



## AAC Publications

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### **Cerro Cachet, Gaucho Muy Complicado**

Chile, Aysén Region, Northern Patagonian Icefield

**Our expedition to the Northern Patagonian Icefield in Chile's Aysén region was comprised of a team of five: two French (Norbert Talazac and Pierrick Saint Martin) and three Argentines (Bruno Falco, Juan Falco, and Marcos Goldin).** We put aside a month on our calendar during November and December.

We met at Coyhaique and packed three to four weeks worth of food, fuel, and equipment, and a pair of skis each. Each of us also carried a packraft, which doubled as a sledge to carry our gear on the ice and as means of transportation to descend the Soler River and cross small glacial lakes along our journey. In Puerto Bertrand, we met Ramón and Hector, the local guides who would carry our loads by horse to El Palomar, the last hut before the icefield. Finally, the expedition had begun. We shuffled gear to the boat and started to sail the Bertrand and Plomo lakes.

The northeast side of Cerro Cachet, showing (1) Homenaje a los Amigos Perdidos (M7+) and (2) the first part of Gaucho Muy Complicado (D 90°), both climbed in late 2019. *Marcos Goldin* The upper section of Gaucho Muy Complicado on the northwest face. *Marcos Goldin*

While the horses were taking our gear to El Palomar, we began our 20km walk inside green valleys with dense woods of lengas that made progress difficult. After two full days of bushwhacking, crossing swamps, and rivers that reached our bellies, we reached El Palomar. We spent two more days reaching the western side of the Nef Glacier, two days in tents under unstoppable rain, and two days (with abundant rain) carrying and pulling our gear into the icefield. After this eight-day approach, we finally established our camp on the ice below an unnamed nunatak on November 22.

November 23 was the only day with weather good enough for climbing, and Norbert, Pierrick, and Marcos used this window to establish a new line on Cerro Cachet (2,632m) for its second ascent. [The peak was first climbed in 1971 by a New Zealand and Chilean trio, starting from a col to the west.] We called the route Gaucho Muy Complicado (600m, D 90°), recalling a funny event from the first few days of expedition. The line starts on the northeast face up a 70° couloir then traverses rightward through easier ground to the north side of the mountain. Here, we climbed a steep chute, averaging 65° with occasional steeper sections; this was mainly ice and could be protected with screws. A couple of pitches on snow led to the final pitch: vertical rime ice and very difficult to protect.

The descent was made in very poor visibility and strong winds via the original route, which winds down the southwest ridge. This included a couple of hundred meters of tricky climbing along rime-covered pinnacles (up to 75°). It wasn't necessary to rappel (and it would have been very time consuming to build proper anchors), so we downclimbed.

On the same day, Bruno and Juan summited one of the spires of the unclimbed nunatak above camp: Porotos y Cerdo (200m, 6b M3). The route begins on a snow ramp then follows easy mixed climbing to reach a perfect 20m crack; after that, the climbing is on easy terrain. The following day provided another small weather window, so Bruno and Juan took the opportunity to climb another small tower immediately south of the unnamed nunatak: Siete Años De Espera (180m, 6a). The brothers named this spire Punta Roco.

The following days were spent in base camp under copious snowfall, but, interestingly, with very little

wind. The trip's main objective, the first ascent of Cerro Nora, remained undone. After descending the glacier to El Palomar, we had to content ourselves with a fun ride in packrafts down the Soler River to Plomo Lake, where we met Ramón and his boat to return to civilization. In just six hours, we rafted through jungle that we had spent two days walking.

– **Marcos Goldin and Juan Falco, Argentina**

## Images



The northeast side of Cerro Cachet, showing (1) Homenaje a los Amigos Perdidos (M7+) and (2) the first part of Gaucho Muy Complicado (D 90°), both climbed in late 2019.



The upper section of Gaucho Muy Complicado on the northwest face.



Ascending an icy runnel on Gaucho Muy Complicado (600m, D 90°) on Cerro Cachet's north face.



Ascending the upper west face of Cerro Cachet on the new route Gaucho Muy Complicado (600m, D 90°).



Steep, rimed terrain on Gaucho Muy Complicado (600m, D 90°).



The line of descent from Cerro Cachet down the 1971 New Zealand route.





Descending the 1971 New Zealand route, along the southwest ridge, from the summit of Cerro Cachet. The col below leads left (west) to the base.



Siete Años De Espera, a new route climbed on Punta Roco by Bruno and Juan Falco, immediately south of the unnamed nunatak near base camp.



Porotos y Cerdo, the new route established on an unnamed nunatak by Bruno and Juan Falco.



Juan Falco leading the 20m crack of Porotos y Cerdos on an unnamed nunatak near the team's base camp for Cerro Cachet.



Floating the Soler River while returning to the Plomo Lake, where the boat was waiting to return the team to Puerto Bertrand.

## Article Details

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