



AAC Publications

Þverártindsegg, Northeast Face, Sinful Pleasures

Iceland, Austurland

The northeast face of Þverártindsegg and a recent avalanche. (1) Sinful Pleasures. (2) Finnbogason-Sigurðsson original route. The normal route to the summit follows the right skyline ridge from the north.

Þverártindsegg (1,554m, 64°12'36.90"N, 16°8'44.23"W) lies around 16km northeast of the famed Jökulsárlón glacier lagoon on Iceland's southeast coast. The normal route is via glaciated slopes to the north (F, probably first climbed in 1932), but its most impressive aspect is the ca 400m northeast face, starting high above long snow slopes. Until 2020, this face had seen only one known ascent, a bold line directly up the center, climbed in May 2003 by the accomplished Icelandic alpinists Ívar Finnbogason and Einar Rúnar Sigurðsson. The first 320m of the route were a mixture of steep snow and ice, interspersed with harder sections of WI3 and 4. The last 80m were either vertical or overhanging, and the route was graded TD+ WI5+.

The approach to the east side of the mountain lies up the broad Kálfafellsdalur valley. Numerous streams need to be crossed, but the valley is more or less flat, and the journey can be made in a high-clearance off-road vehicle. From the valley, an approach southwest up the Eggjadalur valley and an arduous ascent of 1,000m up steep snow slopes and the Skrekk Glacier lead to the bergschrund at the base of the wall.

At 2 p.m. on April 26, having made that long approach, Aliesya Bozhitzya and Eugene Glibin, two Ukrainians based in Iceland, started a new route to the left of the 2003 line. They began at a snowy rib to the left of the couloir leading to a large rock triangle that disgorges rockfall almost constantly.

The first three pitches of adequately protected WI3/4 went well, with Bozhitzya enjoying her first multi-pitch ice climb. Then things got more tenuous on thin ice covered with avalanche-prone snow. Three pitches of poorly protected climbing at WI3 R took them to a southeast-facing spur at around 10 p.m. Beyond was a 50° couloir of deep snow, but to reach it the two first climbed the spur for a pitch, with each climber on opposite sides of the ridge, with the rope between them. Two pitches in the couloir and a further pitch (M4 R) with no protection brought them to the summit ridge. After 50m along the narrow crest, they stood on the summit at 1:30 a.m., greeted by a fine display of northern lights.

Descending the northern slopes, they were troubled by what appeared to be headlamps in the valley below, and eventually the commotion of helicopters. Friends had become concerned they hadn't made it home. By the time they returned to their vehicle, they had been out for 23 hours. The route was named Sinful Pleasures (D/D+, 11 pitches, WI4 M4 R).

— Information from the Icelandic Alpine Club

Images



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