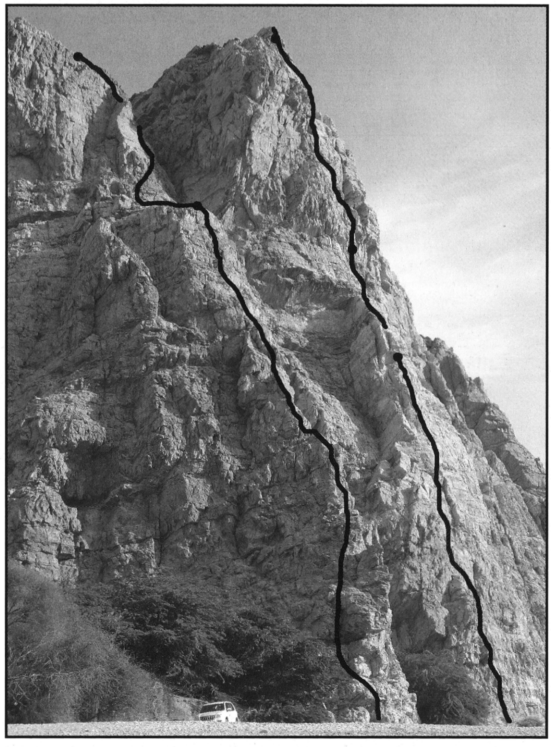
pitch (take full rack of Friends). There are nine pitches: 5c, 5c/6a, 4c, 5a, 5a, 5c, 5c, 4c in a tube then 6b, and 5c. Descend in eight ca 50m rappels.

Further northwest, and close to the border, lies Wadi Surwayh and the natural baths of As Suwayh. After parking in this village, it is a 30-minute walk via the aquaduct to the foot of Révélation (200m, five pitches, 5a, 5b, 5a, 5b, and 5c), put up by all three climbers on the 20th. The last two pitches are simply brilliant. Again, the belays are equipped but only a few protection bolts were placed.

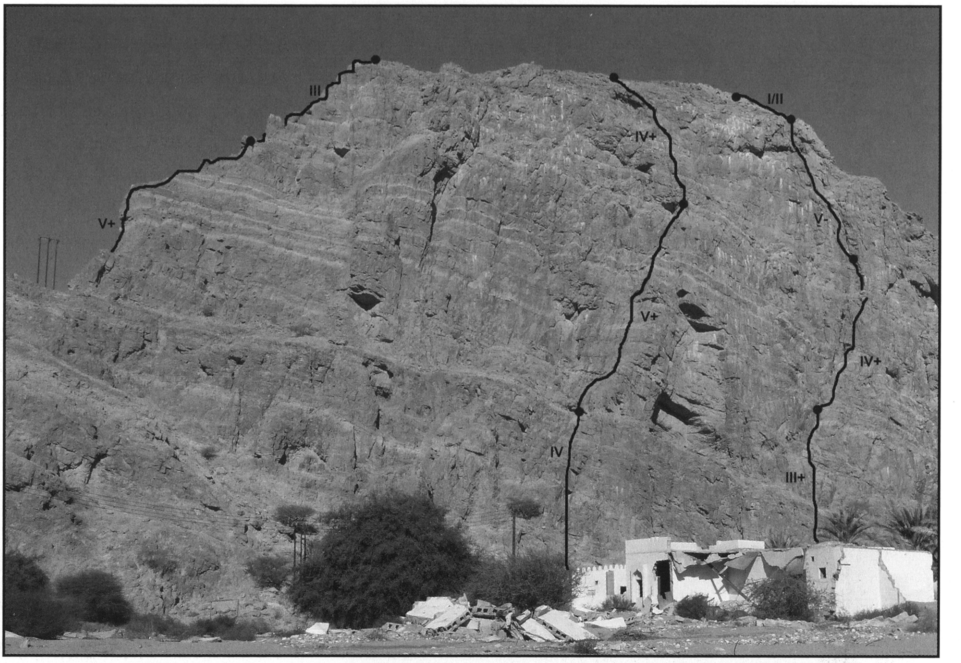
In January 2010 Lamaire, Ratouis, and friends returned, but a serious car accident, which resulted in the vehicle exploding, equipment burnt, and one member seriously injured, curtailed activity. Later, Lemaire and Ratouis were generously lent gear by a British climber, which allowed them to complete one new route (and a new canyon descent). The new route was established in the Cirque d'Umq, 40 minutes approach (including three rappels) from the village of Umq and Al Majin cave, well west of Fins. Together with local Ali (upper pitches only), the two climbed Providence (250m, 10 pitches: 6a, 6b, 5a, 4c, 5b, 3c, 3c, 4c, 4c and 5a; 5c obl.). While not sustained, this is a very worthwhile route on excellent sculptured limestone in a wild cirque, and the first line climbed by Ali.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO, from information provided by Emmanuel Ratouis*



