



AAC Publications

Cuerno Principal, Arriba Quemando El Sol

Chile, Southern Patagonia, Torres del Paine

Arriba Quemando el Sol (650m, 5.11-) goes up the long, shaded pillar on the left side of the west face of Cuerno Principal. The climbers summited via the peak's original route (Chilean, 1968), which climbs black metamorphic rock around the corner to the left. Photo by Seba Pelletti.

On December 6, 2023, Javier Reyes and I ventured into the French Valley in search of adventure on the west face of Cuerno Principal. A big winter snowpack meant that the first warm weather window of the season had left most features dripping wet and out of condition. A long pillar that leads to the upper metamorphic rock on Cuerno Principal had caught my eye while guiding other mountains in the French Valley, and its exposure to the strong westerly winds and prow-like nature meant it would probably be dry enough. There are two routes farther south on this wall: The first to the right is Junto a Vasquez (Labarca- Retamal, 1998), which is around three pillars farther over, then the normal (1968) route up the southwest ridge.

After spending a night under a large boulder on the moraine below the west face, Javi and I were on route at 7 a.m., simulating some 5th-class dihedrals before belaying ten rope lengths to the "headwall" of the pillar. Here, the golden-red rock proved to have amazing climbing; we transitioned from one side of the prow to the other before pulling onto the shoulder of the west face and then scrambling some 200m. After previous experience on Los Cuernos (AAJ 2022), new-routing on this loose metamorphic rock seemed frivolous, and it made sense to continue up the 1968 Chilean line to the summit. Another team was on the route, so we waited until they had summited and descended, to avoid any rockfall, before climbing the seven loose and run-out pitches to the top.

After rapping the metamorphic rock back to the shoulder, we decided to bivy and descend the original route at sunrise. We watched the shadowed silhouettes of Cuerno Norte, Mascara, Hoja, and Espada stretch and project themselves against the glowing red west face of Paine Chico before dozing off, then returned to the beech forest and the bustling tourist trails the next day.

We named our route Arriba Quemando el Sol ("Up High the Sun Is Burning," 650m, 5.11-) after a classic Chilean folklore tune, by Violeta Parra, that rang true at our boulder bivy below the route.

— **Sebastian Pelletti, Chile**

Images



Javier Reyes leading low on the pillar during the ascent of Arriba Quemando el Sol (650m, 5.11-).



Javier Reyes leading the second steeper pitch on Arriba Quemando el Sol (650m, 5.11-).



Javier Reyes seconding on the last section of Arriba Quemando el Sol.



Javier Reyes and Seba Pelletti on the summit of Cuerno Principal after establishing Arriba Quemando el Sol (650m, 5.11-).



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