

MOTÖRHEAD ELDORADO

Going hard-rock

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The famous route *Motörhead* is a lot more than a line or an exceptional Alpine route. The origin of its name is linked to an extraordinary musical era. For us, it all started during the sixties, listening to the Beatles and their songs, such as *Revolution*, *Back in USSR* or *Heiter Skeller*, we all waited impatiently for something that was about to happen and in fact cult groups such as : Led Zeppelin, Deep Purple, Black Sabbath and many more, like Judas Priest, impressed a force on music until then never experienced but without compromising completely the melody. But the amazing revelation comes from the exceptional *Motörhead*. The group consists of a trio, captained by an out of the norm character: Lemmy Kilminster, bass player and vocalist, with technical qualities and a hoarse voice. Five years after they start up in 1981, the infernal *Motörhead* group comes out with its first live album. *No sleep 'til HammerSmith*, recorded in London ; time stands still and the world is amazed that such a pure sound exists. But let us not classify the unclassifiable!

Throughout our two and a half safari-travels, from Lausanne to Grimsel, our car bounced along too enjoying such an innovative sound. The tape played non-stop backwards and forwards, windows shut to avoid traumatizing the animals...

The best granite slab in the Alps, Eldorado, almost five hundred metres high, reveals the sublime which characterises the maximum expression of art, in this case hard rock and its emotional harmony with the incredible arrangement of holds on the rock. For any artist the maximum is to reach perfection : to reach the perfect note, or else to climb one's dream route...

On the 7th July 1981, in the heart of Europe, the perfect, legendary and unique symbiosis between hard rock and alpinism occurred : the first ascent of *Motörhead*.

Interesting info
The first week of July 1981 gives a good idea of the rhythms we were used to in those days to open the routes.

6 July, La Genève, first route to the left of Eldorado.

7 July, *Motörhead*, Eldorado's second route.

8 July, Simple solution, Eldorado, a marked system of cracks at the centre of the Dome.

9 July, Les pieds et les mains, Dôme de la Marée.

15 September 1982, we linked up, back and forward by

car, six routes in the Grimsel area: Eldorado: Septumania, *Motörhead*, Venon, Métal Hurlant; all'Oubli: Les larmes de rire, Uzumati.

During the 1982 season, roughly 1500 climbers were counted on the Eldorado routes!

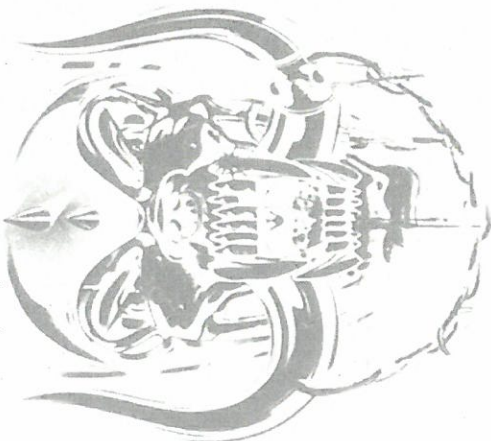
Out of a hundred names given to our routes all were inspired by hard rock. More than twenty are *Motörhead* songs.

Recommended reading:

La fièvre et la ligne blanche, Lemmy Kilminster, Camion Blanc,

2004.

