



AAC Publications

Concha de Caracol, South Face, Cerveza, Pan y Ácido; Mariposa, South-Southwest Face, Attempt

Peru, Cordillera Vilcanota

On July 5, Andres Marin, Alex Torres (both from Colombia), and I met up with Cordillera Vilcanota local Luis Crispín in the small town of Pacchanta, at the foot of Ausangate. There, Luis helped Andres, Alex, and I organize logistics and horses for an exploratory mission into the range. With information and photos of unclimbed alpine lines from our friend and local guide Nathan Heald, we were stoked to see what was ahead.

On July 7, we started the trek around Ausangate and arrived at the base camp of our first objective, the south-southwest face of Mariposa (5,842m; 13°47'7.92"S, 71°12'35.94"W). After climbing a huge portion of this face, we were forced to turn around approximately 150m below the summit. The snow was the consistency of powdered sugar, an unprotectable slab of snow. We quickly retreated and downclimbed. [Mariposa was first climbed from the north-northwest (AAJ 1958) and has since seen numerous ascents and variations on that aspect. The complete southeast ridge (700m, D) was climbed in 2020 by Luis Crispin and Thomas Schilter (AAJ 2021). The approximately 600m south-southwest face remains unclimbed.]

With an array of other objectives nearby, we decided to backtrack and move our base camp north, just below (ca 4,800m) the Jampa Pass. Early on July 13, we set out for a new route on the south face of Concha de Caracol (5,640m; 13°45'16"S, 71°10'38"W). This peak had looked attractive since our arrival, and Nathan had also recommended it. With a light alpine rack, we started up the face to the right of the 2019 route Via Pirenaica, each of us leading in two-pitch blocks. [The route Via Pirenaica (550m, TD+, Baró-Rodríguez-Sancho, 2019) ascends the central part of the south face of Concha de Caracol (AAJ 2020).] The climbing quickly became steep and thoughtful, with a variety of ice, mixed, and snow conditions. The last pitch required everything of Alex to dig through the sugary snow on the summit ridge.

The limited daylight in Peru left us concerned about the descent, so we opted for an open bivy (5,500m) just below the ridge, hoping to continue to the summit in the morning. After an extremely long and cold night with little sleep, we continued up the summit ridge to reach the top of Concha de Caracol. We rappelled the same line of our ascent and reached our base camp again around noon on July 14 with cold toes and an amazing adventure to remember: Cerveza, Pan y Acido (700m [climbing distance], ED 90°)

— Anna Pfaff, USA

Images



South face of Concha de Caracol (5,640m), showing (1) Via Pirenaica (550m, TD+, Baró-Rodríguez-Sancho, 2019) and (2) Cerveza, Pan y Ácido (700m, ED 90°, Marin-Pfaff-Torres, 2021).



Anna Pfaff low on the route Cerveza, Pan y Acido (700m, ED 90°) on the south face of Concha de Caracol (5,640m).



Andres Marin ascends a steeper mixed section on the route Cerveza, Pan y Acido (700m, ED 90°) on the south face of Concha de Caracol (5,640m).

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