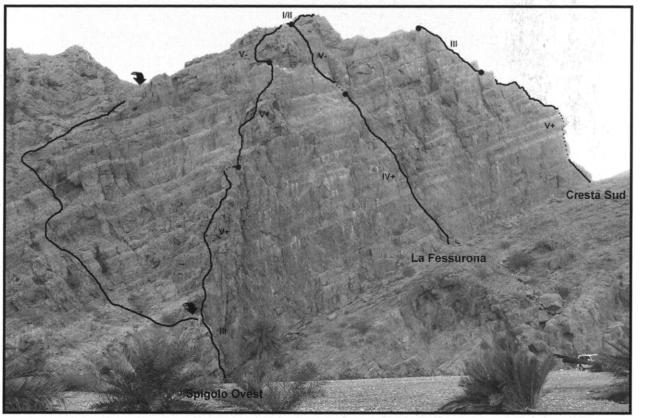
Hassal Hidn Pillar, with Pioneers Route (left) and No Wings to Fly. *Marco Marrosu*

Jabal Yiti, Hassal Hidn Pillar, Jabal Kawr-Kawr Tower, Mawal Needle, Jabal Awi, various ascents. Drawn by an exotic fascination with the Arabian Peninsula, Roberto Masia and I left Sardinia on December 23. Our idea was to explore the central part of the Hajar and look at Jabal Misht's interesting walls. Unfortunately, Alitalia lost one of our rucksacks, which included two ropes, a hammer and pitons, some bolts, part of our rack, climbing shoes, a harness, and helmet. While waiting for this to arrive, we looked at areas closer to Muscat, and 50km south along the coast, near the village of Yiti, we found an interesting formation with an altitude of 140m, situated between two wadis. We tried to find its name by asking locals, but in return we only received big smiles, so we named it Jabal Yiti. In the wadi below the west face (23°31.2007' N, 58°39.7108' E), only accessible to 4X4 vehicles, there is a hot spring, in which



Jabal Yiti east face. From left to right; South Ridge, Quattro Mori, and Cercatori d'oro. *Marco Marrosu*

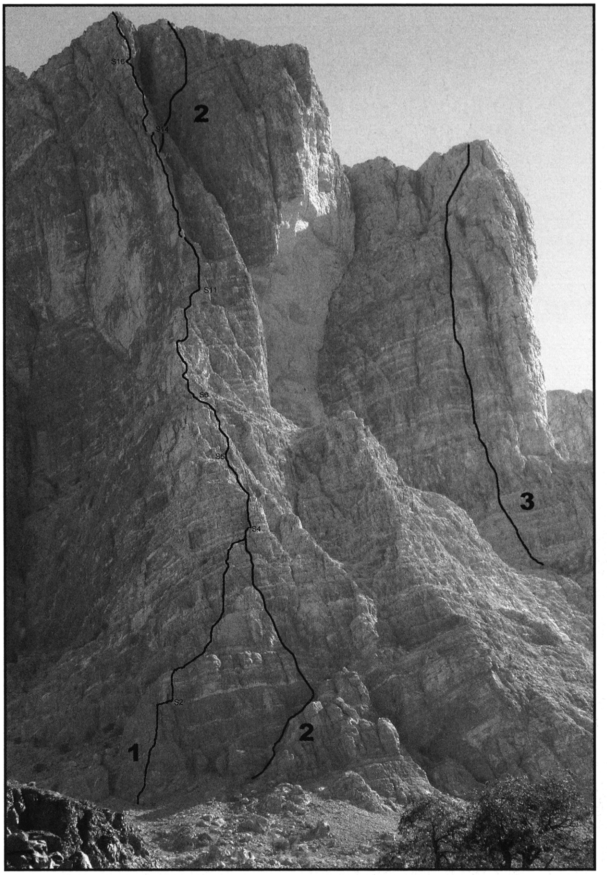
we swam after our climbs. Low on gear but with a lot of enthusiasm, we climbed on a single rope, used a sling for a harness, a stone from the river as a hammer, a bandana stuffed with clothes and an empty carton as a helmet, and the second climbed in trekking shoes. We found no sign of previous passage on all the routes we completed during our stay, and painted a small red arrow at the start of each. The total amount of climbing, rather than vertical interval, is quoted for each route.



