



Dolomites Italy

Summer 2009

This summer's trip saw Richard and David Toon and myself head to the Dolomites in Italy for 2 weeks. The first week was spent around Cortina d'Ampezzo, a flashy ski town where I felt quite out of place without a Gucci chalk bag. We were joined by Pete from The Climbers Club whose immense knowledge of the area proved very helpful. The far off thunder storm clouds never eventuated, the weather was excellent, so we headed up for the stunning long limestone lines that the Dolomites are famous for. Big holds, amazing positions, brilliant climbing – just don't forget your helmet.

In the first week we climbed some classic routes such as Spada Di Domocle VIII–(Lagazuoi North) Nordwestwand VII (Ghedina) South–West Face:Lacedelli VIII– (Cima Scotoni) and Finlandia VII– (Cinque Torri) With 1150m of climbing in 3 days our rest days of sunbaking, eating and reading were much needed.

One of the most stunning routes was the South East Face–Cassin VII (Cima Piccolissima, Tre Cime), which we all climbed. High in the mist, we stumbled upon Les Ainsworth and Dave Cronshaw. We joined forces for a group abseil down and as you could imagine there was enough Lancashire twang and slang around to leave an Aussie like



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myself quite clueless!

The 2nd week we headed west to the Brente group. We stayed up at the Brentei Hut which gave us great access to the Campanile Basso. This area is not only brilliant for climbing, but for walkers, with an excellent via ferrata. Ambitiously as a 3, we took on one of the big routes on the Campanile Basso– South West Wall (Maestri). Two-thirds up and looking like we were going to run out of time we made the decision to descend. Unfortunately the ropes decided to misbehave and snagged as we pulled one of the abseils. Stuck in the middle of a big wall, Dave bravely jumared up the rope and discovered to his horror the very small crack that the ropes were caught in – but all was sorted and we made it safely down. Haunted by the experience Richard and I left Dave on the balcony of the hut the next day looking rather spooked and headed off to climb the South West Face of Spallone Irene– a brilliant corner, but with a descent we could not find we were forced to scamper around the via ferrata the long way back to the hut.



Weather forced us down to the valley on the Thursday, however we managed a little more Italian rock with some sport climbs at Pedore by Lago d'Iseo on the way to Bergamo airport. We had a fantastic trip– sunshine, mountains, alpine flowers, but despite 2 weeks immersed in Italian we didn't get very far with the language. Dave's response to everything was 'Bente, bente uno, fiat punto' and we still couldn't figure out how to order the coffees we wanted. *Ahh non capisco!*

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