



AAC Publications

Ala Archa National Park, Various Ascents

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Kyrgyz Ala-too

From August 4 to 28, Giovanni Pagnoncelli and I climbed three long new rock routes in Ala Archa National Park, all on trad gear. The weather was very bad throughout our stay, with only one day that was fine; the rest had at least two to three hours of rain or snow in the afternoon. We found plenty of good granite and potential for beautiful lines, particularly on north and west faces. Some of the rock on east faces was loose. We met only two (Russian) parties tackling semi-technical rock routes; the rest were climbing easy mixed ground, mostly the normal routes.

We made our base camp near the Ratsek Hut, at 3,400m, and on August 9 (the one continuously good weather day of the trip) climbed Crêuza de Mä (550m of climbing, 6a+) on the west face of Baichechekey (4,515m). This route climbs hand cracks and a corner entirely to the right of the classic Shvab Route (1980, 5A, F6 or 6 A2) for 10 pitches, four of which were 6a+, before joining the Shvab Route on the crest of the pillar. The last three pitches of the Shvab (5a, 5a, 6a+) led to the top. It was an excellent climb on perfect Mont Blanc-style granite. We descended the normal route.

On the 11th we walked up the Uchitel Glacier and spotted an unnamed summit on the long west ridge of Korona (4,860m), between Korona and Ratsek Peak (3,980m). On that day we climbed three pitches up the east face. Bad weather kept us in the tents the next day, but on the 13th we went back to the face, climbed to the top of the third pitch by a different, easier line coming in from the right, and then continued to the summit in another three pitches plus some easy climbing. On the last section we had to climb through a snowstorm. The route follows a splitter, then a corner, then slabs to reach a prominent "banana diedre" (pitches four and five, and the crux). The face is about 250m high, and we named the route Roulette Kyrghiza (330m of climbing, 6c A1), descending the line by rappel in very bad weather. Although it is a beautiful line, the rock is loose in places and difficult to protect. We have dubbed the summit Chiavari Peak (4,145m).

Next we looked at a south-facing pillar leading to a tower on the walls between Baichechekey and Uchitel (4,527m). The pillar, about 220m high, is in two parts: first a narrow "candle," as one might find in the Mont Blanc massif, then a ridge to the summit. We have named the formation Tower Gymnica 2000 (4,020m), and the first section the Chandelle of Uchitel.

On the 18th we climbed the Chandelle in three pitches and left our ropes fixed. Finger, hand, and fist cracks led to the third-pitch offwidth, a flared and sometimes overhanging crux. Our cams weren't big enough, so at base camp we manufactured three wooden "Big Bros," which solved, at least psychologically, the protection problem. Due to bad weather, we didn't get the opportunity to finish the route until the 21st, when we jumared the ropes, climbed a 10m pitch of A0 to the top of the candle, descended 15m on the far side, and continued up the ridge above for another six pitches (5a to 6b+) to the summit. The last two pitches were climbed through falling snow. From the top we rappelled into the couloir between Uchitel and Baichechekey. We gave the route the tongue-in-cheek name of www.lookoutofthetent.com (330m of climbing, 6c A0). Next day there was a lot of snow at base camp, and with little hope of completing any more rock climbing, we left the area early. Thanks to the CAAI, Chiavari Municipality, and Gymnica 2000 for sponsorship.

Images



Roulette Kirghiza on the east face of what the Italian climbers in 2016 dubbed Chiavari Peak (4,145m), a summit above the Uchitel Glacier on the long west ridge of Korona.



The east face of Chiavari Peak (4,145m), a summit above the Uchitel Glacier on the long west ridge of Korona, and the line taken by Roulette Kirghiza.



