



AAC Publications

Seraph, Northeast Face, MaKeMaLo; Hydra, Northeast Face, Fa Pa Caou Per Aqui

Alaska, Alaska Range, Revelation Mountains

At the end of March, Thomas Auvaro, Jeremy Fino, Antoine Rolle, and I traveled to the Revelation Glacier. After reading Clint Helander's stories, the "Revs" seemed to be the perfect place to fulfill our dreams of adventure on unclimbed walls.

After days of preparing gear and food, a gorgeous flight with Paul Roderick and a warm welcome from Clint and Andres Marin (who were also heading into the Revs to attempt a new route on Golgotha), we first had to deal with unsettled weather, heavy snowfall, and furious wind. When the first good weather window appeared, our eyes were caught by an obvious gully on the west face of unclimbed Peak 7963', to the north of Apocalypse and south of Hesperus. At 4 a.m. we were at the base and started climbing. Entering the deep cleft was like a mystical experience, and the pitches offered steep, incredible ice and névé climbing up to WI6 and 90°. However, after 900m and 14 hours of climbing, we were stopped under a 40m roof of black compact rock. A hard aid pitch or loose and contrived mixed climbing could have led us to the pass and the easy final ridge, but that was not the way we wanted to end the route and we chose to rap down. We were back at the base after a 24-hour round trip, so close but so far.

Bad weather then came in once more. Cooking, listening to music, preparing gear, and a bit of skiing around camp was our daily routine. Thankfully, three days of good weather were announced before being our plane returned. Due to frostbitten toes contracted while skiing, I had to let my friends climb on their own and do whatever I could do to support them. After skiing the south face of Sylph, Antoine, Thomas, and Jeremy decided to try a direct gully on the northeast face of Seraph (8,540'). [Chris Thomas and Rick Vance made the first ascent of Seraph in 2015 via Mandarin Mounty (2,300', 5.10 A2 WI5+) on the east face; see AAJ 2016.] **After 600m of climbing, including some technical mixed pitches at the beginning, they reached the summit.** An obvious descent brought them back to the base, and they returned to camp after 14 hours to enjoy a good meal and a small glass of whiskey. They called the route MaKeMaLo (600m, ED- M7). Nice day out!

Last day, last try—the idea was to return to the first unclimbed summit and open an easy route on the south face. But a strong and warm wind caused the guys to change plan to the northeast face of **Hydra Peak (7,800')**. [Kris Irwin, Darren Vonk, and Ian Welsted made the first ascent of this aspect in 2014; the French line is to the right of the earlier route and shares the same exit from the face; see AAJ 2015.]

With multiple pitches of delicate mixed climbing along a diagonal ramp, they managed to reach the summit at dawn to complete Fa Pa Caou Per Aqui (600m, ED M8) and enjoy an unforgettable view of the endless Alaskan wilderness. Emotion was obvious on our four faces when we all met after this last beautiful day. Paul picked us up the next morning; it was time to go home. But we were all already talking about when our next trip could be.

– Matthieu Rideau, France

Images



Steep, aesthetic névé climbing during the French attempt on a direct, unclimbed line on the west face of an unclimbed peak just north of Apocalypse. They were stopped just short of the ridge by a massive roof that would require aid climbing or detouring off the line to easier terrain, and they chose to descend from that high point.



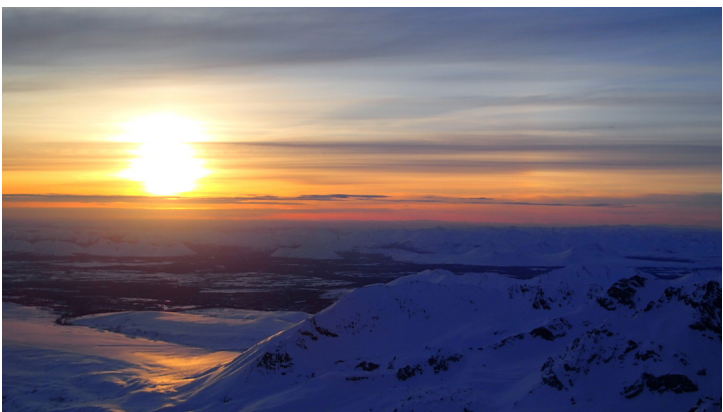
A steep ice pitch on the group's near miss on a direct line on the west face of an unclimbed peak just north of Apocalypse. The four French climbers climbed 900m up to WI6 and 90° névé before being stopped by a massive roof just short of the ridge.



Base camp life inside the group's cozy snow cave. The Revelations are known for their fierce winds and long-lasting storms—several groups have had burly expedition tents destroyed by weather.



Thomas Auvaro, Jeremy Fino, and Antoine Rolle on the summit of Hydra after making the first ascent of Fa Pa Caou Per Aqui (600m, ED M8).



Sunrise over the endless Alaskan wilderness from the summit of Hydra after making the first ascent of Fa Pa Caou Per Aqui (600m, ED M8) on the northeast face.



Thomas Auvaro, Jeremy Fino, and Antoine Rolle on the summit of Seraph after making the first ascent of MaKeMaLo (600m, ED- M7) on the mountain's northeast face.



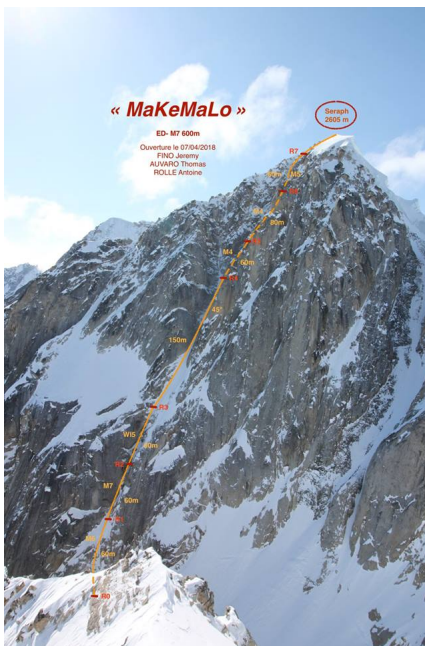
Climbing along the technical mixed ramp that defined the first ascent of Fa Pa Caou Per Aqui (600m, M8) on Hydra.



Getting dropped off below the lineup on the Revelation Glacier.



The west face of an unclimbed peak between Apocalypse and Hesperus, in Alaska's Revelation Mountains, showing the attempt made by Thomas Auvaro, Jeremy Fino, Antoine Rolle, and Matthieu Rideau. The team climbed 900m up to W16 and 90° névé before being stopped by a massive roof.



The northeast face of Seraph in Alaska's Revelation Mountains, showing the line of MaKeMaLo (600m, ED- M7). Thomas Auvaro, Jeremy Fino, and Antoine Rolle completed the route in a 14-hour round trip from base camp.



The northeast face of Hydra in Alaska's Revelation Mountains, showing the line of Fa Pa Caou Per Aqui (600m, M8). Thomas Auvaro, Jeremy Fino, and Antoine Rolle climbed this technical mixed ramp in a push, topping out at dawn. A 2014 route (Irwin-Vonk-Welsted) took the obvious gully system on the left, then moved right across a snowfield to the same exit as the French route.



The south face of Sylph in Alaska's Revelation Mountains, showing the line ascended and skied by a French team between technical climbs in April 2018.

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