



MOUNT EVEREST FOUNDATION

Patron: HRH The Duke of Edinburgh KG KT

EXPEDITION REPORT

FREE VENEZUELAN BIG WALL



Kids With Guns - Amuri Tepui 5.13a, A3, E6 6c.

Over 15 days this February, our team consisting of George Ullrich (UK), Siebe Vanhee (Belgium), Sam Farnsworth (UK), and Mason Earle (USA) successfully weaved an improbable and intricate path directly behind Salto Tuyuren- topping out within a stones throw of where the waterfall burst off the summit. Our best estimate is that the 500 meter wall overhangs almost by one hundred meters. The route transpired to provide 21 pitches of climbing, the overwhelming majority of which were on immaculate and wildly steep Quartz-arenite (pre-Cambrian metamorphosed sandstone).

After meeting as team for the first time in Caracas we flew in two Cessna planes to Yunek, a remote Pemon Indian village that finds itself the staging post of an incredible and rapidly developing climbing region. Here we were able to find a guide and porters to help with the 3 day trek to Amuri Tepui with our 4 weeks of supplies. Instead of trekking off towards white capped peaks, this was a real jungle expedition, incomplete without T-shirts, sunglasses, and a sharp machete.

Upon reaching the base, we picked an audacious line up the centre of the steepest section of wall. We established a base camp to the side of the waterfall that afforded us an amazing view of the wall. We realized later that this five-star base camp was at the expense of a continuous drenching from the waterfall when the wind was in the wrong direction. From here a convenient cat-walk gave access to the bottom of our chosen line and meant that we were able to avoid the adventurous initial jungle pitches for which the area is renowned.

From the start we were immediately impressed by the quality of the climbing. Technical face climbing and short sections of loose rock all made route finding difficult and progress sporadic, but this was interspersed with many obvious pitches and faster progress. After twelve days and only half of the wall climbed we were individually questioning whether we would have the time, and particularly food and water to top out. This meant that our initial goal of free climbing every pitch had to be shelved.

We finally managed to burst through the first major roof at half height. This success boosted team moral enabling some faster progress and making us realize that the top was attainable despite the steepening rock above.

For the twelve days we spent on the wall there was a complete lack of the horizontal- with the exception of some unexpected but welcome ledges. Every pitch resulted in a shockingly airy abseil and a invigorating morning start swinging out 20 meters from the portaledges onto the rope to regain the previous days highpoint.

The entire route would almost uncertainly go free with some protectable but unlikely roof sections providing wild cruxes. We were happy to have established a new line on the steepest wall any of us have ever seen, in such good company and in a unique beautiful part of the world.

The Tepui had originally been climbed by John and Anne Arron in 2008. John, has spent a lot of time in the area and provided the initial idea for the trip with tantalising tales of potential for some of the steepest big wall free climbing anywhere in the world. This kind of incentive meant that unbelievably we were joined at the ridiculously remote wall after one week by the Belgium team of Nicolas Favresse, Sean Villanueva O’driscoll, Stephane Hanssens and Gean-Louis Wertz who made rapid progress on a line within shouting distance to our left.