traveling to Zongo Pass for rock climbing, I have looked at the southwest face of Pico Milluni (5,500m) and thought that in the right conditions it must hold interesting mixed lines. Despite its easy access and a number of obvious possibilities, climbers appear to have largely ignored this face in recent years. For various reasons, mainly involving too many other projects, I never went there.

Finally, on June 5, Roberto Rauch and I left La Paz at 6 a.m., and after picking up Gregg Beisly in El Alto, drove to within an hour and a half hike of the southwest face. Prior exploration of this face, like much of Bolivian climbing history, is a little confusing and vague. As far as we know, two variations were climbed in the prominent central couloir during the 1970s, a time when the face held far more snow. Also, a line predominantly on rock was completed up the left central buttress.

We chose a funnel of steepening hard snow and easy mixed ground between these two, which we climbed unroped for about 300m to a belay stance beneath the crux mixed section. This crux involved 20m of very thin ice in a vertical corner, which Gregg led to a small snowfield. Above, we followed a classic narrow mixed gully for a few pitches until its exit onto a more open snow and rock face. Another few pitches led to the summit ridge at a prominent notch.

Finally in the sun, we followed the ridge for 600–700m of easy but fun climbing on very good rock, similar in character and quality to the Upper Exum on the Grand Teton. It was late afternoon by the time we reached the summit, but the descent was straightforward thanks to the knowledge Gregg had gained from climbing a rock route on the northeast side the previous week. We made three rappels from small outcrops to the northeast, toward Glaciar Viejo, and scrambled a traversing ledge to descender's right onto a long talus slope and eventually the moraine wall of Glaciar Viejo. We stayed on top of the moraine and followed faint trails back to Casa Blanca, where Roberto and I waited while Gregg jogged 10km to retrieve the car on the other side of the mountain.

We believe our line is new and have called it Ya Pues! (600m to ridge, D+/TD- M5 AI3). Ya Pues is an expression commonly used in La Paz to mean "come on already," "just do it," or "knock it off."

Chris Clarke, Bolivia

Editor's note: In his various guidebooks Alan Mesili reports that the central couloir was climbed in 1972 by Italians Angelo Gelmi and Giuseppe Ferrari, and by Ernesto Sanchez and himself. The Italians climbed to the low point in the summit ridge (AD+), while Mesili suggests he and Sanchez veered left and climbed almost direct to the summit (D 55°). Mesili also reports that he repeated the route solo in April 1974. Three years later it was skied by Dominique Chapuis, in the same season that he made the second ascent of the Afanassieff Route on the west face of Huayna Potosi. The left (north) pillar on the face was climbed in 1981 by Frenchmen Yves Astier and Olivier Mandrenes. Although reports suggest that the late Stanley Shepard soloed the first ascent of the south ridge in 1979, his description makes it far more likely he was on the higher Pico Italia.

Images



The southwest face of Pico Milluni. (1) North Pillar. (2) Ya Pues! (3) Central Couloir, Mesili-Sanchez finish. (4) Central Couloir, Gelmi-Ferrari exit.



Gregg Beisly climbing through mixed terrain on Pico Milluni.



A foreshortened view of the southwest face of Pico Milluni. The skyline ridge left leads toward Pico Italia. (1) North Pillar. (2) Ya Pues!. (3) Central Couloir.



Robert Rauch on mixed ground, Pico Milluni.



Local activists Chris Clarke (left) and Robert Rauch on the summit of Pico Milluni.

Article Details

Author	Chris Clarke
Publication	AAJ
Volume	89
Issue	57
Page	0
Copyright Date	2015
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions