



AAC Publications

Gran Muralla, Northwest Face, Camino del Supay

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In July 2019, Ben White and I (Australia) made a ground-up first ascent of a route in the middle of the northwest face of Gran Muralla (ca 5,100m). Dirt-clogged cracks made progress painfully slow, and we used aid on 75 percent of the route. We spent four days climbing and an additional afternoon drilling rap stations and cleaning. Unfortunately, we ran out of time to make a free ascent.

In August 2022, three years and one pandemic later, I returned with Juan-José Catón from Chile. We were able to free every pitch, either on lead or seconding, finding difficulties to 5.11c. With subsequent work on the descent, the route is now squeaky-clean (and possibly more like 5.11-). We named it Camino del Supay (250m, 5.11c) after the Andean god and ruler of the subterranean world. [Editor's Note: This route lies to the right of Espiritu Vertical (7 pitches, 7a+, Condori-Tarqui, 2016).]

— **Patrick Mikelsons, Australia**

Images



The northwest face of the Gran Muralla (ca 5,100m) with the line of Camino del Supay, established in 2019 and freed in 2022. Other routes not shown.



The northwest face of Gran Muralla (ca 5,100m). The first routes on this formation were climbed by a strong and prodigious German expedition in 1987. Since then, many more have been added and reported, though the whereabouts of several remain something of a mystery. (1) Traditionally marked as one of the German routes from 1987 (also climbed in 2015 by Juvenal and Sergio Condori, who reported the 200m/five-pitch climb had difficulties of 6c). (2) Espiritu Vertical (200m, 7 pitches, 7a+), climbed in 2016 by Sergio Condori and Rolando Tarqui. (3) German route from 1987 and reported as around 6a. Between these two routes lies Camino del Supay (2022). (4) Chabert-Labaeye (200m, 4 pitches, 6b+, Fred Chabert–Dorian Labaeye, April 2006. Re-equipped for a rappel descent in 2015 by Juvenal and Sergio Condori). (5) Kamasa (6b A2, Acuna-Camargo-Rainone-Rosso, 2017; part or all the top section may coincide with an established line). This team rappelled the Chabert-Labaeye line and reported that since the first ascent the cracks had become choked with earth, with no sign of passage. (6) Approximate line of an old route established before the mid- to late 1990s. The prominent right-leaning spire on the left is La Fiamma.



Patrick Mikelsons on pitch five (5.11a), the splitter crack in the headwall of Camino del Supay, Gran Muralla.



On the summit ridge of the Gran Muralla.

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