



Cerro Hermoso, South Face; Cerro San Lorenzo, New Route to Pilar Sur–South Summit Col

Argentina/Chile, Central Patagonia

In November, my partner Domen Petrovčič and I, along with Rok Kurnič, Boštjan Mikuž, and Dejan Koren (all Slovenian), decided to go to Cerro San Lorenzo. Our main objective was, until our arrival, a new route on the east face. The planned time for our expedition was one month, of which three weeks were expected to be in base camp.

After flying into Rio Gallegos, we purchased our food and remaining supplies and then continued by bus to Gobernador Gregores, the closest town to Perito Moreno National Park, where Cerro San Lorenzo lies. From here on we needed a 4WD to travel into the park, and we were lucky to secure it beforehand, thanks to Rolando Garibotti, who generously helped us with logistics and forecasts on our trip. It took us three round-trip carries to get our equipment to base camp at an old shepherd's shed.

On our second day at base camp, Domen and I hiked up to scope the east face. The wall seemed fairly dry: Snow and ice climbing conditions looked bad, and the temperature was completely spring-like. While waiting for better conditions, we hoped to try the south face of Cerro Hermoso. [Prior climbs exist on this side of the peak, but their location is not certain.]

On November 11, from a bivy close to Cerro Hermoso, Domen and I started climbing early, ascending easier terrain during the night and reaching the main snowfield at dawn. After we crossed the snowfield, we reached the steeper south-southwest face, where we climbed straight to the summit up the fall line. The conditions were generally good, but warm, and the ascent took six hours (ca 500m, 80° M4). From the summit, we first descended toward the east summit and from there down the southern snowfield until we reached the foot of the wall.

After this the weather worsened, the temperature dropped, and our base camp got covered in snow. After days of waiting, reading, playing tarot card games, and loitering around the base, some good news reached us: A nice weather window, though not 100 percent fair, would arrive during the final days of our trip. Still, for days, the mountain stayed engulfed in clouds.

Domen and I decided to try Pilar Sur via the northeast couloir between it and San Lorenzo's south summit (Cumbre Buscaini). We packed for three days and headed up. After an eight-hour approach, we reached the edge of the glacier, right under the wall, and pitched a tent in the shelter of a large boulder. In the afternoon we had time to examine the chosen line up close.

We started climbing at 2 a.m. on November 21 with our bivouac gear. With fresh snow, we progressed more slowly than expected. After 13 hours we reached the col between Pilar Sur and the south summit, where we found steep and crumbly walls leading to either summit. For our taste, the climbing would be too dangerous. Still, we were content with our route to this point (ca 900m, 90°).

We descended with many rappels down the south side of the mountain, dropping into the glacial tongue of the Buscaini-Metzeltin Route (1986). Meanwhile, on the same day, the rest of our party climbed a line on San Lorenzo to reach the Sudafricana Route (east ridge). See their report [here](#).

Domen Kastelic, Slovenia

Images



The south end of San Lorenzo (3,706m), showing: (A) Aguja Antipasto. (1) Romance Explosion. (B) Pilar Sur. (2) 2013 Argentine attempt. (3) 2016 Ecuadorian attempt. (4) 2015 Slovenian route to the col. (C) Cumbre Buscaini.



The south face of Cerro Hermoso and the Slovenian line.

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