



AAC Publications

Cerro Negro Pabellón, Southeast Face (Not To Summit)

Argentina, Central Andes

Many years ago, a friend pointed out a mountain along the horizon: “That’s Negro Pabellón. It’s had few ascents. It’s hard and far away—a real climb, but close to home.” For 15 years, its image stayed imprinted upon my brain. Finally, in late November 2020, Luco Badino, Chicho Fracchia, and I (all from Argentina) organized an expedition to try a new route up the unclimbed southeast face.

[Editor’s Note: Cerro Negro Pabellón (6,157m, 33°26’59.9”S, 69°42’09.7”W) is located in the Cordón de las Delicias and is the highest peak of the Cordillera Frontal, near Mendoza. The 1953 route up the southeast ridge reached the east summit, which is just slightly lower than the west (main) summit. In 1969, a Japanese expedition reached the west summit via the south glacier. Lastly, in 1984, climbers from Club Andinista Mendoza made an unsuccessful attempt on the Japanese route and instead completed the first ascent of the southwest ridge, which is now considered the “normal route” up this seldom-climbed peak. The southwest ridge was repeated by separate teams in 2014 and 2017 (twice). AAJ 2015 describes the Japanese route as the northwest ridge, which is incorrect; the 2014 team actually repeated the southwest ridge using a new approach route.]

After three days approaching from Tupungato and crossing the Río Las Tunas many times, we reached the base of the southeast face and made camp. The snow and ice conditions on this tall, glaciated face did not look very good. Regardless, at 4 a.m. the next morning, we started to climb. The first 300m were easy and required passing some crevasses (60°). Above a bergschrund, the snow turned to very good but hard ice (70°), and we roped up for the next 700m. After 12 hours of climbing, the angle relented, and we climbed hard snow to the top of the wall (60°).

Our main goal was climbing this wall and getting back to camp safely, so when we reached the eastern summit plateau (ca 6,025m), we decided not to traverse the 1km ridge west to the true summit and instead looked for a way down with our remaining light. We descended the southwest ridge, crossing rock, ice, and penitentes. This was a good decision, given that it took another 14 hours to reach our camp. The following day we rested, slept, and ate. It took us two more days to return to our car, but we had climbed this dream face (1,200m, D+) on a dream mountain, so we were very happy.

— Matias Hidalgo Nicosia, Argentina, with additional information from Pablo González, Argentina

ASCENT CHRONOLOGY

1953 - 1st ascent / Andrés García & others / SE ridge / East Summit

1969- 2nd ascent / Japanese Expedition / South Glacier / West Summit

1984 - 3th ascent / Club Andinista Mendoza Expedition / South Glacier attempt, SW ridge / West Summit

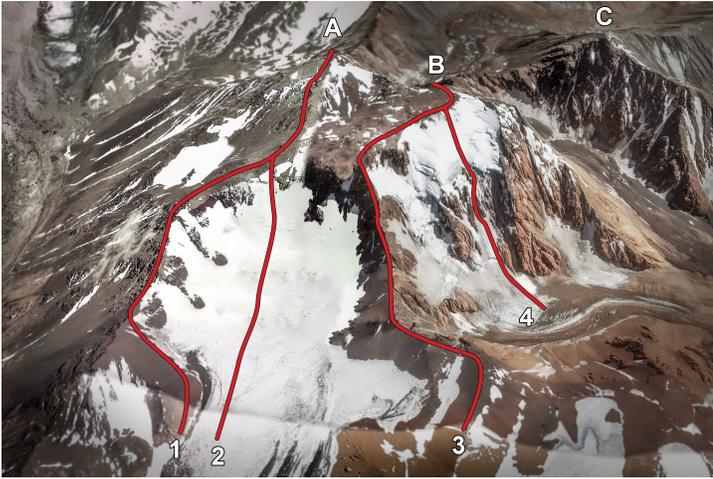
2014 - 4th ascent / Diego Cavassa & other / SW ridge / West Summit

2017 - 5th ascent / Claudio Fredes & others / SW ridge / West Summit

2017 - 6th ascent / Maximo Kausch & other / SW ridge / West Summit

2020 - Matias Hidalgo & others / SE Glacier / No summit

Images



Cerro Negro Pabellón (6,157m) viewed from the southeast, showing: (A) West (main) summit, with the (1) 1984 Argentine route up the southwest ridge and (2) 1969 Japanese route up the south glacier; (B) East summit, with the (3) 1953 Argentine route up the southeast ridge and (4) 2020 route up the southeast face to the east summit plateau; (C) Cerro San Pablo (5,679m).



The southeast face (1,200m, D+) of Cerro Negro Pabellón (6,157m) showing the December 2020 route to the eastern summit plateau (ca 6,025m).



Leading up a long section of hard, glacial ice on the southeast face (1,200m, D+) of Cerro Negro Pabellón before the angle relaxed to 60° snow.



Chicho Fracchia approaching a steeper section on the southeast face (1,200m, D+) of Cerro Negro Pabellón.



Atop the southeast face (1,200m, D+) of Cerro Negro Pabellón on the peak's eastern summit plateau (ca 6,025m). The climbers descended from the plateau without traversing to the 6,157-meter summit.

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