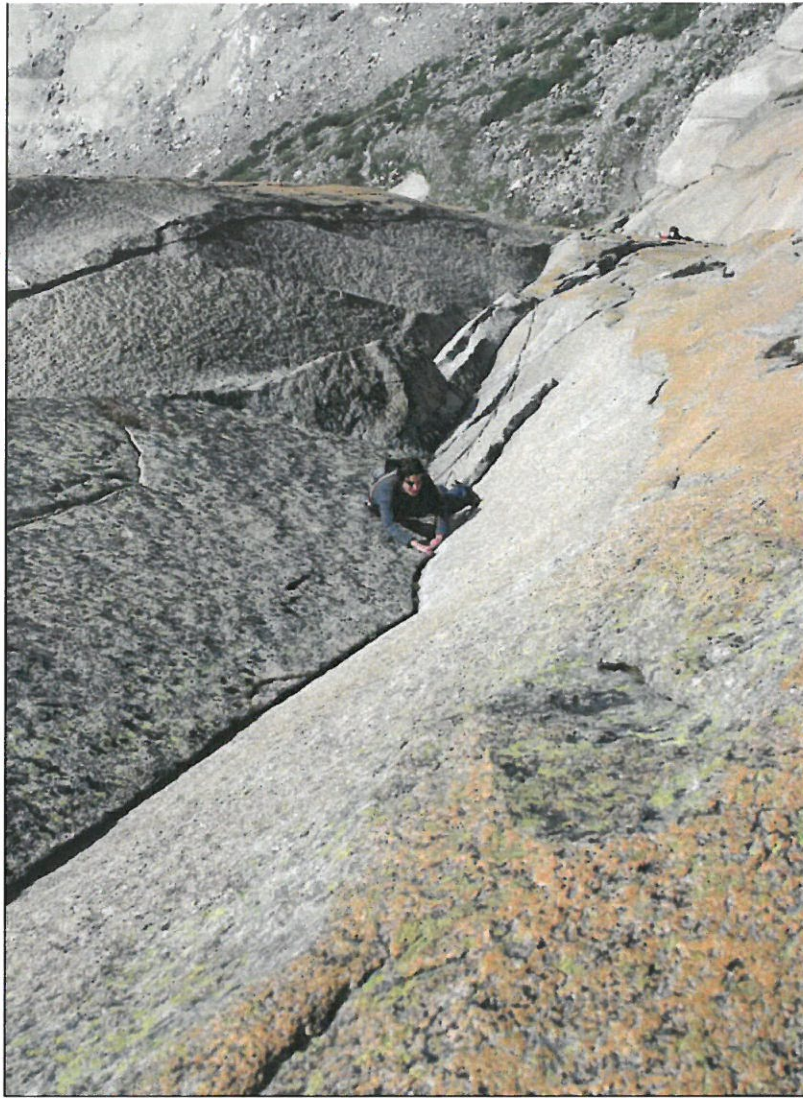
White line fever, Lemmy Kilminster.



legendary route

Eldorado, *Motörhead*

(ph. Claudio Comissaccol)



On the 7th July 1981, in the heart of Europe, the perfect, legendary and unique symbiosis between hard rock and alpinism occurred: the first ascent of *Motörhead*

BERNESE ALPS
GRIMSEL, ELDORADO 2514 m.
MOTÖRHEAD

First ascent: Claude and Yves Remy, 7 July 1981, opened mainly with nuts and the help of only 10 pegs. Repeated on 10 July to equip it with 38 pegs and bolts.
 Re-equipped in 2003 with 60 bolts of which 28 used for anchors.

Difficulty: 6a (6a obl)/RS2/III
 Vertical height gain: 500 m.

Gear: Nuts and friends may come in useful, 50m ropes.
 Ideal period: from the end of June to the end of the October (depending on snow cover).

Region's weather: harsh and changeable.
 Exposure: south, consequently it can be very hot.

Even if the area's typical climbing style is on slabs, Motorhead follows the cracks, dihedrals and other pleasant deformations of the Aar's granite, which is solid and unique in the Alps.

Starting point: From Meiringen reach Innetkirchen and from here proceed along the Grimselpass road till you reach Grimsel Hospitz (51km) or else from Grimselpass descend to the Grimsel Hospitz where you can park (4km).

Access: Eldorado is situated above the left hand bank of the lake. Follow the wide path towards Lauteraar hut for roughly an hour. It is also possible to access the site using a canoe!

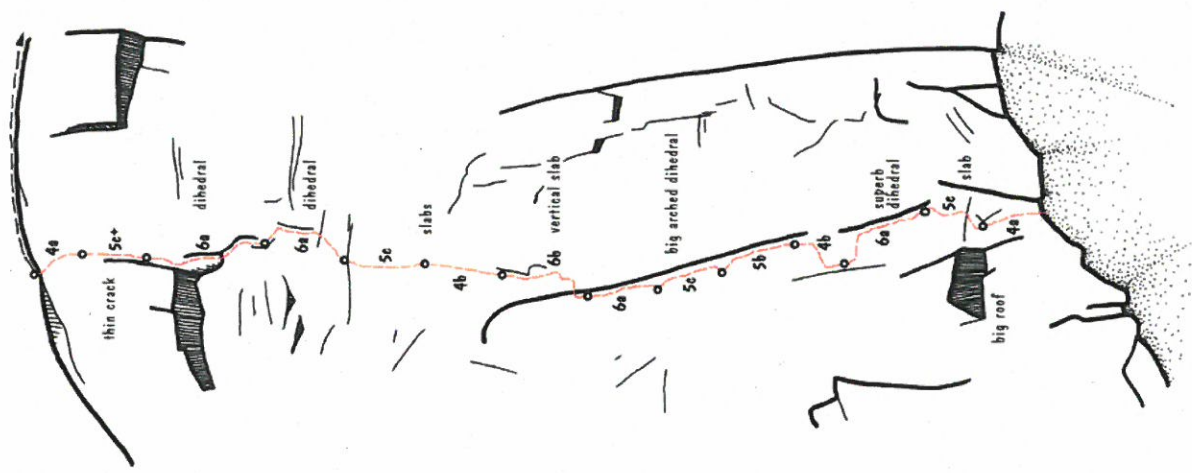
The lake's altitude marks the altitude of the start of the route: 1309 m. Start on the left hand side of Eldorado, 50 metres from the ground, you will see a large roof. The start is on the vertical line to the right of this with the name of the route written at its base.

Topo:

- P1: Follow a crack and then a dihedral, 4a.
 - P2: Move over to the right to overcome a compact slab which leads to the foot of a superb dihedral, 5c.
 - P3: Follow the dihedral which straightens up and then disappears, exit to the left, 6a.
 - P4: Continue for a few metres along the crack then return to the right towards another dihedral, 4b.
 - P5: Climb up this, 5b, then to the left to reach the anchor.
 - P6: Continue up dihedral, 5c.
 - P7: Still up dihedral, 6a.
 - P8: Overcome a wall of 6b on the right, till the terrain becomes less steep, then continue on the right.
 - P9: Follow the compact slabs and cracks, 4b.
 - P10: Continue straight up, along the slab, 5c.
 - P11: Along the slab you reach a dihedral which you climb up on the right, to then leave it on the left, 6a.
 - P12: For the slab reach a dihedral which you climb back up on the right to leave it again on the left, 6a.
 - P13: Follow the dihedral to the right and when possible climb up one of the walls, 6a, to reach a crack.
 - L13: Follow the narrow crack, 5c+.
 - L14: A small step of 4a, leads to a good ledge and then to the summit.
- Descent: follow the ramp to the right uphill, then tracks which follow a vague couloir with rock steps to be overcome by scrambling (II) or by abseiling (anchors) till you join up with the main path just before the Eldorado face.



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THE REMY BROTHERS

Dynamic Duo

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There are many famous brothers in the climbing world. We have the Teutonic Huber brothers, probably the most famous, then the Pou brothers from Spain, the French Petit brothers, while the German brothers Bindhammer concentrate all of their energy on sports climbing. But if we want to talk about opening routes, we immediately think of the Swiss Remy brothers who were already famous before some of the above mentioned were even born...

The Remy brothers are originally from Lausanne, but they are quick to add that they originally come from Charmey, in the French part of Switzerland. The chocolate town, Claude butts in!

Their first steps in the mountains are lost in the mists of time at the beginning of the '60s when their father took them hiking and skiing for the first time. Then, in 1965, they climbed their first alpine route. Claude tells us, they would do everything with the same pair of shoes: from trekking and climbing to skiing! Their father was a simple workman who built train wagons, a difficult job which was obviously underpaid. In 1968 he was operated for hernia of the disc and for a long time was ill. The two brothers started moving independently in 1970 and Yves especially, fascinated by René Desmaison, started opening routes. Claude remembers: «We were simply two young reckless boys fascinated by a world undiscovered yet by anybody. And we still are!»

It is impossible to count all the routes they have opened up until now, these two brothers known as the most prolific route-openers in climbing history. They are the only ones that, painstakingly, keep count, like only the Swiss can. Apart from the undoubted quality of some of their creations, such as Motorhead, the route we present in this edition, we want to know what their philosophy is and where their inexhaustible motivation comes from. We have therefore tried to tease them a little bit, by asking them ten slightly provocative questions... It took Claude and Yves a month to reply, they said they needed time to think carefully about what they wrote. And predictably they wrote the answers using two pairs of hands...

You are known as the most prolific brothers in the world

in terms of route opening. Is there a constant element, a philosophy which guides you in this activity?

Thanks, you are very kind, but there are not many roped parties consisting of brothers. Four or five years ago, Klettern the German climbing magazine asked their readers to make a list of the best route-openers, and this is a country where we have opened no routes and do not speak the language. It turned out that we were voted second after the Huber brothers, who are without a doubt a lot better than us. There is a constant element or philosophy: passion and motivation.

Many route-openers change over the years, just like music groups. They become more "commercial", less "elitist", they open routes which are less difficult often adding bolts on routes which they have opened in the past. Do you belong to this category?

As time passes, yes, they change, it seems to be everyone's fate (except for Lemmy Klimister). Climbing has also evolved, therefore discovering it and practising it is something which anyone can do, depending on how badly they want to and their ability, and this is a good thing. This allows our father, for example, who is 86 years old, to lead Miroir d'Argentine, and to look for routes of his level in Kalymnos.

We do add bolts to our routes sometimes: and today we put in more bolts than we used to, just like everyone else, but the word "commercial" is not ideal. In fact the financial return is practically nil, since we do not receive any money from sponsors; they give us gear but we have always bought some of it ourselves anyway, even today.

We change, and consequently set up routes with differing styles. During the seventies, there was aid climbing, with or without bolts, or the exposed free climbing which was influenced by the greatest of all: René Desmaison. In 1974, we were inspired during a stay in Great Britain: they climbed harder than us, they used nuts, there was the magazine Mountain (now defunct) as a point of reference. To get fit for the Alps we put into practice all the things we had seen,

(arch. Remy)



Carpenter? It is a great craft, I studied to become a mechanic and Yves to be a bricklayer, which helped us deal personally with a part of our equipment, pegs, nuts...

interview

without historical or individual constraints, on a totally brand new crag. St-loup. Then with its first 6c and 7a, the crag became the most famous Swiss crag (it will then experience an extraordinary boom with the Nicole brothers' extreme routes). My brother Yves, who of the two of us was the "locomotive", quickly reached the maximum levels at the time and in 1981 then went on to climb a 7a free solo.

During the seventies and eighties we put up exposed routes, in the Fribourg and Vaud Alps, especially in Sanetsch, sometimes with 6c obligatory moves.

Some of these routes still have the original equipment, others have been re-bolted, usually by us.

Motorhead was opened free (6a to 6b maximum) placing ten pegs, then mainly with nuts. But to leave pegs meant leaving an aid route set up. So, to promote the free climbing in Eldorado, we did what we had done for St-Loup in 1975: we changed pegs with bolts and spread the word that you had to free climb up the route using nuts to complete the belay.

It was an immediate success, beyond all expectations both for the route and the style,

because even if there were very few routes at Eldorado, during the summer of 1982 there were more than 1500 climbers. The majority of climbers prefer more bolts on a route. This means that there are more couples, women and children who climb. The general level of climbing is increasing at the same pace as exposure and difficulty, even if the latter concerns only a minority as usual.

This general success explains why today there are more magazines, manufacturers and shops. However, even if climbing is going well, it still remains a marginal sport compared to other popular sports practised on a wide scale.

The invention of "plaisir" climbing has been attributed to the Swiss, that is well protected with bolts on multi pitch routes. This attitude has conquered the other side of the Alps and today we can observe, in Italy and France, the multiplying of routes which do not require any effort, which can be climbed by anyone. What do you think of this trend? Do you feel partly responsible?

Calm down, let us clarify a few points. Some tales from the thirties start talking about "plaisir" climbing, in shorts, in the sun... which was enjoyed by women.

Maybe, without realizing it, we have contributed to the success and the spreading of this activity, like many others too. The well protected or extremely equipped routes already existed long before and also in other countries.

During the seventies Bruno Fara's group from Lyon,

"generously" equipped its routes in Vercors, especially at Presles. During the sixties some crags were equipped to make climbing at that time safe, as for example in Bellinzona or at Klus Balsthal, while other extreme classic routes in the Alps were accused of not having enough scrap iron... for example the Bonatti on Le Dru. Let's not talk about the great period of aid climbing in the Dolomites. Obviously today's equipment cannot be compared to what was used in those days, but the principle of abundant gear which could help one's ascent already existed. A mechanism which was triggered off when the first huts appeared or, before that, when the first routes across the Alps were established.

It must be mentioned though, that it is not true what you say about routes which are equipped to be safe, they are not within everybody's reach. Leading a 6a is not a piece of cake and far too safe, there are other more exposed routes such as in Wenden or Rätikon (where there aren't many people). And for those who are nostalgic for the heroic era, it is full of routes which are hardly equipped at all as well as new routes to open...

Having said this, routes which are not bolted much have never been popular, but they are fascinating, they attract more attention and are used as a reference.

There is a school of thought which is totally different, represented by climbers such as Scheel, Kammerlander, Larcher, Dal Prà, Mussatto. What do you think of their élitest approach which completely excludes progression by using aid and has obligatory crux moves which are very difficult?

This school of thought is neither different from ours, nor new. It is the follow up to the evolution of climbing on the basis of its predecessors, and its history is full of great achievements. To push the obligatory difficulty to higher levels is a fascinating choice as much as it is demanding. On the contrary, to exclude an aid section to open a route free is a method which highlights the qualities of whoever does it. To place a bolt (or a peg) from the ground up you need to hold onto something like a hook or a nut...

To progress completely free is also a response to the previous era of aid climbing (which contributed to help climbing progress).

Let us remember that before the "great aid period", climbers used to climb radically, protecting themselves as they could, and that is not much. Should we re-assess the "old" Preuss, Dibona (a total of 15 pegs planned throughout his life, for someone who opened 5c routes on walls which were 1000 metres long, impressive!). Comici and many others. In their day it was already extreme climbing, risking not only their



Great Kaly, Pathria, GR (arch. Bemy) 61

lives, but everyone else roped up to them. This style dominated alpinism for a long time paying a very high price... But it is a style that disappeared a long time ago (there are of course exceptions).

More recently, Martin Scheel would decide to climb one or two difficult multi pitch routes, in one season, imposing himself to free climb all of it. But as far as other details are concerned: he would use fixed ropes, go in a group and never excluded aid climbing. As far as we are concerned, our father taught us to proceed as quickly as possible. Consequently, we would open fifty new routes (multi pitch routes) each season, even more if possible, in order not to slow down, when we found ourselves on grades higher than 6c, we would often use aid climbing, which meant we had to return to free the moves (or that other climbers would then free the aid sections). In those days the obligatory grade (6c or 7a) and maximum difficulty in free (7c) of new routes in the Alps were more or less the same for everyone.

Then Beat Kammerlander turned up, opening multi pitch routes from the ground up which included 7c obligatory and jumped ahead enormously, something which was beyond imagination... It is better than Matrix, because Beat evolves without updating his software! For a long time this achievement was never equalled by anyone, but currently it is rarely done in this style.

Let's not forget the Wizard of the Rocks, Manolo, who incognito during the mid '70s, achieved performances which were harder than anyone else's. But this is exactly the role of a wizard, while we are talking about men, aren't we?

At the end of the season do you ever count how many pitches you have opened or how many bolts you have placed. Some people accuse you of being more like carpenters than route openers. How do you defend yourself from this criticism?

Between 1980 and 1986 we placed roughly 600 bolts by hand. Since 1986, with a drill we have placed 2000 bolts on average per season. In terms of pitches or new routes, we haven't counted for a long time, it keeps on changing...

When criticism is constructive it helps one improve, while it is heavy going when it is negative, but in the end that is rare, if compared for example to letters we receive regularly from many countries (especially Italy and Germany) congratulating and encouraging us (sometimes with money). Thanks everyone!