Jabal Yiti west face. From left to right; descent route, Spigolo Ovest, La Fessurona, and South Ridge. *Marco Marrosu*

On the west face of Jabal Yiti we climbed Spigolo Ovest (200m, four pitches, UIAA V+), and La Fessurona (120m, V-), both on December 29. The same day we also added South Ridge (105m, two pitches, V+). On the east face, above Wadi Yiti, we climbed Quattro Mori (150m, three pitches, V+) on the 30th, and Cercatori d'oro (145m, four pitches, V-) on the 31st.

Prior to these ascents we had climbed two routes on a pillar that lies on the left side of the unnamed wadi used to access the west face of Jabal Yiti. We named this formation Hassal Hidn Pillar (23°31.0674' N, 58°39.1483' E). On the 26th we climbed Pioneers Route (200m, four pitches,



Kawr Tower, west-northwest face. (1) Sardinian Shortcut. (2) Queen of Sheba (incorrectly marked in AAJ 2010). (3) Wadi Girls (500m, VI, Barlow-Nonis, 1999). Sardinian Shortcut has at least 450m of independent climbing, differing from Queen of Sheba in the first four and at least the last four pitches. *Marco Marrosu*

IV+), and the following day added No Wings to Fly (195m, four pitches, VI-), which starts 50m to the right. The rock in this area is reasonably good (it looks like dolomite), and the east face of Jabal Yiti is particularly fine, offering middle-grade routes of rare beauty.

On January 1, 2011, we were reunited with our missing rucksack and able to head for the Hajar mountains. From the road we saw Jabal Kawr; the west-northwest face of Kawr Tower immediately exerted its magnetism. We slept the night near it. The next day we set off for what we thought would be 300–400m of climbing, taking only three-quarters of a liter of water each. This was a big mistake. It took two hours to reach the base of the wall, and we had to spend one night on the face, only reaching the top on the 3rd. We built a big cairn (no paint arrow) at the start (1,235m, 23°0.5124' N, 57°5.2583' E) and on the route left three slings, a peg, and, inadvertently, a pair of trekking shoes, which meant one of us had to walk all the way back in rock shoes. The descent was long, and we only got back to the car by headlamp. We named the route Sardinian Shortcut (900m, 18 pitches, VI+); it initially climbs left of the 1999 British route Queen of Sheba (British E1 5a, Hornby-Ramsden) to meet it in the lower section of the face, but then takes a more direct finish.

