



Baspa Valley, Rakcham Plateau, Various Routes

India, Himachal Pradesh, Kinnaur

Raldang Spire above the Baspa Valley. (1) Baba Ji (2019). (2) American-Belgium-Italian route (2019). (3) American attempt (2015). Photo: Much Mayr

A North Face team visited the Baspa Valley in the autumn, mostly operating from the plateau north of Rakcham village on relatively low granite peaks.

Eneko and Iker Pou (Spain) first climbed a previously virgin peak of 4,670m, which the brothers named Midi d'Ossau after the famous Pyrenean mountain. They summited this via a route named the Latin Brother (560m, 7c+, 12h), referring to Hansjörg Auer, with whom they shared two of their best expeditions, to Baffin Island and Siberia. The second route led to an unnamed summit of around 5,000m, to the north of Midi d'Ossau. The Spanish route climbed an elegant and spectacular ridge and was named Miquellink (600m, 6b, 12h), dedicated to the Mallorcan climber, Miquel Riera, who is generally credited to have "invented" deep water soling and died while the brothers were in India.

The Pous' last route reached the previously unclimbed summit of a slender needle they named Gorbea (4,560m) after the highest mountain in the Spanish province of Alava. The route was Beti Alavés (340m, 6b+) after the Basque football club Deportivo Alavés. The three routes were opened in a period of 10 days during October.

The other members of the team comprised Matty Hong (USA), Jacopo Larcher (Italy), and Siebe Vanhee (Belgium), plus photographer Matteo Mocellin. From October 10–13, these four climbed a new route on Raldang Spire. The first ascent of this spire had been made just two days earlier by the Austrian team. The American-Belgian-Italian route lies on the right flank of the pillar, but left of the big corner system attempted in 2015 by Americans Quinn Brett, Whitney Clark, and Crystal Davis Robbins. They started one day later than the Austrians and avoided the first steep part of the pillar (approximately five pitches) by coming in from the right and then continuing up a prominent dihedral. The climb is Toby's Shipwreck (450m, 7b).

– Information provided by **Eneko Pou**, Spain, and **Rodolphe Popier**, La Chronique Alpine, FFCAM

Images



The three new routes climbed by Eneko and Iker Pou: from left to right Beti Alavés on Gorbea, Latin Brother on Midi d'Ossau, and Miquellink on an unnamed summit of around 5,000m, all above the Rakcham Plateau.



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