



AAC Publications

Tranokitily Dome, Sweet Avocado

Africa, Madagascar, Tsaranoro Valley

Madagascar's Tsaranoro Valley has been described as the Yosemite of Africa. But on its big, mostly crackless granite walls, most visitors have chosen to attempt new lines, running it out as far as they dare before placing a bolt. The few routes easier than 5.12 are very sparsely protected (and comprehensive medical care is even farther away!). Many routes have not even been repeated. As Timmy O'Neill and I had done two years earlier in Namibia's Spitzkoppe area (AAJ 2017), we felt that Madagascar was overdue for a long, intelligently protected easy climb. Tranokitily Dome sits directly across from the massive walls of Tsaranoro, and its featured slabby flanks awaited a first ascent.

Gilles Gautier, the Frenchman who is the owner and founder of the luxurious yet reasonably priced Tsaraso Lodge and has lived in the valley for more than 25 years, welcomed the new addition. He served us a sweet avocado delicacy from the lodge kitchen, and the route that Timmy, Jeff Rueppel, Sarah Steele, and I put up in April took its name from his dessert.

Sweet Avocado (III 5.8) has a casual approach (not more than 40 minutes from Gilles' lodge), is well protected with big stainless-steel bolts, and requires only one 60m rope and a quiver of quickdraws for its five rope-stretching pitches, with a short scramble to the top and an uncomplicated walk-off. This route offers something unique in a magnificent stone paradise that was until now reserved mostly for the hard core.

– James Garrett, AAC

Images



Sarah Steele on pitch four of Sweet Avocado, with the main Tsaranoro massif in the background.



Tranokitily Dome from the trail. The route line of Sweet Avocado is obvious once the base of the wall is approached.

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