



AAC Publications

Pic de l'Aurore, Aller Simple Pour Mars

Canada, Québec, Gaspé Peninsula

The Pic de l'Aurore, in Percé, Québec, is a seaside wall at the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula, known for its long ice climbs. It's a five-hour drive from my home in Rimouski, but traveling here is always worth it for the awe and respect this wall commands.

In winter 2015, Carl Darveau and I tried to make the first repeat of Moby Dick (190m, WI5+ M7), a futuristic, high-standard line opened by Bernard Maillot and my late friend Benoit Marion in 2001. On the second pitch, I followed the first of four bolts and then made a gigantic traverse into nothingness, unable to find the line—had something changed? We bailed and traded a second attempt for scotch. Comparing the 2001 photos with ours, it was obvious that a 10m by 50m part of the wall had collapsed into the deep blue sea, taking the climb with it.

In March 2016, we returned to Pic de l'Aurore, believing a new independent line was possible between Moby Dick and Double 7 (190m, WI7 M7). Armed with a drill, pitons, and cams, we rappelled down the wall and found an astonishing ice pitch and delicate mixed terrain. We placed eight bolts. The climbing was almost too nice. Unfortunately, the temperature climbed quickly and this alien-like red limestone is unsupportive—Wham! Woof! Hoho, rockfall! We couldn't climb the line in the same day.

After a few days, the cold returned on March 17. Adding to our rack, we took courage like Vikings leaving home for a raid. Carl led the really long and thin first pitch, which finishes through overhanging ice mushrooms (85m, WI5). I took the second pitch, which starts with a technical traverse on loose rock, then thin tool placements on rock and ice, and, finally, 10m up overhanging, pink ice petals and blobs (30m, WI6+ M7+). The third pitch, a mind-blowing ice pillar, started with an overhanging move onto the broken column and, then, after a puzzle of mushrooms, delicate climbing up thin and hollow ice with so-so screws (45m, WI7-). From here, a snow couloir (25m) led us to the top. The technical crux came later: It was really hard to get out from the Le Pub Pit Caribou in Percé.

This route is an ode to Benoit Marion, who died in a car crash in 2015. We called it *Aller Simple pour Mars* (190m, WI7- M7+), which means "A One Way Ticket For March."

– Jean François Girard, Québec

Images



Carl Darveau leading the first pitch of Aller Simple pour Mars (190m, WI7- M7+).



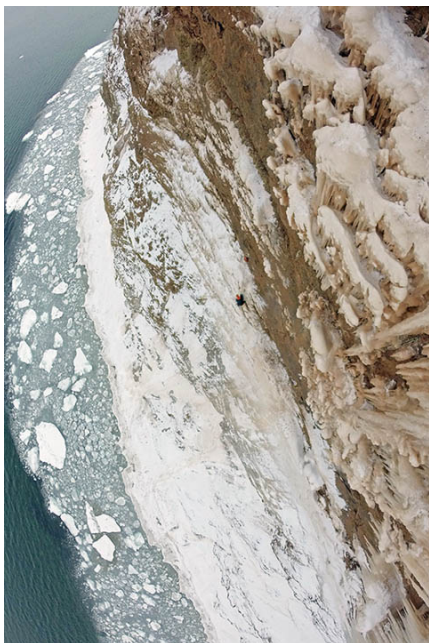
Jean Francois Girard leading the M7+ mixed crux on Aller Simple pour Mars (190m, WI7- M7+).



Jean Francois Girard following the final part of the first pitch of Aller Simple pour Mars (190m, WI7-M7+).



Jean Francois Girard leading up ice blobs on the second pitch of Aller Simple pour Mars (190m, WI7-M7+).



Looking down the second pitch of Aller Simple Pour Mars (190m, WI7- M7+).



Looking up at the red-colored limestone wall of Pic de l'Aurore. Aller Simple pour Mars (190m, WI7- M7+) climbs the central line, with the climbers barely visible atop the second pitch.

Article Details

Author	Jean François Girard
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	0
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions