



AAC Publications

Eight New Routes in Siberia

Russia, Chukotka Region, Bilibino, Chuvan Mountains

After the discovery by two Australians in 2014 of an exciting area of big granite walls north of the Arctic Circle (AAJ 2015), Hansjörg Auer (Austria), Jacopo Larcher (South Tyrol, Italy), Eneko and Iker Pou (Spain), and Siebe Vanhee (Belgium), accompanied by photographers Elias Holzknecht from Austria and me (Spain), spent a month in the area, opening eight new routes, most of high quality.

We split into two teams. In eight hours on July 6, Eneko and Iker put up Aupa! (300m, 6c) on the General. They followed this on the 11th with the first ascent of Into the Wild (425m, 7a) on the Commander, and then returned to the General on the 14th to add Mosquito Rock Tour (450m, 7a+) in 11 hours. Finally, on the 24th, they made an 8.5-hour ascent of the Two Parrots (320m, 7a) on the Commander. All routes were climbed in continuous pushes.

Auer, Larcher, and Vanhee started their collection of new routes on July 6 with Wake Up in Siberia (240m, 6b) on the General, and then on the 11th, 12th, and 14th put up Red Corner (450m, 7c+) on the Commander, to the right of a line attempted in 2014 by Australians Chris Fitzgerald and Chris Warner. This route was team-freed on the final day. They placed four hand-drilled 8mm bolts, including three on belays, and left two beaks and two knifeblades on the route.

On the 18th and 20th, the same three put up Sketchy Django (400m, 6a+) on a previously unclimbed wall leading to the summit of a formation they named the Monk. Finally, over the 21st, 22nd, and 24th, the three worked and then completed From Zero to Hero (490m, 7a) on the General.

The team spent 23 days at base camp and felt this was one of the best trips they had been on, despite having a constant fight with a harsh, unexpected enemy in the form of Siberian mosquitoes.

Jordi Canyi, Spain

Notes on permits for the Bilibino area. The permit procedure for entering the Chukotka autonomous region is somewhat murky. Teams in 2015 were informed they needed to get a permit ("propusk") from a tour agency, at least 30 days in advance (some officials recommended 90 days or more). However, efforts to contact the recommended agencies were unsuccessful. Instead, try contacting the Chukotka governor's office, whose website has a page (in English) with instructions for obtaining tourist permits.

Images



From left to right: Hansjörg Auer, Jacopo Larcher, Siebe Vanhee, Iker Pou, and Eneko Pou in the Bilibino.



North face of the Commander with, from left to right, Into the Wild, Australian attempt (2014), Red Corner, and Two Parrots



The east face of the General. From left to right: Wake Up in Siberia, Ilium, Aupa!, and From Zero to Hero. All routes established in 2015.



The north side of the General. Left to right: From Zero to Hero (2015); Basil Brush (2014); Mosquito Rock Tour (2015); Turilov Route (2014).



Iker Pou climbing.



Essential headgear for racking up in the Bilibino area.



Sketchy Django on the Monk.



Siebe Vanhee makes thin bridging moves during the first ascent of Red Corner on the Commander.



Jacopo Larcher on one of the hard pitches of the Red Corner.



Hansjörg Auer on one of the hard pitches on Red Corner.

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