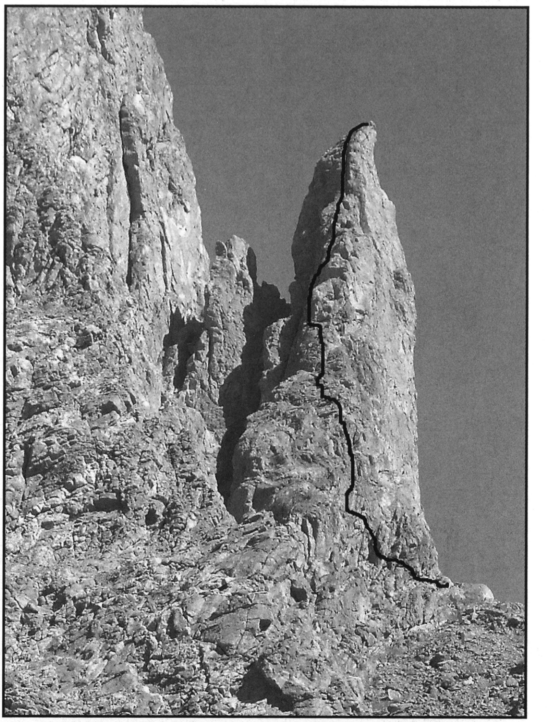
After a rest day we noticed a needle inside a gorge, and concentrated our efforts in finding a way to reach it. We discovered a crossroads between Nadan gorge and Nadan village, where a road sign indicated "Mawal 6km." Following it, we soon had a clear view of our goal. A dirt road led into the gorge, and after parking the car at its end (23°5.7009' N, 56°56.6394' E), we walked one hour to reach the needle. Three pitches, the first in an offwidth on the south face, and the following two on the west face, led to the summit (135m, VII-). The route was hard due to loose rock in the first 30m, and we named the formation Mawal Needle (Guglia di Mawal, 915m).

On January 7 we discovered a gray marble tower with white crystalline veins, situated between Wadi Bani Awf and Wadi Sahaten, near Al Basawi village. It resembles a big dark horn.

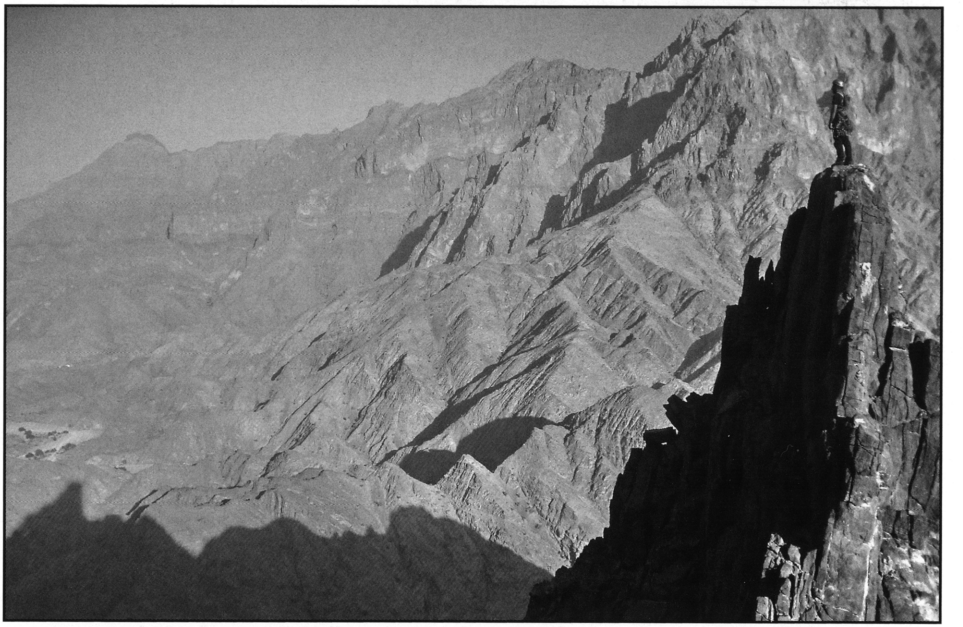
Next morning we reached the foot of the 200m northeast ridge (23°15.0052' N, 57°25.56' E), constructing cairns on our approach. We climbed the crest to the final spur, where, from a notch, we moved to the right of a long chimney and climbed the crux pitches (VI+) to the top, placing a bolt for rappel at the last belay. We named the climb Black Horn's Ridge (260m, five pitches), and after a big effort trying to communicate with a goatherder, found—if we understood correctly—that the name of the summit was Jabal Awi (1,155m).

In all we climbed 10 new routes and came away with the impression that the locals are kind and hospitable. There is huge potential in Oman for discovering unclimbed walls and putting up new routes.

Marco Marrosu, *Italy, marcomarrosu@tiscali.it*



Mawal Needle from west, showing Marrosu-Masia route. *Marco Marrosu*



Roberto Masia on Black Horn's Ridge of Jabal Awi. *Marco Marrosu*