



AAC Publications

Breitinden, North Face, The Ice Princess

Norway, Senja

From February 20 to March 7, Paul Bride, Jesse Huey, Michael Pennings, Jon Walsh, and I visited the island of Senja, north of the Arctic Circle. During the first few days, Jon and Jesse climbed Finnkona (400m, WI6+), which they agreed was one of the wildest ice routes anywhere. They also attempted the still unrepeated Ines Papert testpiece Finnmannen (WI6+ M9+, 2013), finding hard, insecure, and spicy climbing. Mike and I enjoyed a Polar Circus-like route called Hesten, a 450m WI5 classic.

Conditions then became very coastal, and the danky rains mirrored the health of our team as we battled a flu-like sickness that took us down one after the other. During a down-day ski tour to Senja's highest peak, Breitinden (1,010m), we scoped the "Scottish Wall," finding the 400m to 600m north face ripe with potential. Jesse and I returned in better conditions and launched up an unclimbed system of goulottes and mixed ground to the left of the original route, Fantasia (Nesheim, Olsen, and partner, 2007).

Right away we knew it was game on. I found only a couple of pieces to protect the 60m AI4 first pitch. That theme continued for the remainder of the route, but when the difficulties increased and the terrain got steep, we always found just enough gear to make the next move. As a full moon began to rise, we topped out on the summit ridge, howling as you do when a fist pump just isn't enough. A rappel off the back led to long snow slopes and a circumnavigation of the mountain to get back to the car. We arrived home 17 hours after leaving. Our 450m route, the Ice Princess, was AI4+ M6+ R, but like most mountain experiences the grade only tells part of the story. [Find many more photos here.]

Paul McSorley, Canada

Images



Jesse Huey searches for pro on the run-out Ice Princess, north face of Breitinden.



The “Scottish Wall” on the north face of Breitinden. (1) Grasshopper Gully (400m, AI5 M5, Perrin-Visscher, 2014). (2) The Ice Princess (450m, AI4+ M6+ R, Huey-McSorley, 2015). (3) Fantasia (450m, TD WI4+, Nesheim, Olsen, and friend, 2007). (4) Crazy Maze (600m, 8+/IX WI4+, Papert-Senf, 2014).

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