



Komarova Valley, Pik Gronky, East Buttress and A Bang for the Buck; Pik Zuckerman, Pizzeria Komarovan

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Western Kokshaal-too

From August 21 to September 13, four members of the Austrian Young Alpinists Group—Maximilian Reiss, Manuel Steiger, Roman Weilguny (leader), and Michael Zwölfer—and two mentors, Alex Blümel and me, climbed in the Komarova Valley, east of Kyzyl Asker.

After a few days of enjoying great boulder problems around base camp at 3,800m, we climbed Pik Beggar (4,720m), Pik Lyev (4,710m), and Pik 4,963m for acclimatization. We then established an advanced base below Pik Gronky (5,080m).

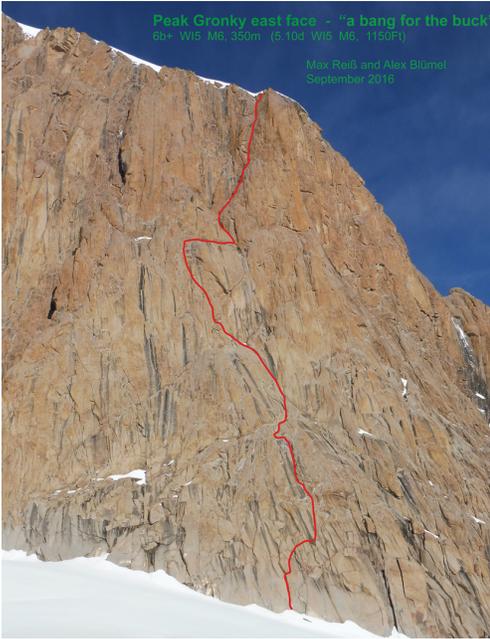
On September 4, Blümel, Steiger, and I climbed the east buttress of Gronky (800m, UIAA IV+ M5 75°), while Reiss, Weilguny, and Zwölfer attempted an ice couloir on the mountain's east face. The ice quality was very bad, so they retreated after two pitches. However, while descending they noticed a fine-looking rock climb toward the right side of the face, and they explored 150m of this before returning to advanced base in the dark.

The next day, Blümel and Reiss completed the rock line up the east face of Gronky. A Bang for the Buck ascends 350m of excellent granite, with difficulties of 6b+, WI5, and M6. In common with all other routes climbed during the expedition, no bolts were placed. The same day, Weilguny and Zwölfer climbed the steep northeast face of Pik Zuckerman (5,045m) in a 14-hour push to create Pizzeria Komarovan (600m, M4 90°).

On September 6 we returned to base camp to start the long journey home. This expedition was the culmination of a two-year project launched in 2014 by the Austrian Alpine Club for budding alpinists aged between 18 and 22. They were mentored by mountain guides and experienced alpinists such as Hansjörg Auer, Hannes Leitner, Much Mayr, and in this case, Alex Blümel and me.

Lisi Steurer, Austria

Images

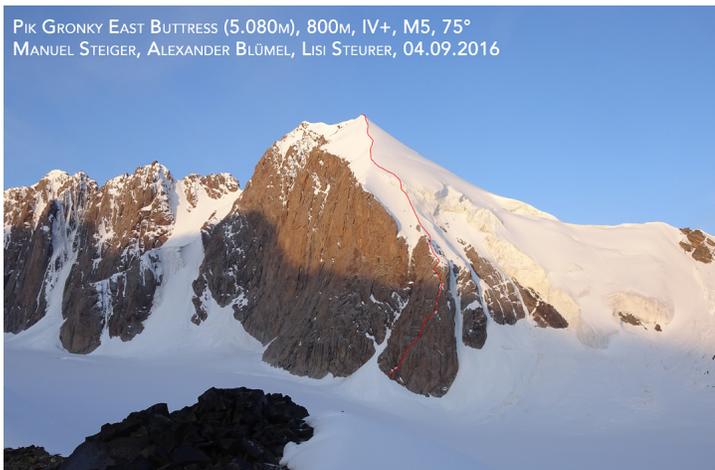


A Bang for the Buck (350m, 6b+ WI5 M6) on the east face of Pik Gronky.



Pizzeria Komarovan (600m, M4 90°) on Pik Zuckerman. The pointed summit on the left is Pik Unmarked Soldier (5,352m).

PIK GRONKY EAST BUTTRESS (5.080M), 800M, IV+, M5, 75°
MANUEL STEIGER, ALEXANDER BLÜMEL, LISI STEURER, 04.09.2016



Pik Gronky and the line of the East Buttress Route (800m, UIAA IV+ M5 75°, 2016). Left of this peak lie Pik Carnovsky and the Ochre Walls (ca 4,800m), on which there are a number of established lines (see AAJ 2013).



On the east buttress of Pik Gronky.



Attempting a new ice line on the east face of Pik Gronky.



The last mixed pitch on A Bang for the Buck, east face of Pik Gronky.



Pik Gronky showing (1) Bang for the Buck (350m, 6b+ WI5 M6) and (2) the East Buttress (800m, UIAA IV+ M5 75°). Left of this peak lie Pik Carnovsky and the Ochre Walls (ca 4,800m).

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