



AAC Publications

Suiricocha Massif, Unnamed Peak, Peru-Belgium Arête

Peru, Cordillera Central

In May, Guy Fonck (Belgium) and I climbed an unnamed peak (ca 5,400m, 11°56'5.79"S 76°3'18.95"W) in the southern Cordillera Central. It is part of the Suiricocha Massif (sometimes spelled Suerococha) and located just to the north of a peak (ca 5,500m) that may be called Manon Dos, on which I'd previously climbed a new route up the west face with Sophie Denis (AAJ 2011).

[Editor's note: Editor's note: The naming of peaks in Peru's central ranges has been somewhat idiosyncratic, and many elevations stated on the IGN map or by climbers appear multiple times or are unconfirmed; this makes it sometimes difficult to pinpoint ascents. For example, in 1996, the prolific first ascensionist Evelio Echevarría reported climbs on Vicuña (5,050m, just north of the peak Rajuntay) and Suerococha (5,312m, just south of the town of San Mateo), a zone over 30km west-northwest of the area mentioned in this report, and which generally contains lower elevation peaks, some known by the same names (see **AAJ 1997** and the U.K. **Alpine Journal 2000**). The Suiricocha Massif described here contains at least six prominent summits between 5,400m–5,600m, the tallest of which appears to be the central ca 5,600m summit.]

On May 7, I left Huaraz with my porter Hector Alejo and friend Antonio Silverio, who helped us with the logistics. Guy met us early on May 8 in Miraflores (near Lima), and we drove to San Mateo to acclimatize and make preparations for four days in the mountains.

On the 10th, we left early toward Paccha Cocha, shuttled our gear to 4,800m, and then descended and slept at 4,370m. On the 11th, we left at 8 a.m. and shuttled climbing gear to the moraine (4,950m) underneath the snow-covered peak Vicuña.

On the 12th, we began our ascent soon after 1 a.m. There had been a recent avalanche from Vicuña, so we adapted our initial route, climbing carefully up the first steep snow slope. We reached our mountain's northern ridge by 6 a.m. I hurried up the 260m of snow and mixed climbing above, as I knew the sun's arrival would further weaken the snow. After two hours, I arrived at a false summit—to my shock, we still were 70m short. Finally, we reached the summit just after 10 a.m.

For a moment, I wasn't interested in the descent but only in enjoying the summit—so much so, that I completely forgot about my climbing partner, Guy, who had helped give me this opportunity to climb a virgin summit. He seemed excited but worried about the descent. The snow was now the consistency of bread dough.

To descend, we used deadman anchors and pitons to rappel, as well as some downclimbing. The weather changes quickly in the Cordillera Central, and it soon began to snow. By the time we reached the col, the wind had blown snow through every gap in our clothing, and the insides of our boots were like swimming pools. Rather than continue down the way we had climbed, we decided to continue northward toward Nevado Norma, to reach a point where one rappel would get us to the glacier. It took us an hour pulling our frozen rope with a Tibloc before we could traverse to Norma and return to the flat glacier.

There is a worrisome area of crevasses in the middle of the glacier where Guy suddenly fell into a

crevasse. We managed to get him out. I don't know where we got such strength. We were off the glacier just past 6 p.m. and arrived at our tents exhausted. Fortunately, we didn't have to cook, as Hector and Antonio had prepared soup and "mountaineer spaghetti"—the most delicious in the world!

Because this peak appears to have no name, I have ventured to baptize it with my own name, and I am in coordination with the National Geographic Institute of Peru (IGN) so that their future maps will contain the new name: Beto Pinto.

– **Beto Pinto Toledo**, Peru, translated from Spanish by Pam Ranger

Images



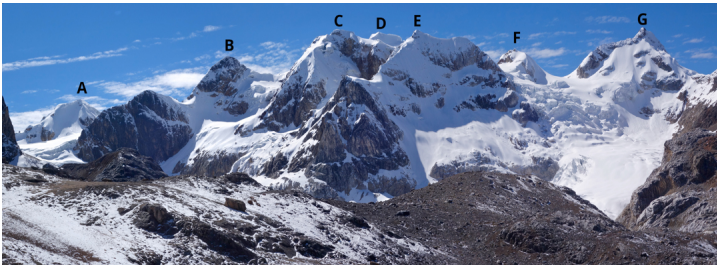
The Peru-Belgium Arête (2018). The route began on the western snow slopes of the ca 5,400m peak and then climbed its north ridge.



The Suiricocha Massif from the east.



The Suiricocha Massif from on the approach from the east. The peak climbed in 2018 (ca 5,400m) is just to the left of a ca 5,500m peak (possibly called Manon Dos), the high peak in center.



An overview of the Suiricocha Massif from the west, showing: (A) Nevado Norma. (B) The ca 5,400m peak climbed by Guy Fonck and Beto Pinto in 2018. (C) The ca 5,500m peak climbed by Sophie Denis and Beto Pinto in 2010, which may be called Manon Dos. (D) The ca 5,600m central summit of Suiricocha. (E) The ca 5,450m central-western summit of Suiricocha. (F) The ca 5,425m south-central summit of Suiricocha. (G) The ca 5,450m southern summit of Suiricocha climbed by Sophie Denis and Beto Pinto in 2010. Nevado Vicuña is out of the frame to the left.

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