



## AAC Publications

---

### **Gudvangen Valley, The Kraken and Other Routes**

Norway, Sognefjord Region

**Philippe Batoux, Aymeric Clouet, and Michel Coranotte spent 10 days of February in Sognefjord, staying in the centrally situated Flam.** The conditions were perfect, with lots of ice—all the known lines were in, and some new lines had appeared. The trio warmed up with several short climbs on the south side of Gudvangen Valley, which gave a good view of the possibilities on the opposite side. Gudvangen is a mecca for huge waterfalls: The valley is surrounded by 1,000m faces, some adorned with ice lines.

On February 2 the three climbed a line on the south face of Gudvangen at 60°51'50"N, 6°46'42"E. This lies on the broad hillside southwest of the popular tourist village of the same name. After a 40m pitch of WI4+, the climbers walked up through wooded terrain to reach a headwall, which gave 200m of WI5+ to a large wooded terrace.

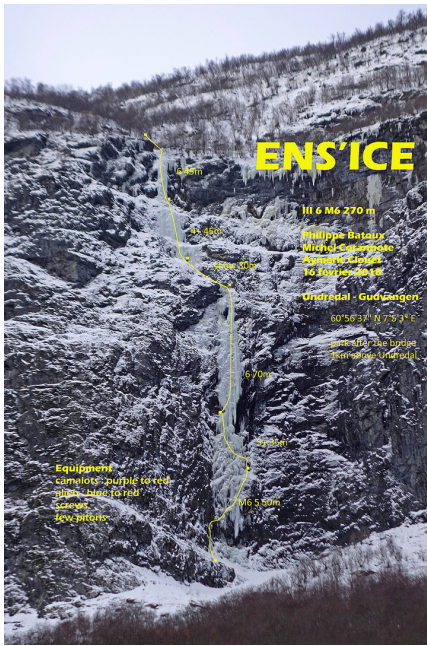
On February 16 the three climbed Ens'ice (270m, III WI6 M6). They parked just after the bridge one kilometer above Undredal. The fall is situated at 60°56'37"N, 7°5'3"E, faces east, and is six pitches long (the third is a 70m WI6). They also climbed the well-known Stalheimfossen (180m, III WI5+).

In one long day, the three climbers repeated the famous Fosslimonster (800m, with 1,000m of climbing, WI6+ M8+), finishing with cramps in the biceps. This was the February 2009 route completed by Robert Jasper and Roger Schaeli (after a previous attempt by Jasper and Markus Stofer), who were then lambasted by the Norwegian climbing community for their use of bolts (the two placed 14 on the route, see AAJ 2009). Batoux, Clouet, and Coranotte used the bolts in situ on the first M8 pitch, although they think it might be possible to climb without.

The other route climbed by Jasper (with Markus Stofer) during that 2009 trip was Into the Wild (close above the road sign for Gudvangen when driving from the north), which was billed at the time as the longest pure icefall climbed to date (900m high but 1,300m of climbing, WI6+ X). Batoux had noticed a thin line to the right (60°51'52"N, 6°49'8"E), but in five previous visits to the area it had never been in climbable condition. The French trio climbed it in a 14-hour day on February 20, adhering to Norwegian ethic of placing no bolts. The ice crux was a 50m free-standing pillar sitting on huge, strange, jellyfish formations above a 20m roof. They named the 800m route the Kraken (VI/6+ M6).

– Information supplied by Philippe Batoux, France

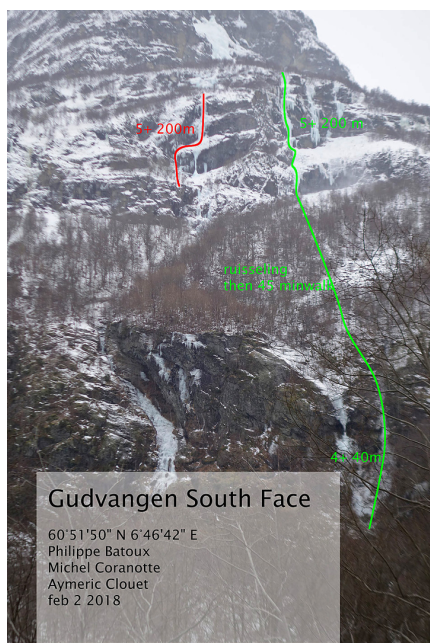
## Images



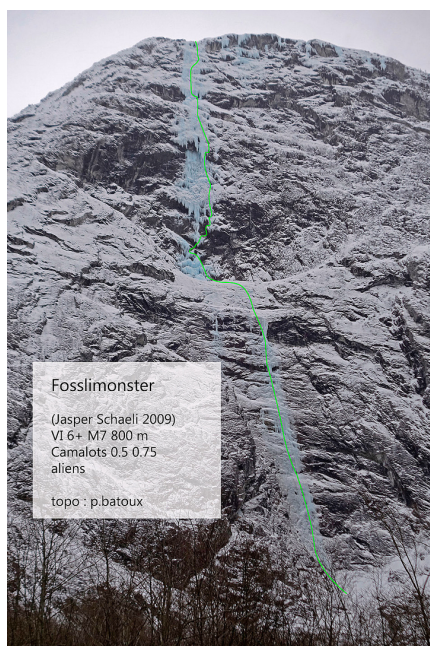
Ens'ice at Undredal, climbed in February 2018.



The huge ice lines of Into the Wild (left) and the Kraken, near Gudvangen.

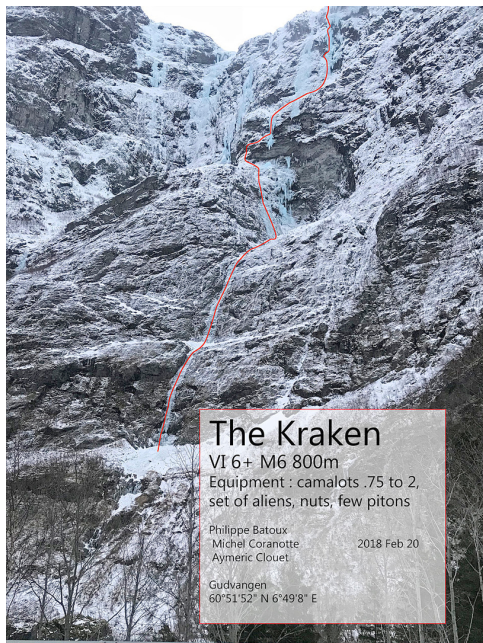


Various routes climbed in February 2018 by a French trio on the south face of Gudvangen.



Fosslimonster, close to Gudvangen.





The Kraken (800m, VI/6+ M6), close to Gudvangen.



The Stalheimfossen.



The upper portions of the huge ice lines of Into the Wild (left) and the Kraken, near Gudvangen.

Article Details

Author	Lindsay Griffin, with Information from Phiippe Batoux
Publication	AAJ
Volume	61
Issue	93
Page	253
Copyright Date	2019
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions