



AAC Publications

Urus Oeste, Vuelta Austral

Peru, Cordillera Blanca

Maximiliano Arias enjoying the high-quality snow on pitch four of Vuelta Austral. Photo by Vicente Urzúa

In June, Eduardo Tapia, Vicente Urzúa, and I traveled to Huaraz with the goal of improving in mixed climbing, as we already had much experience on big walls and alpine ice. We had heard about Alexander Gruber and Iñaki Herrasti's new route on the south face of Urus Oeste ([see report here](#)), and it seemed suitable for us. It's worth noting that this face is rarely climbed. The Pou Brothers and Micher Quito opened a new route in 2022 ([see AAJ 2023](#)), but up until this season there had been no new development.

We approached from the Ishinca Valley and arrived at the wall at 7 a.m. Seeing the face up close, our attention was grabbed by the potential for new routes. Inspired, we chose a line on the far left side. We could see that the first two pitches would be the crux, followed by easier climbing.

As is customary for us, Vicente led the first pitch, a 55-meter M6 with poor rock and ice, angled at 80°. The pitch ended with a difficult boulder problem. By 9:45 a.m., all three of us were at the first belay. After climbing the second pitch and realizing we were short on time, we decided to descend. Committed to finishing the route, we left our ice gear at the belay to force ourselves to come back!

Eight days later, on June 29, Vicente and I returned; Eduardo had injured his ankle. We left for the wall at 3 a.m., this time choosing a slightly easier first pitch, left of the original line, traversing over mixed terrain. By 9 a.m. we reached the first belay. We climbed another 350 meters relatively quickly, repeating the original second pitch and then finding high-quality alpine ice and poorly consolidated snow. We reached the summit (5,450m) in a total of seven hours, leaving nothing on the wall, and descended the easy couloir on the right side of the south face. We invite everyone to enjoy this high-quality line: Vuelta Austral (400m, M5 WI3).

—Maximiliano Arias, Chile

Images



The south side of Urus Oeste (5,450m) and its neighbors. (1) Upper part of Suspiro del Quenual (2025) on Urus Oeste II. (2) Vuelta Austral (2025). (3) Mi Carnal (2025). (4) Hanan Pacha (2022). All routes on Urus Oeste reached the summit and descended snow to the right of the peak.



Vuelta Austral on the south face of Urus Oeste, showing both variations of the first pitch.



Maximiliano Arias looking to solve a boulder problem on pitch one (crux). Eduardo Tapia is below in a sustained rock section.



Maximiliano Arias midway through the first pitch of the team's successful second attempt on Vuelta Austral.



Maximiliano Arias enjoying the high-quality snow on pitch four of Vuelta Austral.



Maximiliano Arias on pitch six of Vuelta Austral, where the snow became less cohesive and protection scarce.

Article Details

Author	Maximiliano Arias
Publication	AAJ
Volume	67
Issue	100
Page	
Copyright Date	2026
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions