



AAC Publications

Puscanturpa Este, North Face, El Juego Sumando

Peru, Cordillera Huayhuash

It's never easy to find a fine new line, especially when your requirements border close to arrogance: unclimbed, vertical, sunny, with good rock, and, of course, all free. However, we managed to find a jewel in Peru, realizing a new route up the north face of Puscanturpa Este. It was a complete success.

In late August our team from the Groupe Militaire de Haute Montagne (GMHM), which included Antoine Bletton, Cyril Duchêne, Dimitry Munoz, and myself (along with Max Bonniot and Didier Jourdain, who climbed a new route on Siula Grande [see linked report]), traveled to the Cordillera Huayhuash. Puscanturpa Este (5,445m) is located at the southern end of the range. Most of the famous mountains here—Yerupaja, Siula Grande, Jirishanca—are known for their limestone makeup. However, the Puscanturpa peaks are quite different: The walls are made of solid volcanic basalt “organ pipes,” where free climbing is quite enjoyable.

We initially aided the lower 200m of the wall, due to difficult protection. Our cams and ordinary pitons did not work well here—hard steel pitons would push aside the giant columns with a frightening noise, every hammer knock resonating and propagating through the column. We were forced to use classic soft steel pitons instead.

Operating in a team of four, two climbers would struggle to open the route above while the other two tried to free the pitches below. It took time to clean the cracks and add some bolts to belays or run-out sections. It took us seven days to reach the summit in this style, free climbing all of the pitches. We called our route El Juego Sumando (400m, ED 7b, mandatory 6b). We hoped to repeat the route in single-push, redpoint style over one to two days but ran out of time. Apart from the belays, the in-situ gear consists of 12 pitons, four nuts, and 10 protection bolts, plus anchor bolts. A full rack, including additional soft steel pitons, is still required.

Although the abseil descent reduces the commitment, this climb remains demanding. The altitude at the start is 5,000m, and there are a lot of committing pitches, with long passages of 6b climbing lacking protection. Overall, this sunny and steep wall would fill lovers of crack climbing with great enthusiasm!

[Editor's note: There are now five known routes on Puscanturpa Este: the north ridge (British, 1986), the east face (Kozjek-Kresal, 2007), the north face (Dutch, 2012), the southeast face (Noda-Yamanoi, 2013), and the new route up the north face (Bayol-Bletton-Duchêne-Munoz, 2016). The 2016 route, El Juego Sumando, climbs mostly up the main wall to the right of the 2012 route; however, it appears to join that route or share similar terrain in its final pitches.]

– Arnaud Bayol, France (translated from French by Claude Gardien)

Images



Cyril Duchêne leading the third pitch (6b) on El Juego Sumando.



Dimitry Munoz leading a 7b pitch up a dihedral and wide crack on El Juego Sumando.



Aid climbing while establishing the initial 200m of the new route on Puscanturpa Este's north face.



The line of El Juego Sumando on the north face of Puscanturpa Este (5,445m).



The team atop the summit of Puscanturpa Este (5,445m).



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