



AAC Publications

Giant's Belly, Lightning and Chunder

Montana, Beartooth Mountains

Adrien Costa contends with Lightning and Chunder's hollow WI5 crux pitch. Photo by Lauren Smith
On October 30, Lauren Smith and I made the slog up to the Giant's Belly, a north-facing wall (45.14255, -109.66345) on 11,928-foot Mt. Inabnit, with open minds and hunger for early-season adventure. We found the face in fat condition, with the two central mixed lines climbed in 2008, Winter Pants (350m, WI3+ M6, Griffin-Nygaard-Thrasher) and Moonburn (350m, WI4 M5, Magro-Magro-Thrasher), almost completely iced over. An unclimbed line to the right of these routes, fully iced and terminating in a pillar below a cornice, pulled us in.

We simul-climbed up a deceptively steep initial flow and then through scrappy, sn'ice-y mixed steps to reach the base of an aesthetic ice curtain splitting the route in half. This steep, hollow pitch led us into another simul block on low-angle ice.

Now we could see that the summit cornice looming above the attractive final ice pillar was much larger than it had looked from the base. We scanned for alternatives. The next accessible ice to our left led to an improbable-looking mixed ramp that brought us to the summit plateau cornice-free—thankfully, moss sticks and a bomber nut kept it reasonable. We walked down from the summit plateau in beautiful late-afternoon light, regaining our trail runners and enjoying a cigarette break before dark.

Perhaps rare to form, Lightning and Chunder (350m, WI5 M5) climbs well and quickly while still featuring a handful of engaging pitches in a stunning setting.

—Adrien Costa

Images



Lauren Smith simul-climbing toward the cornice high up on Lightning and Chunder on Giant's Belly.



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Giant's Belly wall on Mt. Inabnit, showing the known routes.

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