



AAC Publications

Cerro Capicúa, A Tirar a la Rarita (not quite to summit)

Argentina-Chile, Northern Patagonia, Cochamó

This season I hoped to complete a first ascent on one of the most impressive and beautiful walls in Cochamó, the west face of Cerro Capicúa. I'd chosen a line in the middle of the wall, following a very steep headwall. Trying to free as much as possible, and bolting if necessary to favor free climbing, it took three trips over three different years.

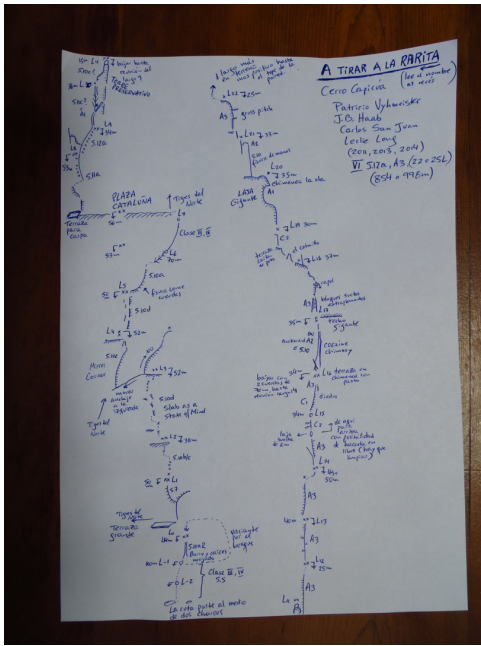
I first tried the route with my wife, Leslie Long (USA), in 2011. The possibilities in the lower part of the wall were limited, so we were forced through a slab, hand-drilling for progress. We were able to do just six pitches, with difficulties up to 5.10d. I came back two years later, in 2013, with Carlos San Juan (Chile). To avoid continuing up the slab we joined Tigres del Norte out left, climbing a finger crack in a corner, until we arrived at Plaza Cataluña (a huge ledge in the middle of the face with an *alerce* forest and running water). From here we followed an abandoned project started by Catalonians, climbing four pitches to the summit of a sub-tower (A3). We eventually freed the aid pitches by adding bolts, this time with a Bosch. The climbing was hard, up to 5.12a, and comprised of very thin slab climbing. Then we were forced down to Plaza Cataluña by a storm. Heavy rain kept us there for three days, soaking our clothes and sleeping bags. Eventually we bailed and rappelled through waterfalls—kind of epic.

On my third trip, in 2014, I teamed up with J.B. Haab (USA). We were armed with ropes to fix, bolts, and a tent to establish a real campsite on Plaza Cataluña. Four days of climbing brought us to pitch 20, where peckers proved very helpful (A3). Only six pitches remained to the summit; we decided to go for it, even though the skies were gloomy. The cracks up high were full of dirt, so progression was slow—cleaning and aid climbing. But the headwall was wild: an overhanging chimney, a huge roof, an exposed flake, a nice hand crack (finally!), and more filthy, slow aiding. By the time we were on top of pitch 25 it started to rain, just one short pitch below the top of the wall! We rappelled in the rain and kept cleaning the fixed ropes through the night.

Capicúa, in Catalan, means a palindrome, a number that can be read the same way forward and backward. Thus, we named the route A Tirar a la Rarita (1,000m, VI 5.12a A3). Four slab pitches could be freed at solid 5.13 with the addition of bolts for protection. We did a thorough job cleaning the route up to pitch 18, and most of the anchors have two bolts. It was a bummer not to reach the summit after so much steep climbing—the final pitch is likely 5.7 or easier. But I'm not going back up there just for one pitch, that's for sure.

Patricio Vyhmeister, Chile

Images



Topo for A Tirar a la Rarita.



Patricio Vyhmeister aiding up a thin section.



Patricio Vyhmeister leading a steep and clean crack.



Cerro Capicúa, showing A Tirar a la Rarita.



Looking down Cerro Capicua.

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