



AAC Publications

La Pirámide, New Routes

Chile, Northern Patagonia

In February 2015, Matt Van Biene, Coleman “Troutman” Blakeslee, Tad McCrea, and I climbed at La Pirámide (a.k.a. Cerro Colorado), a cliff discovered by Jim Donini and others in 2009 [see AAJ 2014 for Donini’s introductory report]. While at the cliff we established four new routes.

The Magic Spatula (150m, III 5.11c) is the most significant line that we established. It climbs four long, quality pitches up the face to the right of the main prow, followed by a short fifth pitch that scrambles up blocky terrain to the top of the cliff. There are two-bolt anchors at the top of each pitch, except for the fifth one, which tops out on easy terrain. From the top it’s a 30-minute walk down the backside and around the base. Matt and I first established the climb, and then our group of four made the first free ascent.

Young Gaucho (35m, 5.11a) is a single-pitch route in the “cragging” section of the wall, just below the huge ledge on the right side of the cliff. It is immediately left of a number of existing and unnamed routes established by Donini, et al. It climbs a slabby crack system for 20m before pulling through a crux roof and finishing on another 15m of slabby, technical crack and face climbing—a high-quality line with a two-bolt anchor at the top. Coleman made the first free ascent.

Gauchito Gil (50m, 5.10) is a two-pitch route that begins off the big ledge above the cragging section (you must climb one of the lower pitches to access it). The route starts up a small pedestal above and right an anchor for the unnamed routes. It’s possible this route could continue to the top of the wall. Matt and I did the first ascent.

We climbed one more quality single-pitch route just right of the unnamed lines: an obvious hand crack that we called Daley Splitter (35m, 5.8), in memory of Liz Daley.

It appears that Brazilian and Argentine climbers have established numerous routes over the past year. However, the cliff is massive and there is still a lot of potential for other routes. Note that many of the lines look like splitter cracks from afar, but are really thin seams when you get close. I imagine that most lines of weakness will be climbed soon.

At this point almost all routes have gone on gear, and bolts have only been used at belays. There are also many interesting rock formations and towers across the valley from the cliff. These may be loose, and there are few crack systems, but it is possible they could offer wild sport climbing if the rock is decent. There is more rock climbing within an hour’s drive of Chile Chico, the nearest town, that will be developed in the coming decades. Depending on access issues and how many people take the time to develop these zones, I could one day see the Chile Chico area being a destination in its own right for all types of climbing.

To reach the area, drive from the east end of Chile Chico, following the dirt road toward the airport for about 7km. You will pass a red gate on your right. Do not use this gate. Continue past the red gate and the gate after that, before reaching a wood-and-wire gate on the right side of the road. Drive through this gate (and close it behind you) and continue west for a couple of kilometers until reaching another wood-and-wire gate at the edge of a small field. Drive through this gate (and close it behind you), and park on the far side of the field. This is the property of Señor Marques, who raises sheep on

the land. From here, continue up the road on foot for a short while until the road ends. You can clearly see the cliff above the hills in front of you. Follow your nose and rough animal trails up into the basin below the cliff. Establish camp at the obvious meadow in this basin. The approach takes two and a half to three hours.

The campsite in the meadow below the cliff is beautiful. There is a natural spring, so it is not necessary to carry water up to the camp. There is room for at least four to six tents in the zone around the spring, so there should not be a problem finding a place to camp. Please, do not poop near the spring. There is no established bathroom near the camp, and we usually walk about 10 minutes west into a rocky gully to go to the bathroom. In the future, if more climbers come to use this camp, another solution will be needed.

I believe it's important to stress to any visiting climbers that they should be extremely respectful of Señor Marques and the land, both on the approach and at base camp. My Spanish is not perfect, but I was able to understand that he has worked on this land for many years, his uncle worked on it before him, and it is very important to them. He is very, very nice and welcomed us into his home even though we were complete strangers. We tried to be as respectful as possible and left him with a tarp when we left. Other climbers have left ropes or brought alcohol or other gifts.

Austin Siadak, USA

Images



Matt Van Biene climbing the crux pitch of the Magic Spatula (150m, III 5.11c), one of the few routes on La Pirámide to reach the top of the cliff.



Coleman "Troutman" Blakeslee climbs the technical Young Gaucho (5.11a).

Article Details

Author	Austin Siadak
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	87
Page	0
Copyright Date	2015
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions