



AAC Publications

Jebel Misht, Organ Pipes, and Wadi al Ala, New Routes and Exploration

Oman, Western Hajar

When time off for climbing is limited, it makes sense to choose a destination with guaranteed good weather. With interesting culture and plenty of climbing potential, Oman fit the bill perfectly for our winter holidays.

After familiarizing ourselves with the local fossil-infused rock by climbing the classic Shukran (1,000m, 5.10+) on Jebel Misht, we turned our attention to a southeast-facing wall on the massif called the Organ Pipes, which is about 1km wide and features numerous towers that give it the name (see Recon, AAJ 2018). Saule Simute and I first climbed an enjoyable route we called Camel in Distress on the left side of the wall, with some excellent pitches topped with a few squeeze chimneys. Cyrill Boesch and I then climbed the Smell of Cheese on the right-hand side of the wall, which had continuously enjoyable climbing only slightly marred by a short traverse through some loose rock. Both routes are around 400m and have climbing up to about 6b.

Since Oman boasts not only mountains but also canyons (or wadis), we spent the rest of the trip exploring various walls in these formations. In particular, while flicking through the Field Guide to the Geology of Northeastern Oman, we spotted a good-looking wall facing northeast in the Wadi al Ala, southeast of Jebel Kawr and in between the towns of Al Ala and Sint. After figuring out a quick way to descend into the wadi (a few abseils and downclimbing, about 500m upstream from the main lookout), Cyrill and I climbed an elegant line called Once Upon a Time in a Wadi (250m, 6a) on the opposite side of the canyon. The line has a red groove capped by a roof as a defining feature. We found no prior evidence or reports of climbers visiting this canyon.

With ease of access comparable to a sport climbing trip and the engaging climbing in the mountains and canyons, Oman is a great place to have an adventure.

– Gediminas Simutis, Lithuania

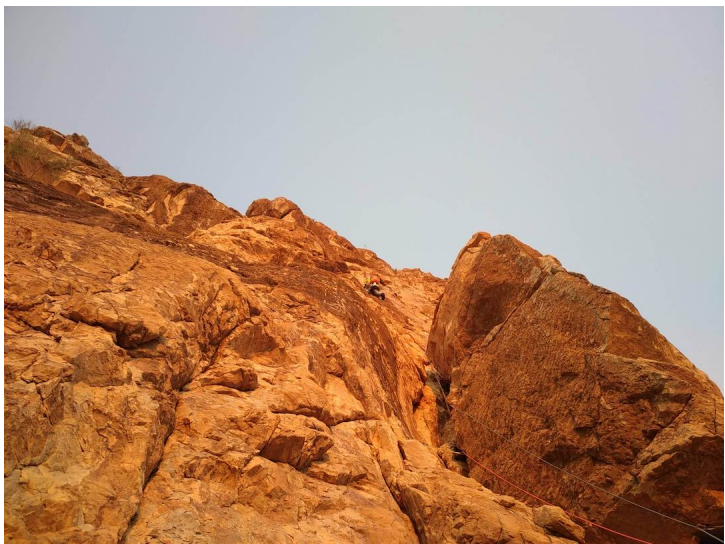
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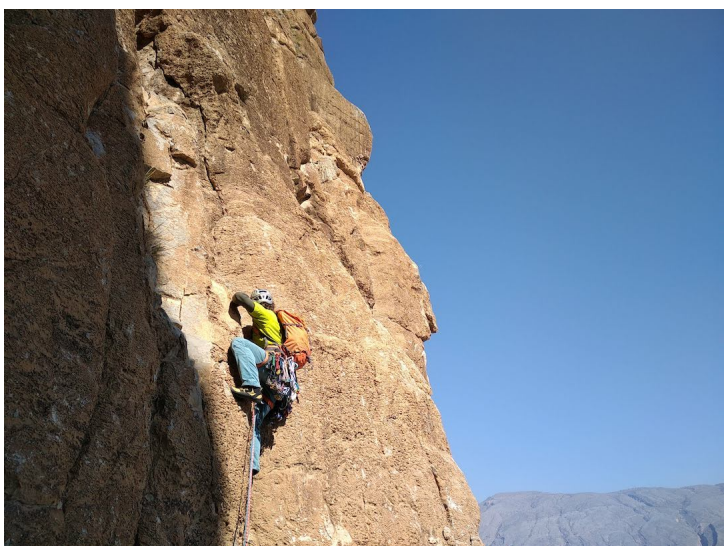
A northeast-facing wall in the Wadi Al Ala in northeastern Oman, showing the line of Once Upon a Time in a Wadi (250m, 6a). Cyrill Boesch and Gediminas Simutis climbed this new line in early 2020, possibly the first route in this canyon.



Base camp below the famous south face of Jebel Misht. The kilometer-long wall known as the Organ Pipes can be seen on the far right side of the massif.



Gediminas Simutis leading the first pitch of Camel in Distress (400m, 6b) on the Organ Pipes wall of Jebel Misht, during the early hours of the morning.



Gediminas Simutis starting the first steep pitch of the upper wall during the first ascent of Camel In Distress (400m, 6b) on the Organ Pipes wall of Jebel Misht.



Cyrill Boesch starts up the first pitch of the Smell of Cheese (400m, 6b) on the Organ Pipes of Jebel Misht.



Cyrill Boesch midway up the Smell of Cheese (400m, 6b) on the Organ Pipes of Jebel Misht.



Cyrril Boesch looking into the Wadi al Ala, a canyon between the villages of Al Ala and Sint. After finding a picture of the canyon in a geology book, Boesch and Gediminas Simutis completed the first documented rock climb in the canyon, Once Upon a Time in a Wadi (250m, 6a). The route climbs to the right of the sun/shade line in the center of the photo.



Gediminas Simutis following the defining corner feature of Once Upon a Time in a Wadi (250m, 6a), in the Wadi Al Ala of Oman.



Cyrill Boesch following a pitch in the upper part of Once Upon a Time in a Wadi (250m, 6a). This is possibly the first time climbers have visited this canyon, between the villages of Al Ala and Sint, Oman.

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