

AFRICA

MALI

Hombori Tondo, General Overview. Le Main de Fatima is the best-known feature of the many huge sandstone “mesas” that populate the arid interior of Mali. Much of the development of the five colossal weathered sandstone towers, which rise up to 600 meters from base to summit, has been under the influence of Spaniard Salvador Campillo, who first visited the area in 1978, returned to climb his first route (solo) in 1982, and in 1988 married a local woman from the village of Daari very close to the towers’ base. The couple now splits time between Mali during the winter (the climbable months in the area are November to February) and Spain during the summer. Campillo has gained the trust and respect of the indigenous peoples and remains the sole person able to negotiate access to the various cliffs of the area with the village chiefs on whose land they lie. It should be noted that it is customary to bring gifts for the village chiefs in exchange for permission to climb on the formations.

Teams from both France and Spain visited the Hombori Mountains in the winter of 1995-’96 and again in ’96-’97, creating a number of new routes. A large group of Spanish climbers in the company of Campillo put up a number of routes in the region of Le Main de Fatima the first winter. On Kaga Tondo, these included *Complicado Burocratico* (F5, 250m), and *Primera Instancia* (7c+, 200m) on the walls immediately right of the big couloir separating the east faces of Kaga Pamari and Kaga Tondo. On Suri Tondo, routes included *Con la Izquierda Cuesta Más* (6c+ A3+, 500m), *Txatxaponk* (6c+, 470m), a route that follows a series of cracks and corners on the east pillar, and *Verga Dura* (6c+, 400m). On the Grimari Dagana Massif, above the village of Grimari Dagana, the towers of the Wambe Ballo are an area of extensive area of rock with potential for great number of new, if somewhat shorter, climbs. Routes established included *Pilla que Vomito* (6b, 220m); *Monica* (5c, 130m); and *Nouvel An* (5c, 130m) on the Bicéphale Tower. (*High Mountain Sports* 184)

Kaga Tondo, Solucao Suicida. Various Ascents. It was reported that from June 6-13, three Brazilians (Márcio Bruno, Eliseu Frechou and Sérgio Tartari) put up the 550-meter *Solucao Suicida* on the east face of Kaga Tondo. It is believed that this is the first big climb to be put up in the Hombori Mountains in the middle of the African summer. The ascensionists spent six days on the wall in temperatures up to 50°C, drinking six liters of water per day. (*High Mountain Sports* 184)

Le Main de Fatima, Various Ascents. It was reported that the British team of Grant Farquar, Louise Thomas and Mike “Twid” Turner established the 450-meter *Grains of Time* (British E4 5c) on the north face of the north tower of Suri Tondo in January, 1997, over three days. The three climbed a number of established routes in Le Main de Fatima massif during their stay, including three routes on Kaga Tondo—the North Pillar (F5c, 600m) via a Spanish variant up the east face; *Turismo Alternativo* (7b+ A0, 170m) and *Vuelta Usted Mañana* (6a+ A2, 260m) on the south-facing fin that forms the edge of Kaga Tondo; and *Macumba Circus* (7b+, 150m) on Kaga Pamari.