



## La Catedral, The First Lucky Strike

Mexico, Chihuahua, Parque Nacional Cascada de Basaseachi

**AT THE END OF JANUARY, Christian Fascendini, Matěj Svojtka, and I arrived in Basaseachi National Park with one goal: to open a new line.** We chose Rancho San Lorenzo as our base camp, an ideal and quiet place. The owner, Don Fernando, helped us a lot. The day after we arrived, we hiked down into Candameña Canyon. At its beginning stands the wall La Cascada, where there are already a few routes. Our plan was to establish a new line there, but local officials do not allow first ascents on it anymore, due to the possibility of rocks falling onto the tourist trail below. We decided to go deeper into the canyon, as it boasts huge walls everywhere (including the famous big wall El Gigante) and spans more than 10km.

After hiking two hours downstream from the waterfall, we found a southeast-facing wall that to our knowledge was completely unclimbed (28°09'44.0"N, 108°13'49.3"W). We estimated it to be about 250m but realized later that it rose about 500m.

The next day we started up the first few pitches of our line. The walls in the canyon are composed of rhyolite, and although some of it was solid, the rock we found was mostly loose and required some cleaning. It looked as if the quality would improve in the upper section, so we decided it was worth continuing. We spent four days and one night on the wall, climbing ground up. Our route is protected by bolts, drilled from hooks, and whenever possible by natural protection. Unfortunately, we didn't have time to redpoint the route, a challenge left for future teams. We reckon the crux pitch will be around 7c. Belays are two-bolt anchors, making it possible to descend by rappelling the route: The First Lucky Strike (500m, proposed 7c).

We named this wall La Catedral, and there are many other possibilities for new and amazing lines in this area. The park also offers great sport climbing spots, including one right next to Rancho San Lorenzo and one on the way to the upper waterfall viewpoint. We encountered great weather, but the locals told us that we were lucky. Usually it tends to be much colder in January and February, and there is a possibility for it to snow.

Tips: To find the way leading down into Candameña Canyon, look for a small path in the upper part of the left bank, marked by a cairn. There are food stores in the village of Basaseachi, but we recommend buying some provisions in bigger cities. Our base camp in the canyon below La Catedral had drinkable water from a small waterfall, but this is likely nonexistent in dry conditions. The water from the river is not drinkable.

– Ondra Beneš, Czech Republic

## Images



La Catedral from base camp. See topos for route line.



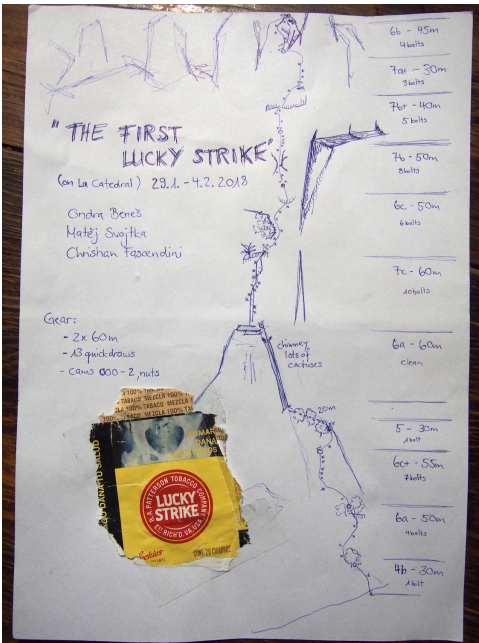
Climbing on the First Lucky Strike, the first route up La Catedral.



Climbing on the First Lucky Strike, the first route up La Catedral.



Climbing on the First Lucky Strike, the first route up La Catedral.



Topo for the First Lucky Strike on La Catedral.

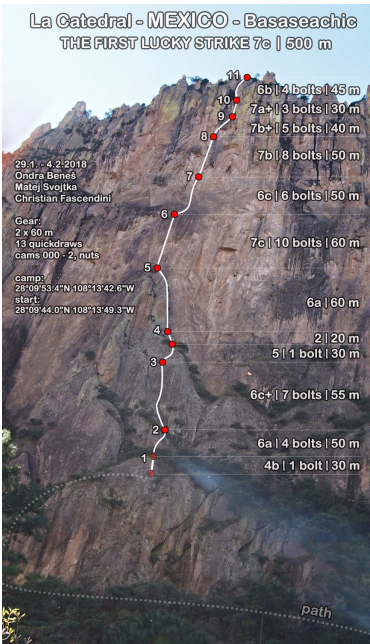


Photo-topo for the First Lucky Strike on La Catedral. The climbers believe it will go free at 7c, but the route was not redpointed during the first ascent.



Big Wall in Mexico

## Article Details

Author	Ondra Beneš
Publication	AAJ
Volume	61
Issue	93
Page	0
Copyright Date	2019
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions