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Nochnoi Motyl, Ski Descent by North Face

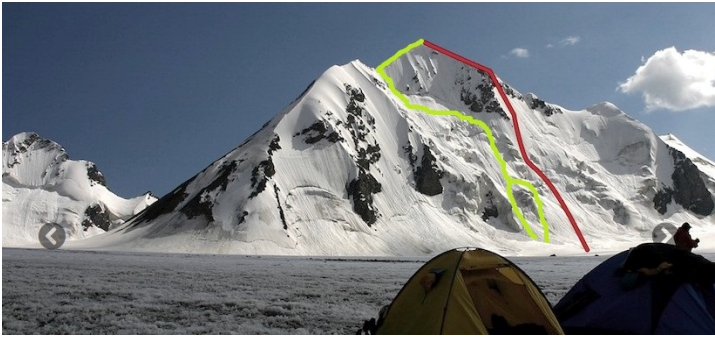
Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Western Kokshaal-too

On May 19, 2022, the mostly French team of Thomas Delfino, Jean-Yves Fredricksen, Léa Klaue (Switzerland), Aurélien Lardy, and Hélias Millerieux skied and snowboarded the north face of Nochnoi Motyl ("Night Butterfly," 5,056m), the central peak at the head of the Dzhirgagaktu Glacier basin, just west of Kyzyl Asker. Access to the range was very difficult this early in the season, and they could get no closer than 45km from their planned base camp in a vehicle. They arranged to complete the journey on horseback, which cost time and limited their options.

After warming up with ski descents of Kucyk ("Pony," 4,705m) and Pyramide (4,812m), the riders climbed the south face of Nochnoi Motyl, the route of the peak's first ascent in 2010. They then started down the east ridge, climbed in 2013 by a British women's team. The quintet entered the north face (all belayed on the first steep pitch except for Lardy) then diagonaled down very exposed slopes. The ski descent was independent of the only route climbed up this face, North Face Corridor (Morrell-Zholobenko), ascended in late August 2012.

— **Dougald MacDonald, with information from Chronique Alpine et des Montagnes du Monde and Montagnes magazine**

Images



Nochnoi Motyl (5,056m), showing the 2022 ski descent by the east ridge and north face in green. The red line shows the route climbed in August 2012 for the first ascent of the north face.

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