



The Sphinx, Mazaroca Ardiente

Mozambique

Argentine climbers Lucas Alzamora, Carloncho Guerra, and Diego Nakamura visited northern Mozambique during September, inspired by photos of the granite domes there. Northern Mozambique has many rock walls, some up to 700m high, however the local culture and religious beliefs make it possible to climb only if local leaders and authorities approve it.

The team's first objective was Lamitihui, a 400m granite tower 15km west from the city of Nampula. The locals approved the climbing, but with distrust. On the second day, after finishing the fourth pitch of their line, the team fixed ropes and descended to the ground, where they were startled by a group of seven or eight lads emerging from the bushes and brandishing AK-47 rifles.

They had no uniforms, wearing only shorts, shirts, and flip-flops. In a tense conversation, the Argentines tried to explain what they were doing. The armed youths marched the team to their barracks and eventually let them go, with the agreement that they would gather their equipment and leave town. The climbers never learned exactly who the armed young men were.

After this frightening episode, the Argentines traveled to a more secure zone near the village of Liupo, 100km southeast from Nampula, where they'd heard of previous climbing activity on a rock just north of the village. They opened a new route over three days, using natural protection and placing a few bolts: **Mazaroca Ardiente (230m, 6b+ A0+)**. [In 1998, Alard Hufner and Mark Seuring (South Africa) climbed four routes on this rock, which they called the Sphinx (**AAJ 2001**). Two of their routes followed corner systems to either side of Mazaroca Ardiente.]

– Marcelo Scanu, Argentina

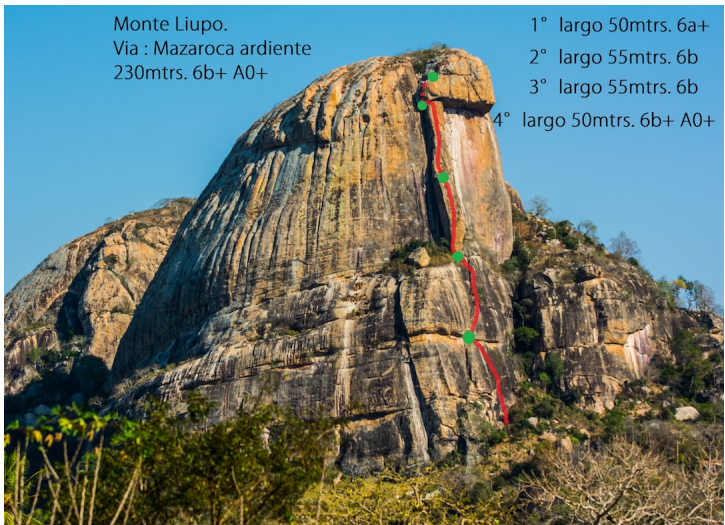
Images



Lucas Alzamora on the new route Mazaroca Ardiente in Mozambique. This granite formation near the village of Liupo was named the Sphinx by the climbers who did the first routes.



"Monte Lamitihui, 15km west of Nampula, showing the route attempted by the Argentine climbers. Armed locals drove them off before they could finish the route.



The Argentine route Mazaroca Ardiente on the Sphinx, near Liupo. Earlier routes follow crack systems on either side.



Diego Nakamura climbing the fourth pitch on Mount Lamitihui, the last pitch the team could complete before armed locals drove them away.

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