



AAC Publications

Cerro Marmolejo, new ice climbs

Chile, Central Andes

In mid-July, I met Cecilia Buil (Spain) in Chile; our plan being to climb some new routes on Cerro Marmolejo (6,109m) located at the head of Cajon del Maipo, a long, mountainous valley near Santiago. We first wanted to climb the route established by Harry Berger and Albert Leichtfried in 2006, Senda Real (6 pitches, WI7+). However with extreme cold and blizzard conditions persisting, a long approach, and little time at our disposal, we could only complete two pitches on this hard icefall. [See AAJ 2006 and www.escalando.cl/marmolejo.htm for more information about Senda Real and other climbs on this wall.]

After this we shifted our attention to the rocky bastion that supports the Marmolejo Glacier, 1,000m lower in elevation (the climbs are around ca 4,000m). From our base camp, a number of icefalls on the east side of the mountain could be reached by just a couple of hours on foot. There were often high winds and storms during our 15-day stay, but we made good use of two good weather windows. The icefalls face northwest and on sunny days this means you have only one hour before rocks and ice begin to tumble down.

First we established a variation to a route completed by Jose "Josito" Romayand and Cecilia in 2012 called Le Patou; that route tops out on a large ledge, as does our new variation Le Bombardier (30m, WI6-) which lies just right of it. Next, we established La Gioconda (160m, WI6), which is the most obvious line on the wall, the biggest, and most beautiful. It can be broken up into two sections due to a dividing ledge. The first, in the shade, climbs black-colored and extremely hard ice, while the second receives the afternoon sun and climbs porous, stalactite ice. We needed three days to climb the five-pitch route.

We also attempted a route we dubbed Mega Couloir, which climbs up to the Marmolejo Glacier past two vertical-to-overhanging pitches at the end. The first part is hidden from sight, deep in the rock, and after a snowstorm it runs like water with spindrift. Additionally, a local named Nicolás Gutiérrez opened a new route (180m, WI5) during our trip, which is located in a gully on the left side of the wall.

– Anna Torretta, Italy

Images



Cecilia Buil on Le Bombardier (30m, WI6-).



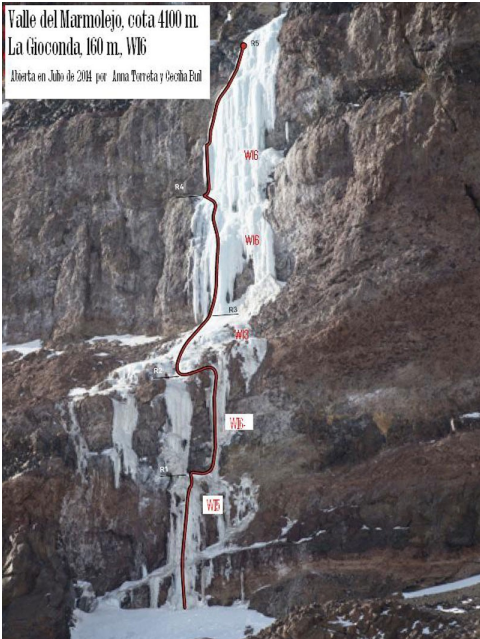
Le Bombardier (30m, WI6-) on the right and Le Patou on the left.



A photo of the remote ca 4,000m wall below the Marmolejo Glacier as seen in October during a “fatter” year. The icefalls were much thinner when Torretta and Buil visited in July; however, temperatures were colder and more conducive to climbing. La Gioconda (160m, WI6) is the large line on the right.



Cecilia Buil leading steep ice on the upper part of La Gioconda (160m, WI6).



A photo topo of La Gioconda (160m, WI6) with difficulty breakdowns.

Article Details

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