



AAC Publications

Middle Huey Spire, L'oro dello Yukon

Canada, Northwest Territories, Cirque of the Unclimbables

Giacomo Meliffi climbing pitch six of L'oro dello Yukon. Photo by Dario Eynard

Visiting the Cirque of the Unclimbables and climbing a new route has always been one of my dreams. Doing it together with three friends—Enrico Bittelli, Dario Eynard, and Giacomo Meliffi—while also repeating the original route on the Lotus Flower Tower (2,570m) and paddling out on the South Nahanni River was simply unimaginable.

We drove from Vancouver on July 21 and, after three days, made it to Finlayson Lake and the floatplane base of Warren LaFave and Kluane Airways. On July 25 we flew in and the same day carried climbing gear and food for two weeks to the Fairy Meadows base camp.

We wanted to open a new route before repeating the classic climbs in the area, but the weather wasn't cooperating at first. During a couple of days of wet weather, we scouted a line that very obviously cuts through the middle of the south face of Middle Huey Spire (2,310m, 62°06'30.4"N, 127°41'38.4"W), heading toward a big roof that looked like it would be possible to climb.

On July 28, we began by climbing the first three pitches of the Austrian Route (Kosy-Lackner-Weilguny, 1977), which are shared with Power of Silence (Papert-Steurer, 2009). Where the Austrian route cuts to the right then Power of Silence cuts to the left, we chose to head up a system in the middle, which was very grassy and at points quite loose. We resorted to a combination of aid climbing, gardening, and free climbing. After another four pitches, we reached the base of the imposing roof. We added two bolts, one for protection and one for an anchor, then fixed our ropes and rappelled.

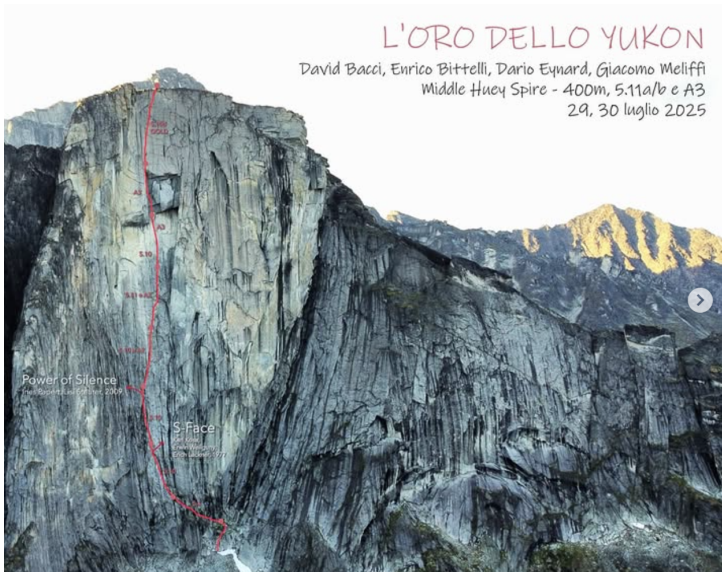
The next day, we jugged up the lines and aided the big roof, which was very exposed and resulted in quite hard aid on Peckers and micronuts. We tried to free climb it, but it was too hard, probably around 5.13. The next lead was the money pitch: an amazing splitter crack around 5.10d that rewarded us for all the effort and the scary climbing underneath.

We topped out just as it started to pour down rain (and it didn't stop for the next three days). We rappelled Power of Silence, using its bolted anchors. We named our route L'oro dello Yukon ("Yukon Gold," 400m, 5.11 A3), and we think it would possibly be a good free climbing challenge for future parties, though the loose rock would make it quite scary.

After a short break, we free climbed Riders on the Storm (Blair-Friberg, 1977) on East Huey Spire and the southeast face of the ultra-classic Lotus Flower Tower (Bill-Frost-McCarthy, 1968). We ended the trip by paddling out of the range on packrafts along the South Nahanni River in 11 days.

—David Bacci, Italy

Images



Overview of the new route L'oro dello Yukon (400m, 5.11 A3) on the south face of Middle Huey Spire.



David Bacci on the approach to Middle Huey Spire, with the line of L'oro dello Yukon (400m, 5.11 A3).



Looking up Middle Huey Spire in wet conditions.



Enrico Bittelli climbing pitch four during the team's first ascent of L'oro dello Yukon (400m, 5.11 A3) on Middle Huey Spire.



Giacomo Meliffi climbing pitch six of L'oro dello Yukon (400m, 5.11 A3).



Dario Eynard aiding on pitch seven of L'oro dello Yukon (400m, 5.11 A3) on Middle Huey Spire.



The Middle Huey Spire team from left to right: Dario Eynard, Enrico Bittelli, David Bacci and Giacomo Meliffi.

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