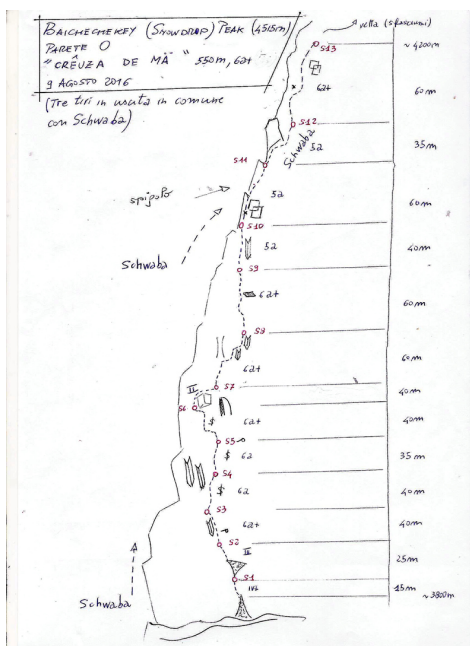
The west face of Baichechekey (4,515m) above the Ratsek Hut in Ala Archa National Park. (1) 3A, 2010, F3-5. (2) Ilushenko, 1989, 5A, a classic ice couloir. (3) Kuzmenko, 1977, 5A, F6 or 5/5+ A1. (4) Polak, 1983, 5A, F6 or 5 A1. (5) Shvab, 1980, 5A, F6 or 6 A2, the classic of the face and repeated frequently. (6) Crêuza de Mă, 2016, 6a+.



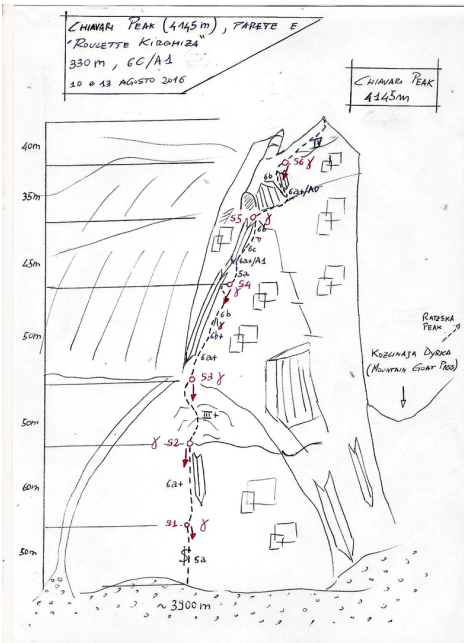
The west face of Baichechekey, above the Ratsek Hut in the Ala Archa. The left line on the crest of the pillar is the classic and reasonably popular Shvab Route (1980, 5A, F6 or 6 A2). The route on the right is the 2016 route Crêuza de Mă (6a+). It is thought the big corner visible in the lower section between the two lines has been climbed as a variant to the Shvab Route.



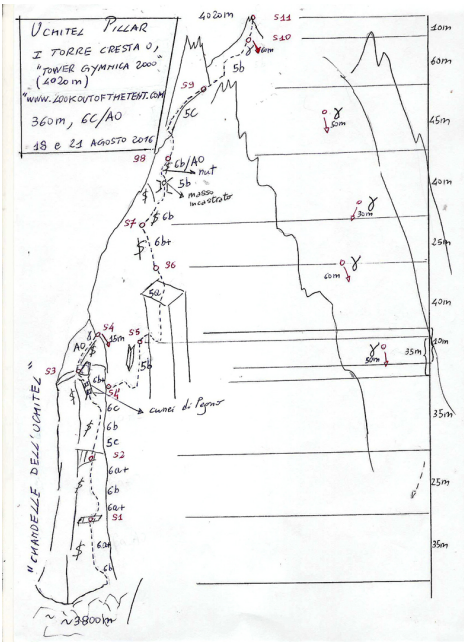
Tower Gymnica 2000 and the line of the new route called www.lookouthetent.com.



CreuzaTopo



RouletteTopo



LookoutTentTopo



Marcello Sanguinetti following on the “chandelle” of Tower Gymnica 2000.



Giovanni Pagnoncelli traversing to start the upper pillar of the Tower Gymnica 2000.



Giovanni Pagnoncelli on one of the many fine crack pitches of Crêuza de Mă, west face of Baichechekey.



Giovanni Pagnoncelli climbing into the mist on one of the fine crack pitches of the route called www.lookoutofthetent.com on Tower Gymnica 2000.



Marcello Sanguineti jumars the lower section of the “chandelle” on Tower Gymnica 2000 during the final ascent.



Homemade wooden "Big Bros" in the third-pitch offwidth of the route called www.lookoutofthetent.com on Tower Gymnica 2000.

Article Details

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