



AAC Publications

New Climbs in Perito Moreno National Park

Argentina, Southern Patagonia

After my brother Tomas Franchini and I spent one week in El Chaltén with bad weather, we decided in late January 2017 to move north toward Perito Moreno National Park. After six hours in the car, we slept at Gobernador Gregores and the next day continued to El Rincón, the end of the road and where one would access Cerro San Lorenzo from the south, on the Argentinean side.

We were joined by Mariano Ignacio Spisso (who works as a park ranger) on January 24. Together, we warmed up on Cerro Colorado (2,301m), a rocky, volcanic peak located in the lower grassland zone of the park, making an ascent of the unclimbed west face: La Ruta del Chinchillone (350m, UIAA VI-). This peak is easy to identify from El Rincón and has only a 30-minute approach and 20-minute descent.

In the following days, the three of us hoped to climb Cerro Penitentes (2,801m) by its unclimbed southeast face. On January 25, we hiked in from the east, an unknown approach. We first crossed the Rio Lacteo and then continued up a valley with many water crossings, eventually reaching moraine pouring out from the glacier. There were no sign of previous human passage, and Mariano said it was his first time in this zone.

Between us we carried one sleeping bag, one tent, food for three days, four ice screws, and a light set of cams, nuts, and pitons. At the outset, we were unsure if the climb would involve more ice or rock. But had not expected the wall to be so steep! And there was a lot of ice. We studied the best way to climb it from our camp.

The following morning, January 26, Tomas and I started at 2:30 a.m., wanting to climb the wall very fast (Mariano stayed behind at camp). The wall faces southeast and receives sun very early, but during the night the mountain was quiet, and we didn't see signs of stonefall or avalanches on the glacier below.

We chose a line on the right side of the wall, climbing a goulette with waterfall ice. The climbing was fun and fast. Eventually we reached a larger frozen waterfall, which was white in color, and we climbed it on its right side. From here, snow slopes, mixed terrain, and a short ridgeline led us to the northeast summit (2,771m). We could see the east face of San Lorenzo in the distance—it was one of the best landscapes I've seen in my life. We called our route El Mariano (750m, 85° M4).

We tried to descend a ridge on the opposite side of the peak, but there was strong wind and the rock was incredibly rotten. We decided instead to rappel the face we had climbed. The sun was strong, and with the ice melting it was not possible to make V-thread anchors. We were forced to leave all our slings, pitons, and nuts to descend the 750m face. We arrived back at our tent at 5 p.m.

This trip was an incredible adventure, and with these two climbs we discovered the “wild side” of Patagonia. Thanks to our contacts Mariano and Cesar Fava for enabling our trip to this area.

– Silvestro Franchini, Italy

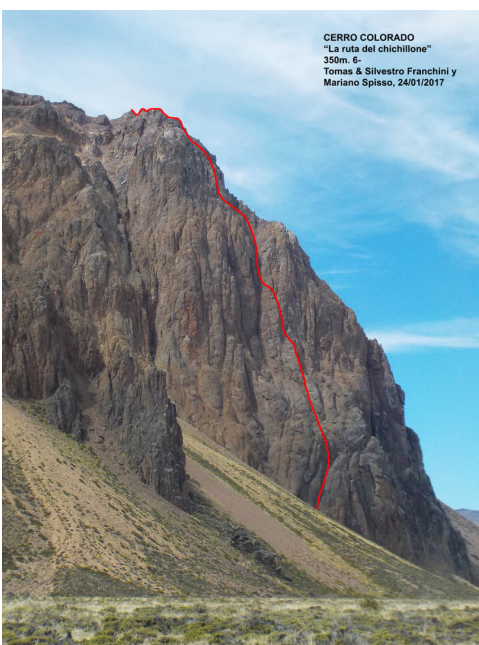
Images



The Franchini brothers standing directly below their route on Cerro Penitentes' southeast face.



The Franchini brothers on the summit of Cerro Penitentes, with San Lorenzo in the background.



La Ruta del Chinchillone (350m, UIAA VI-) on Cerro Colorado.



Cerro Penitentes as seen from the Rio Lacteo crossing.



The route line of El Mariano (750m, 85° M4), leading to the northeast summit of Cerro Penitentes.



Rappelling the southeast face of Cerro Penitentes.



Rappelling the southeast face of Cerro Penitentes.



The Franchini brothers on the final descent back to camp from Cerro Penitentes.



In the nice ice goulette of El Mariano (750m, 85° M4) on the southeast face of Cerro Penitentes.



Rock climbing on La Ruta del Chinchillone, Cerro Colorado.

Article Details

Author	Silvestro Franchini
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	0
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions