

Turbio IV, Northern Patagonia

Patagonia is known for its beautiful mountains and rough climate. In the shade of iconic mountains like Cerro Torre and Chaltén lay other remote valleys with hidden gems.

After having heard the stories of first ascensionist Leo Viamonte, Seba de la Cruz and other locals that first entered this remote valley in Northern Patagonia in the 80's we got excited to explore this part of Argentina.

We were a team of five women coming from different backgrounds and nationalities all driven by a deep love and motivation for climbing and exploring: Fay Manners, Belen Prados, Rocio Guiñazu, Julia Cassou and Caro North.

At the end of January we started our expedition into the Turbio IV valley. Two days of hiking and horse riding that included some treacherous river crossings brought us to the place where the Turbio II, III, IV meet.

A little higher, deep in the rain forest is the hut Don Ropo, a rustic wooden hut built and held by Osvaldo and Gabriel Rapoport. This was our starting point for our access to the Turbio IV valley.

From here on we were required to transfer loads from the horse backs to our own backs and hike another day to reach the hut, Don Chule. Following small trails through dense forests, crossing two zip lines we arrived at this quaint and welcoming hut. Constructed by people in the local climbing scene and known climbing legend Sebastian de la Cruz, this hut became our base camp for the next month. Especially on those days with heavy rain we were grateful to have such a luxurious shelter.

We used the first days to explore the valley, look at different walls, visit some existing lines and repeat some pitches to get a feeling of the granite. We then decided to install our bivy at the Laguna Mariposa to try to open a new route up El Cohete a so far unclimbed feature.

We started opening ground up and fixing a couple of pitches but days with heavy rain forced us to go back to the hut to seek shelter. We were lucky that the periods of rain never lasted more than two days and were interrupted by a couple of good days that we used to make

progress on our route. In between we hiked down to get our resupplies that the horses had carried to the Don Ropo hut. This was also the opportunity to get the treat of Osvaldos amazing Tortas Fritas and a wooden heated shower that him and Fede would heat each time we arrived. Their welcoming warm atmosphere made it hard to leave each time.

Up on the wall our objective was to open a route that would be nice for people to repeat. This involved a big amount of cleaning: cracks were full of plants and deep roots while slabs were covered by lichen. While we were pushing our line further up into the unknown, we were working hard on the pitches below to make the climbing enjoyable. Lots of hard work shared between the five of us! While opening involved quite some aid climbing the cleaned pitches offer amazing, varied and sustained freeclimbing up to 7b+. We couldn't believe the quality of the rock on each single pitch and the variety of corners, cracks, flakes and slabs we found.

Most of the route is sustained climbing in the 6c/7a range on trad gear. We only placed bolts where it was necessary to avoid exposed sections.

13 pitches (most of them 50m long) lead us to the top of the Rock Pillar of Cohete. From there we were able to climb a line of 650m of AD 4a scrambling up to a snowy ridge and the first snow summit.

One month of hard work, logistics and tactical choices paid off and at the end we created "Apollo 13 7b+".

The route is bolted with two 10mm Inox bolts on each anchor and equipped to rappel down. We added ...bolts to make the climbing enjoyable and safe.