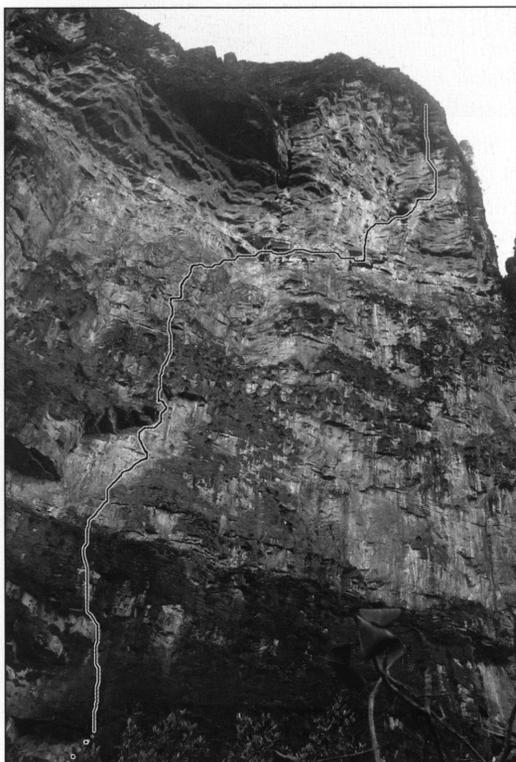


*Amurí Tepui, Amurita.* From September 13-19 we did our most adventurous big-wall expedition yet, making the all-free first ascent of Amurita (E7 6b), on the south face of Amurí Tepui. The 10-pitch route has sustained 5.12 climbing alongside a remote, unnamed 2,000' waterfall. The approach to the face took four days of bushwhacking from the community of Unek. It was the first time the villagers had been to the base of the wall, so it was great to see them relaxing and admiring the waterfalls on arrival. We climbed capsule-style, with two portaledge camps en route. Each of the long pitches was E5 or E6 (solid 5.12), except for two 5.11+ pitches and a particularly harrowing 50m adventure that John considered E7 (run-out 5.12+). We placed three bolts, all at belays. Overhanging patches of jungle vegetation, loose rock, and scorpions added to the adventure. Often rain would come in the afternoon, but the wall was steep enough for it not to affect us until the top of the climb.



*Amurita, on Amurí Tepui. Arran collection*

The only onsighting failure was an attempt at a direct final pitch. After nearly two hours of trying, John climbed an easier but less attractive line instead. On the way down, the diagonal rappel from the top pitch proved challenging, with the rope wrapping itself around a sturdy bromeliad fixed to the wall. As darkness fell we made it across the most exciting commute in the world, back to our ledge.

We had eyed a steeper line directly behind the waterfall, which lands hundreds of feet out from the base of the cliff, but didn't have time to attempt it. This wall has potential for the hardest and most overhanging big-wall free climbs on Earth. On the way out three local villagers met us to help with our bags, and we just managed to make it across the raging torrent of a river at the base of the hill. We were impressed by the locals' ability to catch fish and live off the land as we trudged back to the village.

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ANNE and JOHN ARRAN, U.K.