



AAC Publications

Pico Paraná, Submundo das Sombras

Brazil, Paraná

Discussing the possibilities for new adventures close to home, one day the south face of Pico Paraná (1,877m), the highest mountain in the state of Paraná, came up in conversation. In southern Brazil, where I live, the mountains are always green and show few bands of rock. Paraná's northeastern subsummit, Ibitirati (1,846m), had established rock routes (see AAJ 2009), but not the main peak's big south face. This face would be difficult to access with a load and is always in the shade in the Southern Hemisphere's winter, the climbing season in our region—which probably explains the lack of routes.

On July 23, 2022, Daniel Covatti, Willian Lacerda, Valdesir Machado, and I headed northeast from Curitiba, the state capital, toward Pico Paraná. We spent eight hours trekking to the base of the wall, with 25kg backpacks loaded with enough equipment and supplies for at least four days. Part of the approach went along a well-marked path, but after crossing over Pico Paraná's west ridge, we dropped into a very steep valley with dense vegetation.

We found the base of the face to be seeping water. For a bivouac site, you could choose between sleeping on rocks or in the mud. During the first two days, we fixed ropes up the first half of the wall. It presented significant technical difficulties (up to 7a free climbing) and also contained a lot of dirt and few cracks, which made progress slow.

On the third day, we worked hard to move our camp up to a large, bush-covered plateau in the middle of the wall. The final two pitches (90m) leading to the ledge were climbed entirely through vegetation. Unfortunately, we found the plateau to be very wet, with no places to sleep comfortably. In addition, the water we had collected from a puddle at the base of the wall must have been bad, and our entire party had vomiting and diarrhea. Luckily, it seemed to strike us in waves, so when one was ill, the others continued climbing.

Above the plateau, there were still many wet sections, which was a shame, as there were sections that we could have climbed free, but we had to aid because of the dampness. Not once did the sunlight touch us during the ascent. At the end of the fourth intense day of climbing, we arrived at the top of Pico Paraná, very tired but happy to have the sunlight touching our skin again! Our new route, which is mostly protected by bolts, is called Submundo das Sombras ("Underworld of Shadows," 655m of climbing, 7a A2).

—Ed Padilha, Brazil

Images

Article Details

Author	Ed Padilha
Publication	AAJ
Volume	66
Issue	99
Page	210
Copyright Date	2025
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions