



AAC Publications

Jabal Kawr, Said Wall; Jabal Misht, Südtirolerführe

Oman, Western Hajar

Jan Kobald, Markus Kollmann, Philipp Prünster, and I (all South Tyroleans, age 23–25) couldn't wait for our Christmas holidays. Markus and I knew the country of Oman a bit from an earlier climbing journey in 2012–'13. Ever since, we knew we would return for more time with the friendly people, the moon-like landscape, and the simple life in the desert.

Just after finishing our last course at university, we flew to Muscat on December 17, 2014, and headed into Oman's desert. Near Jabal Misht and Jabal Kawr, we set up camp at the foot of the same acacia that two years earlier had provided us with shade, hammocks, and a fridge for our food. The centuries-old tree was our only refuge from the sun. We brought a gas cooker, but forgot to bring gas, so we were forced to cook over an open fire, gathering wood around camp or during our descents. This worked great except that we and all of our gear were completely smoked.

During the last weeks of 2014, we climbed almost every day and did about 10 new routes. Our fingertips desperately needed some recovery time, and we decided to take a road trip to the south of the country, where we nearly lost our Jeep to the sea when it got stuck on the mudflats and flooded by the incoming tide. We had to spend the night on a sandbar, inches from the water. Fortunately, next day, two fishermen helped haul our truck out of the mud before it was ruined.

We had seen enough of the sea and decided return to the mountains again. We spent two days in Wadi Tiwi before returning to our original camp and our beloved acacia. After many climbs in Oman we were well adapted to the rock and highly motivated to try some bigger lines. We had already climbed two easier routes on a shady sector of Jabal Kawr that we came to call the Said Wall, after a hospitable old man who lived nearby and came out again and gain to watch us with binoculars. One day, the night had just fallen and we were walking back to our car after a long day, and Said could see our headlamps shining, so he scrambled up to us and offered us some exquisite mint tea. "Were we well paid for our work?" he wanted to know. It looked exhausting! We tried to explain that we did this voluntarily. Strange people, he must have thought.

In the center of the Said Wall was an incomplete line with the promising name Interruptio, begun in 2004 by Hanspeter Eisendle and friends. Markus and I had tried this route in 2012, but we were scared off by a huge, slick overhang in the upper third of the wall. Sticking to our self-imposed rules of not using any bolt if not absolutely necessary, we bailed exactly where Eisendle and his party had backed off years ago.

Now, on New Year's Day in 2015, standing again under this impressive roof, we were indecisive about where to go. The roof itself did not look climbable for us, so Markus decided to traverse to the left into vertical rock. After climbing past some loose rock, Markus reached a small stance where he was able to place a piton. The next 8m were unprotectable and rather crimpy, requiring all of Markus' expertise. Blessedly, he reached a 4 cm thick hourglass thread that offered the only possibility for a hanging belay. The very bad piton backing up the thread did not give us a good feeling while belaying the next pitch. Again a long runout led straight upward, than we traversed back to the right into a prominent dihedral crossing the headwall and leading to the exit of the wall. For sure, Interruptio (500m, VII+) was one of the most inspiring routes I have ever climbed!

While descending, Markus spotted another possible line on the right part of the wall. He and Philipp

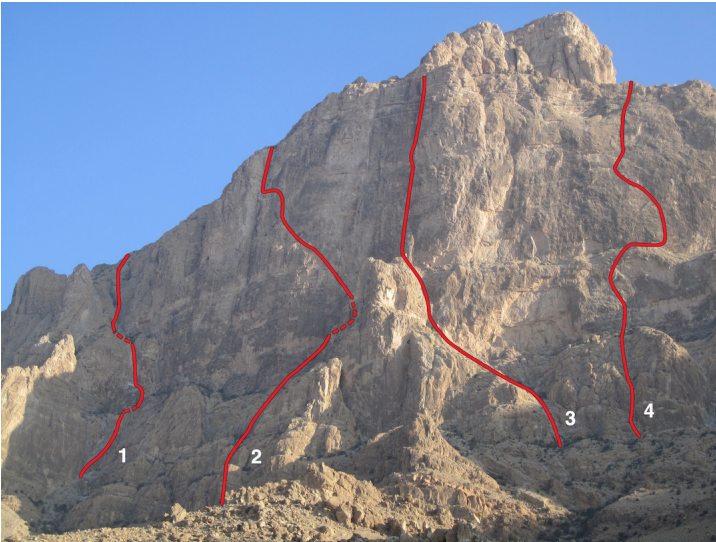
climbed this impressive and challenging new route the next day. At one point, Markus broke off an undercling and took a long fall into the only piece above the belay anchor. He was lucky he got away with no more than a scare and some scrapes. The duo named this difficult to protect route Sab Kuch Milega ("Everything is Possible," 450m, VIII-).

At the end of our trip, we succeeded on a big line on Jabal Misht itself—the only route we climbed together as a team of four. While studying photos of Jabal Misht at home in South Tyrol, we noticed a pillar on the left side of the mountain's south face that seemed to have no routes, probably because of the long approach and full sun. (This pillar is between the Second Tower and Third Tower, right of the route Madam Butterfly, Chaudhry-Hornby, 2000.) We decided to get onto the wall early in the morning, and we planned for a bivouac. So we were all surprised when we stood on top of the mountain after only six hours of climbing—a fabulous miscalculation in difficulty on our part. We named the route Südtirolerführe ("Way of the South Tyroleans, 800m, VI+).

All 16 routes we opened in Oman during this trip were climbed from the bottom up and all free. We used a total of ten pitons, which we left fixed. Follow this link to find a report (in German) with descriptions and topos of each new route. Our earlier new routes are found in [Climbing in Oman](#) by Jakob Oberhauser (2014).

Simon Messner, Italy

Images



New routes on the Said Wall, a relatively shady sector of Jebel Kawr. (1) Passer Fritz. (2) Vacca Loca. (3) Interruptio. (4) Sab Kuch Milega.



The line of Südtirolerführe (800m, VI+) on Jabal Misht.

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