



AAC Publications

Cerro Chueco, First Ascent

Chile, Northern Patagonia, Aysén Region

In early 2018, Tad McCrea and I made the first ascent of Cerro Chueco (47°13'46.7"S, 73°02'34.4"W). Clearly visible west of the Carretera Austral (highway), Cerro Chueco rises above a sea of glaciers and lush forest. Though not a giant, even mountains of 7,100' (ca 2,164m) entail real climbing in an area where glaciers come down to the sea and treeline is 3,500'.

Approaches in Aysén can be trying. Fortunately, the forest below Cerro Chueco was relatively open and blessed with an intermittent, overgrown gaucho trail. After scoping the peak from the road and deciphering the approach with my wife, Angela, I made two solo trips to establish a cache of gear just above treeline and directly below the peak.

On February 1, Tad and I drove to Los Leones, located on a side road about 25km southwest of the Carretera Austral, where we would begin our hike. Next day, in clear weather, we did the seven-hour approach to my cache. On February 3 we ascended several hundred vertical feet of easy slab to reach the base of the glacier. Another 1,500' of unroped glacier travel and snow slopes brought us to the northern ridge of the peak.

We soloed the first couple of hundred feet of easy terrain until the route steepened. Nine belayed pitches (up to 5.9+) on good quartzite, interspersed with sections of choss, led us to the top. Our route had approximately 300m of vertical gain.

We were loathe to rappel the circuitous ridge we had climbed, so we were pleased to find a direct rappel line down the west side. Four 60m rappels got us down to a short traverse across a glacier to a col that brought us back to our approach and down to base camp.

– Jim Donini, USA

Images



Cerro Chueco (ca 2,164 meters) from the east. The first ascent weaved up the right-hand (northern) ridge. The climbers rappelled the far side (west face) to descend.



Jim Donini on the first ascent of Cerro Chueco.



During the first ascent of Cerro Chueco.



During the first ascent of Cerro Chueco.



Tad McCrea leading during the first ascent of Cerro Chueco.

Article Details

Author	Jim Donini
Publication	AAJ
Volume	60
Issue	92
Page	232
Copyright Date	2018
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions