



## AAC Publications

---

### **Cerro Riso Patrón Sur, Southwest Face**

Chile, Southern Patagonia

**From February 9 to March 3, 2018, we spent 22 days in Chile's O'Higgins National Park, hoping to climb Cerro Riso Patrón.** This mysterious mountain on the western border of the Southern Patagonian Icefield has seen very few climbers. The central summit (ca 2,550m) was climbed twice: first by Italians Casimiro Ferrari, Bruno Lombardini, and Egidio Spreafico in August 1988, via the southeast face, and then in September 2015 by Lise Billon, Antoine Moineville, Diego Simari, and Jérôme Sullivan by the east spur. The south summit (approximately 2,350m) was unclimbed.

The style of our expedition was "by fair means": We planned to reach the base camp in Fiordo Falcón by kayak, which involved 100km of paddling from Puerto Edén, the closest settlement. Once we arrived in Puerto Edén, we spent a day visiting the offices of the authorities. Getting permission from the navy, police, and national park turned out to be complicated, and we missed having a lawyer on our team. We finally started on February 10 and were able to finish the approach by kayak in three days, thanks to good conditions.

Upon arriving at our base camp by "Fonrouge Bay," we immediately noticed that the usual forest, full of green plants and birds, was missing. Instead we found a brown and gray field of broken trees, dead fish, and pieces of ice. The only conclusion we could reach was that a huge tsunami must have swept the area just before we arrived, destroying everything within a kilometer or more of the sea.

The day after our arrival, we immediately started to explore the so-called Comesaña Valley. [Fonrouge Bay and the Comesaña Valley were named by the 2015 French team after Argentine climbers José Louis Fonrouge and Carlos Comesaña, one of the first teams to explore this region.] **How to reach an advanced base camp and then the foot of the mountain was one of the many questions of our expedition.** The approach we chose involved crossing a big river exiting the lake above Fonrouge Bay. One of us had to swim across the lake with a rope so we could set up an acrobatic 80m Tyrolean traverse. Rubber boots turned out to be essential equipment for wading through the swamps and creeks along the approach.

Eventually, on the 15th of February, we positioned an advanced base camp southwest of the peak, at about 1,000 meters, one and a half hours away from the foot of the mountain. Everything was now ready—we just needed some good weather to start the climb!

Sitting out a week of storms at ABC, we continuously guessed about different strategies and routes. When a small weather window of one and a half days was forecast, it became clear the only reasonable line would be up the southwest face, following mixed ground to an obvious ice ramp that led toward the summit from halfway up. We stuffed semi-dry gear in our packs and finally started climbing on February 22.

Moderate mixed terrain, plus a few harder pitches (including a 25m M7+ wall that took about an hour to climb), brought us to the ice ramp. The ice turned out to be perfect, and we enjoyed pitches up to 90° on both blue ice and rime. After 12 hours of climbing, we reached the summit at dusk (around 8:30 p.m.) and enjoyed breathtaking views of the Southern Icefield. However, we were overwhelmed when we looked to the north: Our dream of completing the climb with a traverse to Riso Patrón's central summit evaporated when we saw the obvious difficulties, especially given our short weather

window. We decided to be content with the first ascent of this untouched summit; we called our route King Kong (900m, M7+ 90°). After bivying in a cozy cave below the summit, we started down the south ridge and then downclimbed and rappelled the west face.

We would have liked to climb some more in this paradise, but the weather turned definitively bad. After another long day extracting all of our gear from advanced base, we started back to civilization in our kayaks, fighting strong gusts for five days of paddling before we could reach Puerto Edén.

– Matteo Della Bordella, Italy and Silvan Schüpbach, Switzerland

## Images



Photo-topo of the line of the first ascent of Cerro Riso Patrón Sur.



Kayaking en route to Cerro Riso Patrón Sur.



Base camp below the Riso Patrón group.





Telephoto image of the Riso Patrón peaks from base camp to the south-southwest, with the main summit on the left and south peak on the right.



The 80-meter Tyrolean traverse rigged for the approach to Cerro Riso Patrón.



Silvan Schüpbach leading the crux (M7+) rock wall on the first ascent of Cerro Riso Patrón Sur.



Climbing steep ice on Cerro Riso Patrón Sur.



Beautiful ice climbing high on Cerro Riso Patrón Sur.





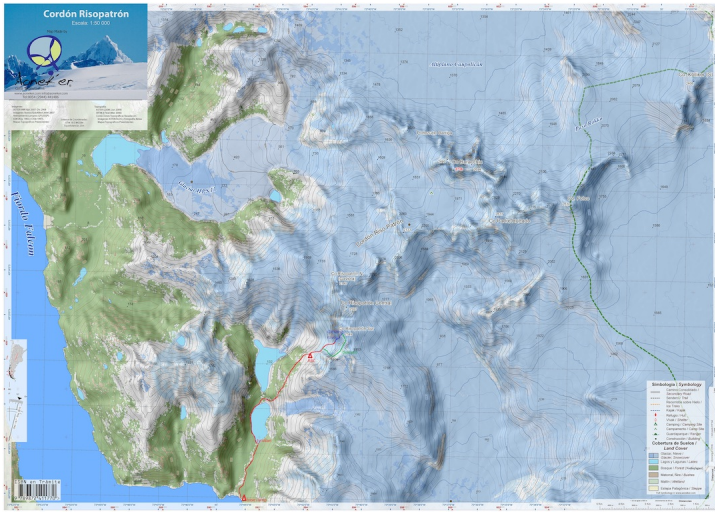
On the summit of Cerro Riso Patrón Sur, looking northward toward the main summit.



View to the northeast from Cerro Riso Patrón Sur. The high peak in center is Cerro Buracchio.



Line of the first ascent on the southwest face of Cerro Riso Patrón Sur.



Map of the Riso Patrón area with camps and approach marked.

## Article Details

Author	Matteo Della Bordella and Silvan Schüpbach
Publication	AAJ
Volume	60
Issue	92
Page	0
Copyright Date	2019
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions