
MARCELO SCANU & ED DOUGLAS

South America 2021-22



Extremo Huanacuni Norte. (*Julieta Ferreri*).

Bolivia

In the summer of 2021, Argentine Julieta Ferreri and Brazilian Marcelo Motta Delvaux were active in the **Nevado Huancuni** (5798m) region. First they explored the area over two expeditions during June and July and then a climbing expedition that took eight days. They established base camp by Lago Nube and camp one at 5,000m, near the entrance to the south-west glacier. During an 18-hour push, the pair ascended the normal route, the south-west ridge of Huanacuni, first crossing the summit of **Extremo Huanacuni Sur** (c5450m). They then continued to the main summit finding powder snow above 5,500m. They were forced to stop 20 or 30m below the main summit. The ridge between Huanacuni and **Nevado Nube** (5710m) had snow at 65° but because of the poor powder conditions felt steeper. They descended the route of ascent and rated it AD/D.



Topo of ascents Nevado Huanacuni. (*Julieta Ferreri*)

Afterwards they crossed a pass (5250m) descending to a glacier below the west face of Huanacuni, establishing their next camp at 5,100m at the glacier's base. They then climbed **Extremo Norte de Huanacuni** (5400m) via a glacier on the edge of the west face that started at a moderate angle but steepened to 55° grades near the top. The route was rated as PD/PD+. This beautiful summit has no definitively recorded climbs but Lindsay Griffin reports that some peaks at the northern end of the Huanacuni massif were climbed by a German expedition in 1969. After descending, Ferreri and Motta Delvaux walked to the nearby road and took a bus to La Paz.

Meanwhile, in the **Cordillera Real**, Fiona Tummon and Alexander von Ungern left Peñas on 7 August to arrive close to the Paso Mullu col (4730m), just short of Lago Jankho Kota. From there they trekked west, crossing a pass a little over 5,300m below **Wila Lloje** (5596m), camping after four hours in the middle of the glacier plain beyond. Next day at first light they approached the long north-north-west ridge of Wila Lloje, which starts from a col south-east of **Peak 5604m**. They chose to climb all the gendarmes on this ridge, although they reported that most could have been passed on solid névé. Until the first significant summit – **Peak 5580m** – the rock was solid. Continuing over two more forepeaks, mainly on hard snow, they reached a steep rocky section below Wila Lloje itself. Progressively deteriorating rock on this 100m passage made for delicate climbing. From the top they descended the south-west ridge (55° in the upper section) to the col they'd crossed the previous day and regained their tents less than six hours after leaving.

Next day they opted to climb a gully on the east face of **Warawarani I** (5542m) that had caught their attention the evening before. They started at

sunrise on an initial pitch of dry tooling to reach the bottom of a large cave and comfortable belay below what proved to be the crux. Taking a line around the left side of the hollowed rock formation, the crux 10m were vertical and very delicate, with compulsory tool placements in thin, shallow cracks, often hidden by moss, and thin edges for the crampons. Protection was poor. Above was a snow gully of c50° with steeper steps. From the top they descended the north ridge, then down-climbed a snowy gully to the east and were back at the tent before noon. The first ascent of Warawarani I was made in August 1975, by four Italians, via a gully on the east face. Glacier heights and snow cover have changed here dramatically.

On 10 August the two climbers left at dawn for one final climb. The mountain at the head of their glacier is **Jankho Peque** (5604m), 'white head' in local Ayamara, and they climbed its south face at around 50°, although snow conditions were poor, leaving them up to their waists at times. 'From the summit, we had the impression we were a little lower than both Warawarani and Wila Lloje, making us feel the map altitude for Jankho Peque is too high.' They descended the west ridge, packed up camp, and walked down to the road. The first recorded ascent of Jankho Peque was in 1998 by a four-man French party, which climbed the south-east ridge at F.

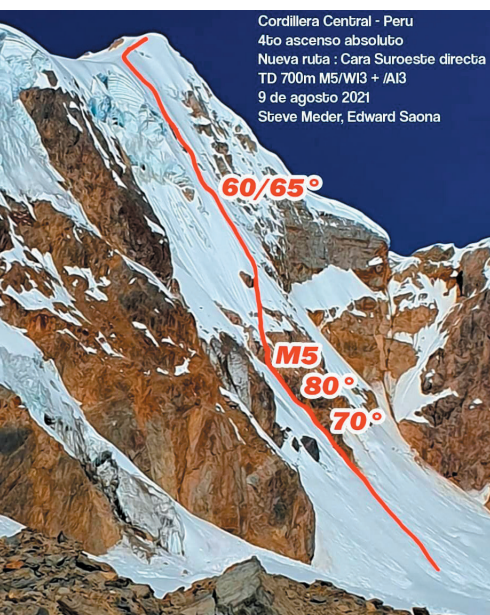
Peru

The **Cordillera Central** is located between the regions of Junín and Lima. It's very little visited, with many wild areas that remain untouched. All the 5,000m peaks here have had very few ascents. This allows an old-time version of mountaineering similar to that of the pioneers. During July 2021, the Peruvian Edward Saona and Frenchman Steve Meder, who has spent 17 of his 44 years living in Peru, explored access to the south-west face of **Nevado Sullcon Sur**. The pair ascended the north summit of **Nevado Sullcon** (5500m) to get a good view of the unclimbed face of Sullcon Sur (5650m). In August they drove 130km and six hours from Lima to Yurak Mayo (4300m), where the road finishes, and then trekked to base camp at the nearby Sullcon glacier at almost 5,000m. On 9 August they put up a new route on the south-west face of Sullcon Sur, 700m of mixed ground described by Meder as 'an interesting and sustained route with ice and rock of good quality, with climbing up to M5 and WI3+.' It took 10 hours to reach the summit ridge and after a rest they continued, passing lots of penitentes on the way to reaching the summit at 5.30pm, just in time for a superb sunset over the Pacific Ocean and a nice view of the Cordillera Central. They reached base camp after 17 hours of activity.

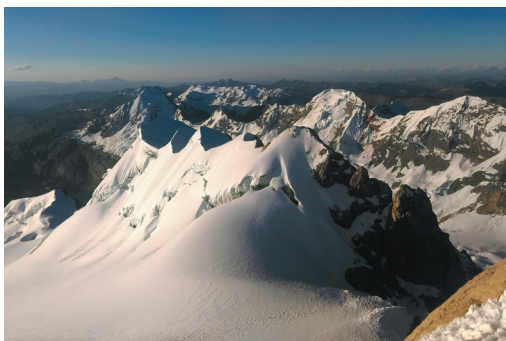
Steve Meder is very active with new routes in Peru. For his next expedition, this time in the **Cordillera Blanca**, he was joined by Peruvian friends Silio and Antonio Chinchay. Departing the town of Pashpa (3450m), they ascended the Uruscocha valley, camping near the second Uruscochas lake at about 4,335m, below the possibly unclimbed north-west face of **Urus Oeste** (5450m). On 4 September 2021, Meder and Silio Chinchay climbed the moraine to the lake at the base of the face (4800m) and continued climbing



Edward Saona on the second pitch of the south-west face of Sullcon Sur (5650m) in Peru's Cordillera Central. (Steve Meder)



Topo of the south-west face of Sullcon Sur. (Steve Meder)



View of the Cordillera Central from Sullcon Sur. (Steve Meder)

decomposed rocky terrain for 300m, with vertical steps of around III. They reached a suspended glacier and traversed left, climbing some 45°-50° ice slopes to reach easier snow slopes and penitentes and the summit pyramid. It took them 5 hours from camp and they rated the 600m climb at AD, 50°, III. The pair opted to descend via the eastern sub-peak (5350m, M3) and the south-eastern slopes of the 1963 normal route from Ishinca base camp and then the rocky north ridge, which they had attempted the year prior, and descended easier slopes from a col (5100m) to the moraine lake in the Uruscocha valley.

The Basque mountaineers Eneko and Iker Pou have made plenty of contributions to Peruvian climbing in recent years. The summer of 2022 was no exception. In late June, together with Peruvian alpinist Micher Quito, they climbed two new routes on the Urus Oeste peaks that lie between the Ishinca and Uruscocha valleys. The first was on **Urus Oeste** (5450m) from the Urus Oeste glacier. *Hanan Pacha* (425m, 90°) was climbed in an 11-hour round-trip from a base camp at 4,900. Three days later they



New route on the north-east face of Urus Oeste (5450m) in Peru's Cordillera Blanca. (Steve Meder)



High on Urus Oeste. (Steve Meder)

added a route to **Urus Oeste III** (5270m), likely the first on this feature climbed in 12 and a half hours. *Emmoa* (M6, 75°) is named in honour of the Basque mountain museum. The Pou brothers had already made an acclimatisation trip up **Huarapasca** (5418m) and done a free ascent of their own 2019 route *Aupa Gasteiz* (160m, 7c+). Yet they were far from done.

A few days after these ascents, they put a fabulous new mixed climb on the north face of **Cashan** (5716m) in the nearby Rajucolta valley, leaving



The line of *Hanan Pacha* from the prolific Pou brothers and Micher Quito. (*Iker Pou*)

Below: Iker Pou and Eneko Pou making the first ascent of *Bizirik* on the north face of Cashan (5716m). (*Iker Pou*)



The line of *Bizirik*. (*Iker Pou*)

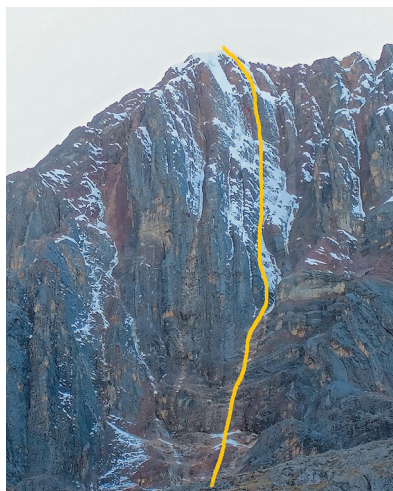


On the first ascent of *One Push* on the south-west face of Pumahuacanca (5563m). (*Iker Pou*)

their bivy at 5,000m on 21 June and taking eight hours to reach the summit. They called their route *Bizirik* (980m, M6, 85°), which translates as 'alive'. They descended the opposite side of the mountain and were back at their base camp in a 13 and a half hour round-trip.

