

Acropole des Draveurs, Sens Unique, first winter ascent

Canada, Québec

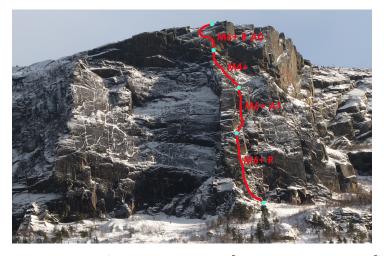
Sens Unique (200m, 5.10+, Bérubé-Frick, 1974) is a particularly remote route that follows an imposing rock pillar up Acropole des Draveurs. The route is in the Charlevoix region and is well known as an ice-climbing destination because of the mega-classic ice route La Pomme d'Or (330m, WI5). Even in the regular rock climbing season, Sens Unique is rarely done due to a long, strenuous approach and poor rock quality on the third pitch.

Yannick Girard and I climbed this route on February 7, in "normal" Northeastern winter conditions: high winds, spindrift snow, and temperatures between -19° and -28°C. Many of the useful cracks became filled with ice. And the overall difficulty was increased by a 25km ski approach. Paths of deer, moose, hare, and huge gray wolf tracks decorated the astonishing frozen scene. After the ski approach, it took four hours of steep climbing up an icy gully and then dense bush fighting to reach the base of the wall.

We climbed until dark and "slept" at an open bivy on the route. The following morning we finished the climb, rappelled, and skied out to complete the adventure in a 48-hour round trip. We both experienced temporary hypothermia and frostbitten fingertips and toes. Climbing Sens Unique in winter (200m, M6+ R A1 [in winter conditions]) revealed once again that Québec is not only a terrific hard-core training ground, but also that the difficulty levels, extreme cold, and remoteness make this a world-class climbing destination in itself. For Yannick and me, it was another opportunity to fulfill our wild alpine dreams here among the gentle rolling hills of eastern Canada.

- Louis Rousseau, Québec

Images



Sens Unique (200m, M6+ R A1 [in winter conditions]) on Acropole des Draveurs in Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie National Park.



Louis Rousseau and Yannick Girard bundled up on Sens Unique (200m, M6+ R A1).



Louis Rousseau and Yannick Girard near the top of Sens Unique on the second day.

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