



AAC Publications

Abrahamstind: Wish You Were Here

Norway, Lofoten Islands

Through my work as a guide, I'm privileged to see corners of the Lofoten Islands that a short-term visitor might not. Abrahamstind (ca 900m) is not in one of those corners. The northwest face is front and center and staring at the road, though guarded from it by the not-inconsiderable finger of the Higravfjorden, as well as two problematic couloirs. My first attempt, in 2015, ended when an avalanche of spindrift in the second couloir made me question the wisdom of stomping up it alone. The second was over when my partner triggered a small slab in the same place.

The Nordland, more than anywhere else I've climbed, is a hard place to align everything for the ideal day out. Weather, conditions, free time, and the right partner rarely seem to come together. When I arrived in 2016, recent rain had left everything coated in ice, and the forecast showed no snow until the following night. However, as is often the case in these sparsely populated islands, the key thing missing was company. On February 26, I left the car at the end of a dirt road before dawn and set off alone.

As I exited the previously offending couloir and swung my tools into ice, I thought I would just go up and see how it looked, but the corner above pulled me in like a magnet, and next thing I knew I was on my way up, on lead by myself for the first time in nearly a decade. The corner was a beauty, with a crack running its length. It widened and closed from offwidth to seam, a mixture of gloved jams, torques, and swings into the "torf." The overhanging hummocks commanded wild positions, and I wished I had a witness for the drop knees as I reached for stick after stick, sometimes stemming on ripples, sometimes with a knee in the maw, or a foot on nothing at all. I wish I could know if it was really that steep or just tilted in memory. If I'd had a partner, I'd have had him watch me, keep me tight, and tell me how well I was doing. Instead I paid out a big loop of slack so that the rope wouldn't pull me at the crux, and lamented what an idiot I was for being out there alone.

Eventually the angle eased off, and after five or six roped pitches I stopped belaying and climbed to a notch. As the sun dropped into the sea, I made a short rap into a gully and continued up through the rocks to the summit, where I sat and ate the requisite Kvikk Lunsj, the Norwegian national chocolate. I downclimbed and rappelled the way I came up, and as I reached the wall's base the wind rose and snow started falling. I tramped back along the fjord, bashing through the woods and along the water's edge, crunching over sea ice, frozen kelp, and mussel shells as I strained to see into the gale. As I rallied the car up the road, it slid off into the snow. Sometime around 2 a.m. a friendly man from Viking Towing winched me 10m up onto the highway.

The photograph on the summit shows my icy glasses askew and my collar filled with dirt, but my eyes reflect the magic that gives the islands their name. It makes me happy every time I drive past Abrahamstind and remember: Wish You Were Here (420m, WI4 M6 A0).

– Chris Wright, AAC

Images



Abrahamstind from the northwest. (1) Wish You Were Here (420m, IV WI4 M6 A0, Wright, 2016). (2) All In (400m, WI7 M8R, Klarstrom-Olsund, 2012). (3) Nothing Compares to You (420m, WI5 M6, Rothl-Odermatt, 2009, repeated several times). (4) Green and Grey (WI4 M6, Eriksson- Frans- Melling, 2012).



Abrahamstind catching the evening sun. The left-hand route is Wish You Were Here (2016), and the right is Nothing Compares to You (2009).



Back-roping Wish You Were Here on Abrahamstind.



Seen from the approach, the line that would become Wish You Were Here is the obvious left-angling groove on Abrahamstind.

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