



AAC Publications

Jakoceri, South Ridge and Traverse to Chachacomani

Bolivia, Cordillera Real

It was 2 a.m. on May 25 at the base camp for ascents of Chachacomani from the west. Jules Jenner and I woke up excited: It was the first time we would attempt a new route in the Cordillera Real. We had left the small village of Peñas, where we'd been staying between ascents, the day before. The priest there, Padre Antonio Zavattarelli, probably knows these mountains as well as anyone, and we benefited from his wisdom. But when we got out of our sleeping bags at the 5,100m camp, we discovered it was cloudy. No way we would be able to find the notch in the ridge where we planned to start our ascent. We decided to sleep until 4 a.m. and reassess the weather.

Seven and a half hours later, we were gently woken by the sun. Damn! Neither of us had heard our alarm. While breakfasting we discussed options—wait until tomorrow or go now? Waiting seemed the reasonable option, but the weather was nice and we wanted to climb, so at 10 a.m. we left camp and started up the Chachacomani Glacier. At a large plateau around 5,450m on the normal route to Chachacomani from the west, we headed east across the glacier to the south ridge of Jakoceri (ca 5,800m, ca 5,900m on Google Earth).

Two poorly defined cracks led up to an obvious notch on the crest of the ridge, and we chose the one on the left. Jules led, as he is more at ease on rock, and after 40m of UIAA IV/V on good rock—once we had thrown off all the dirt, and there was a lot—he reached the ridge. We turned the first gendarme on the right. The section after didn't appear to have any protection, but fortunately it was short. We climbed exactly on the crest at IV. The ridge then became easier and more mixed until reaching a small top. Here, we noticed this point could be gained more easily directly from the glacier, by a 65° snow slope. [The Italian party that made the second ascent of this ridge, also in 2016, followed this "shortcut."]

The ridge now became rocky again, with many short sections of climbing on beautiful granite (IV), reminiscent of Chamonix. We bypassed the third gendarme on the right via an amazing orange slab. We couldn't have been happier, the route continually surprising us by its beauty and interest. Although the technical sections were short, there were many. We climbed the fourth gendarme at first on the left by a 3m crack (IV+) and then, after a short traverse, a second crack (V+) with a moving block. Above, we crossed the last notch and climbed easy mixed terrain, then snow, to the south summit of Jakoceri.

The traverse from here to the north summit is largely an icy ridge with impressive cornices. This summit ridge is oriented southeast-northwest, and, while it is not difficult, it offers amazing views toward Lake Titicaca and the Altiplano. Although the difference in altitude between summits is very small, we feel the north summit is probably the higher—the south summit is snowy and the north summit is rock, which makes it less variable.

We continued north and then downclimbed 60m to the 5,800m col between Jakoceri and Chachacomani. It is possible to head back to base camp from here, but we continued up the south ridge of Chachacomani West, a.k.a. Sentinela or Sentinel [AD+ and possibly first climbed in 1964]. It was now 7 p.m. and the sun was beginning to set. We stayed close to the crest, enjoying fine mixed climbing (IV M3) to the final rocky section, which we overcame via a flake (V+). From the top of the Sentinel, it took only half an hour to traverse the ridge eastward to the summit of Chachacomani (6,074m).

In darkness we set off northwest down the normal route, trying to follow tracks that had been erased by the wind. We lost them and kept too close to the base of the Sentinel, heading southeast. We downclimbed a 50m ice wall above a huge hole, leaving an ice screw. We eventually connected with the normal route and followed it back to our camp, arriving in the middle of the night—hence our route name: Back in Black (D+ V+). Although we made the ascent in May, this was a very dry year and we expect parties climbing the route during July and August of a normal year would find the same conditions as we did.

Alexis Collette, France

Images



In the approach valley to Chachacomani base camp. Sentinel and Jakoceri are visible above the climbers.



On the north summit of Jakoceri with the south face of Sentinel (a.k.a. Chachacomani West) at left and Chachacomani behind.



On the airy and unprotected section of the south ridge of Jakoceri. The Altiplano and Lake Titicaca are visible behind.



Alexis Collette crossing fine granite slabs on the south ridge of Jakoceri, before the fourth gendarme.



The first pitch off the glacier on Jakoceri. Alexis Collette climbing.



Seen from the Chachacomani Glacier to the east: (A) Sentinel (a.k.a. Chachacomani West); (B) Jakoceri north summit; (C) Jakoceri south summit. Back in Black (2016) follows the skyline ridge to

the top of the Sentinel, then continues to the hidden main summit of Chachacomani. (1) The Italian "shortcut" start to the south ridge. (2) The original French start to the south ridge. Both climbed in 2016.



Looking back along the south ridge of Jakoceri. The Chachacomani Glacier and approach valley are off to the right.

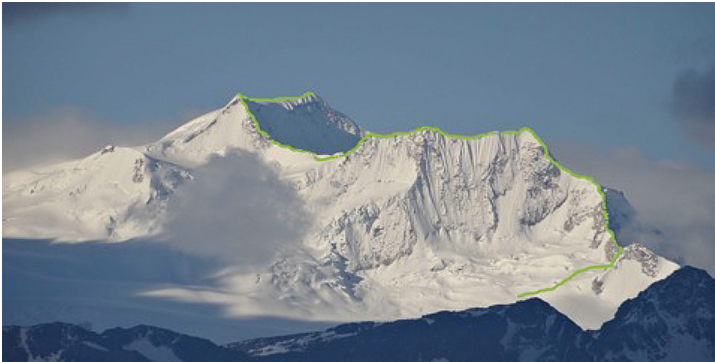


Alexis Collette heads north along the Jakoceri traverse.



The south-southwest face of Chachacomani (6,074m), seen from Jakoceri. (1) Southwest ridge (AD+,

possibly climbed in 1964). (2) South face (AD). (3) Another south face route (AD). (4) South face direct (D-, 1998). (5) Southeast ridge (AD). (6) Southeast buttress and southeast ridge (D, 1989). The ridge between the two tops was crossed in 1983.



Chachacomani (distant left) and Jakoceri from the southwest, with the line of the 2016 French traverse route Back in Black.

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