These were only warm-ups compared to what came next. Still in the Cordillera Blanca, above the Rurec valley, the Pou brothers and Quito climbed a new route on the south-west face of **Pumahuacanca** (5563m), a 'brutal' 1,000m line they called *One Push* (V, 85°, M7), named for the intense continuous effort required to climb it.

Leaving their high camp at 5.15am on 12 July, their route culminates in an inspiring and perpendicular goulotte just below the summit, which they reached at 5.45pm, just in time for sunset. Pumahuacanca is a complex mountain with no descent straightforward and it took the trio another nine hours to reach safety on steep grass slopes, where they waited for dawn, reaching base camp 26 and a half hours after setting out. They described the route on social media as 'the hardest high mountain of our career', some claim given their extensive track record. The pair still weren't done,



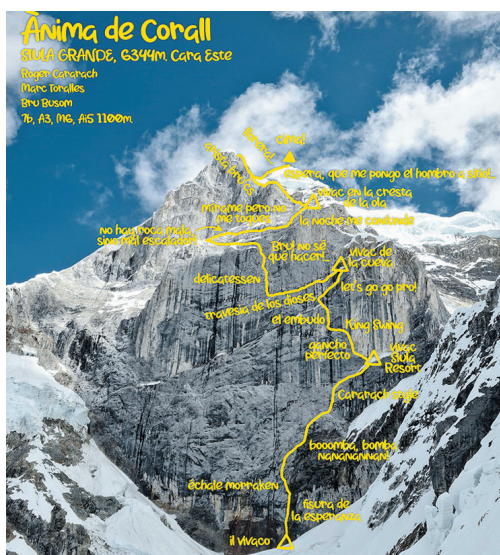
The line of *One Push*. (Iker Pou)

climbing a 14m 8c+ rock route and reaching the summit of two 6,000m peaks, **Tocllaraju** (6034m) and **Ranrapallca** (6164m).

In the **Cordillera Huayhuash**, Alik Berg and Quentin Roberts climbed an impressive new route on the famous peak **Jirishanca** (6094m), a name that translates as 'bill of a hummingbird'. This spectacular mountain has a storied history, from the first ascent via the east ridge in 1957 from Toni Egger and Siegfried Jungmair to more recent new routes on the east face including Nick Bullock and Al Powell's *Fear and Loathing* and Aymeric Clouet and Didier Jourdain's *Tambo, Churros, y Amigos*, both climbed in 2003. However, there was still a huge amount of unclimbed real estate to the left of the face, which this summer attracted Berg and Roberts. During a three-week expedition in July 2022 Berg and Roberts managed to climb a new line on this east side of the mountain. More details next year, hopefully, but Roberts told *Planetmountain* that they called the route *Reino Hongo* after the South American mushroom kingdom in Super Mario, a nod to the complex snow mushrooms they met on the route. They rated difficulties at 5.8, 90°, M7 and quoted an elevation gain of 1,100m, 'although the numbers in no way represent the complexity of the climbing' and the height gain doesn't reflect the length of the route. Also on the mountain were Josh Wharton and Vince Anderson who repeated the 2003 Italian route *Suerte*, which controversially used dozens of bolts.



The line of *Reino Hongo* on the east face of Jirishanca (6094m).



The meandering and difficult line of *Ánima de Corall* on the east face of Siula Grande (6344m).

Staying in the Cordillera Huayhuash, Spanish climbers Bru Busom and Marc Toralles made the first ascent of the formidable east face of **Siula Grande** (6344m) in Peru, in a six-day effort starting 11 July. Despite numerous previous attempts, the east face had not been climbed in its entirety before, although in 2016 Max Bonniot and Didier Jourdain climbed the east pillar and south-east ridge. The two Spaniards had tried the face before in 2019 with Roger Cararach but abandoned the attempt when Cararach was injured by rockfall. Having bivied under the face on the night of 10 July, they set off on a meandering journey of 'great tension', the mountain's compact limestone low down exposed to rock fall. The pair was forced to climb after the sun had left the face in the afternoon or at night using big-wall tactics low down before reverting to alpine style higher up. They called their route *Ánima de Corall* (1100m, 7b, A3, AI5, M6) and described what must have been a harrowing descent on loose abseil anchors.