



## AAC Publications

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### **Acopan Tepui, east face, Gravity Inversion**

Venezuela

In late December 2013, Luis Cisneros, Blake McCord, Joel Unema, and I traveled to the friendly Pemon village of Yunek. From there we hoped to establish a new route on the east face of the Acopan Tepui. Analyzing the formation, we found a weakness on the gently overhanging, red-colored, 2,000' wall a few hundred feet right of Pizza, Chocolate y Cerveza. This was Luis and my second trip to the Tepui, after establishing Araguato King [AAJ 2009].

Starting on December 30 we spent ten days establishing Gravity Inversion (VI 5.12d R). We found some vertical crack systems on the first half of the route. The second half challenged us with horizontal crack systems reminiscent of the Gunks, making for committing, athletic, and often run-out leads. Thankfully, the crux 5.12d pitch allowed passage via a stunning, continuous finger crack that weaved its way through three roofs. Despite an occasional downpour, we stayed dry thanks to the overhanging nature of the climb. Four pitches clocked in at 5.10, eight at 5.11, and six at 5.12. Some belays were reinforced with a bolt, while almost all of the climbing is naturally protected (one fixed piton).

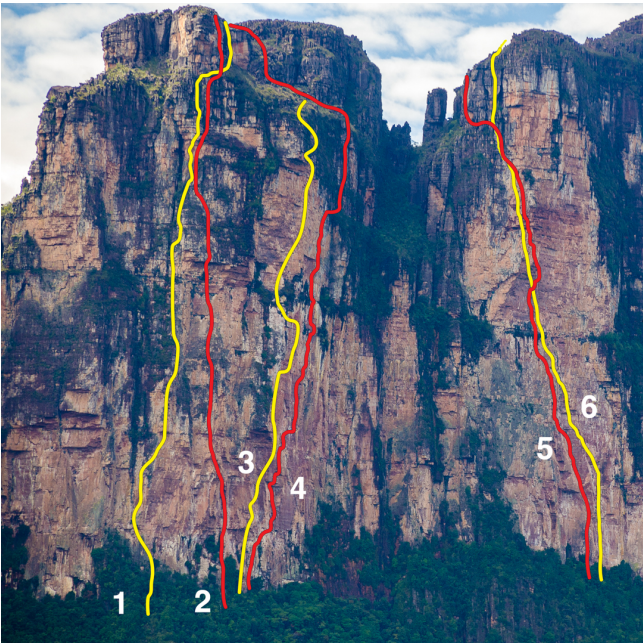
Problems with our stoves led us to add firewood to our haulbags, and we cooked dinners on small ledges along the way. A couple of the upper pitches presented difficult jungle climbing, and a machete was an important part of our lead rack. From the bivouacs our view was dominated by the massive south-facing wall of Churi Tepui, which is many miles long, up to 2,000' tall, and, to the best of our knowledge, unclimbed. Four 1,000' waterfalls pour down Churi, and that number doubled after storms. Other unclimbed walls can be found northwest of the Acopan Tepui in the U-shaped valley connecting Acopan Tepui to Churi Tepui. We encourage future teams to be respectful of the locals' wishes in Yunek, as access to climbing can be granted or withheld by the villagers. Paying for guides and porters is required.

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## Images



Climbing out the crux roof on Gravity Inversion. Almost all of the climbing is protected by natural gear, unlike many hard climbs on Acopan Tepui that are mostly bolt-protected.



Acopan Tepui, showing (1) Mundo Perdido (Madinabeitia-Vacampenhou, 2010), (2) Pizza, Chocolate y Cerveza (Arran-Arran-Rangel, 2003), (3) Escalador Selvático (Giupponi-Larcher-Oviglia, 2014), (4) Gravity Inversion (Cisneros-Deschamps-McCord-Unema, 2014), (5) Purgatory (Albert-Calderón-Glowacz-Heuber, 2007). (6) Dempster-Libecki (2007).



Approaching the Acopan Tepui.



Drilling a belay anchor.



Enjoying a serene morning from the portaledge.





Even midway up the wall, the jungle is alive and well.



Step face climbing, high above the jungle.

## Article Details

Author	Eric Deschamps
Publication	AAJ
Volume	56
Issue	88
Page	193
Copyright Date	2014
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions