



AAC Publications

Urus Oeste Group, Mi Carnal and Suspiro del Quenual

Peru, Cordillera Blanca

Topo of Mi Carnal on the south face of Urus Oeste. Photo: Iñaki Herrasti Collection

It all began at Plaza Ginebra in Huaraz. I'd gone to meet friends for dinner, and at the table next to ours were friends of theirs, Linda and Alex from Austria. We combined tables and the conversation flowed with nonstop joking. Alex (Gruber) told me about several routes he'd climbed in the Cordillera Blanca and mentioned he wanted to repeat a Pou brothers route on the south face of Urus Oeste (5,450m, 9°21'42"S, 77°27'21"W), climbed in 2022 (see AAJ 2023). I immediately told him, "Let's go!"

Although we could see Urus Oeste during the approach up the Ishinca Valley, I couldn't see the ice line the Pou brothers had climbed, and I was filled with uncertainty. When we arrived at camp (4,950m), we confirmed the ice had not formed, so I suggested we try to open a new route instead. Alex hiked to the wall to look for possible lines while I looked for a water source. I returned an hour later with seven liters, and Alex arrived a few minutes later with an idea for an aesthetic but intimidating line.

The following morning, on June 4, we left camp at 7:30. Alex led the first pitch, a relaxed M4. Then came the crux, with good granite at M6. We were short on cams, but after a fall and some backcleaning, Alex reached the second belay. He also tackled the third pitch, with 15 meters of M6 followed by 45 meters of M4, with great ease. We then simul-climbed to the summit (5,450m), which we reached after a nine-hour push. We descended to the east by a snow gully, arriving at camp before nightfall. We named the route Mi Carnal ("my brother")—a phrase only used in Mexico.

During the third day of our trip, while resting, Alex proposed we do another first ascent. I hesitated—but I'm not very hard to convince! On June 6, we found a nice gully heading up the south side of Urus Oeste II (ca 5,400m), west of Urus Oeste. The first two pitches featured delicate ice that we couldn't protect with screws (M4, M5-). The third pitch traversed to the right, depositing us at an obvious crack system, which we climbed at M6-. A final pitch of M4 led to the summit.

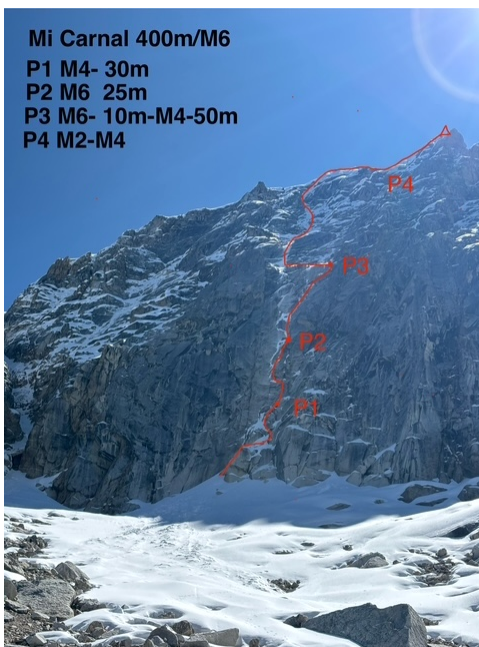
The descent was complicated: We traversed toward Urus Oeste, then rappelled and downclimbed an obvious gully to return to camp, arriving at 8 p.m. We named this route Suspiro del Quenual (400m climbing distance, M6-). [Editor's Note: This summit was probably first reached in 1983 by members of the German Alpinclub Karlsruhe, who climbed to the col west of Urus Oeste and then traversed the ridgeline to the west. See AAJ 1984.]

—Iñaki Herrasti, Mexico

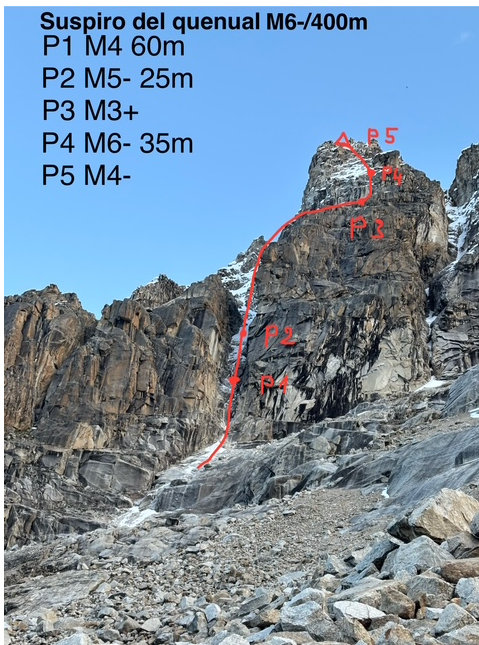
Images



Alex Gruber starting pitch two, the crux, of Mi Carnal on the south face of Urus Oeste.



Topo of Mi Carnal on the south face of Urus Oeste.



Topo of Suspiro del Quenual on the south side of Urus Oeste II.



Alex Gruber on the second pitch of Suspiro del Quenual, south face of Urus Oeste II.



Alex Gruber on the summit of Urus Oeste II.



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.

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