Carpenter? It is a great craft, I studied to become a mechanic and Yves to be a bricklayer, which helped us deal personally with a part of our equipment, pegs, nuts...

Recently an Italian magazine asked why you have opened so few routes on Mont Blanc. Is this because you do not want to compete against anyone or because it doesn't interest you as much?

At the end of the seventies and at the beginning of the eighties we opened a few routes in the Mont Blanc massif, among which three on le Dru, Chamonix is amazing, but there

are a lot of people, and that is not what we are looking for when we go to Mont Blanc. From 1981 we have preferred Switzerland, which is vaster, more varied, quieter and with many virgin spaces on the best rock ever.

Putting classic routes into safety is an issue which is being debated a lot at the moment. Many climbers do not accept that bolts are added on traditional routes, or that these can be crossed invasively by modern routes. What do you think?

A very wide and delicate argument. Above all it is wrong to say that "many climbers do not accept that bolts are added..." because, once again, the majority of climbers prefer well protected routes (this does not mean they are right).

Almost all difficult routes are put in safety perfectly. So why can we not do the same for easier routes? But especially why not, leave the possibility to co exist with equipment (which should be distinguished from re bolting) and differing styles? Re bolting routes is questionable and varies depending on regions and people. It goes from the entire prohibition to an excessive use of bolts. You can plan the safety of classic routes respecting the spirit of the first ascenders and after discussing it with the people involved. Sometimes, even in this way things aren't easy. But to substitute dubious gear (pegs, slings) with bolts, seems the best thing to do, if one respects the original effort (this happens for example in Saentisch and Wenden). We have established that this type of re bolting which respects only the position of "original anchors" is not always ideal, for example in the case where bolts are "lost" deep into a chimney, difficult to see, and which cause rope drag and above all do not protect at all... Therefore, if you bolt an old route, you might as well do it well, and for a number of reasons, one often ends up putting more bolts than before. And this is why it is important to act case by case.

We would like to cite a few examples. We know that super safe equipment guarantees great success, and with bolts placed too close by you will find climbers who are limited to climbing 5c looking for...7a (pulling themselves up on bolts sliding all over the place with dirty shoes). Result: in a short time the rock becomes polished and the crag wears out prematurely. The famous Matterhorn went through this in different stages. But to regulate the way one equips a route is very sad, and we will end up being prisoners... Another aspect of "intelligent" re bolting (at least we hope) is the classic normal route at Miroir d'Argentine, Vaud Alps, 450 metres, opened without pegs in 1926. It has been progressively equipped with pegs, but often there are serious or fatal accidents. In 1985, the Diablerets section CAS (Lausanne) decided with the climbers of the time, to bolt the route (hand drilled holes).

Two bolts for each anchor and two or three along the pitches. The year after the Miroir direct was bolted in this way. Then the new routes were bolted. Today the fifteen routes which have been bolted are classic, while the other fifty or so in the massif (among which there are old routes equipped with pegs) are no longer climbed.

Sometimes nowadays in one single day there are one hundred and fifty people at Miroir d'Argentine, and that is a lot more



than there used to be during a whole season, and especially important is the fact that there are almost no more accidents. Even though there are still quite a few metres from anchor to anchor with the need to back up pro. It is true that today the effort required is no longer the same as the first ascenders, but if someone falls fifteen metres above a bolt the rock will no doubt leave him an indelible souvenir, but at least the roped party will avoid going to heaven (where we will all go sooner or later...)

The crossing over of routes can be a very delicate topic. One should avoid it, but to climb up a 5c crack which has a 7a route crossing over it on the rock face can be accepted, because they can be distinguished one from the other. The matter becomes complicated when two similar routes (style and equipment) are too close together. An example of something which seems unacceptable? The Italian routes in Eldorado, which touch or cross over up to eight times the already existing routes, unanimously considered superfluous.

It all comes down to the climbers, to their ethics, to the way in which the rock face has been equipped, to the morphology... once again this argument deserves to be debated on a case by case basis. We bolt our routes and we correct them, which allows the elimination of the ones we think are in excess, but nonetheless these are our routes. We do not do this on other itineraries, unless it has been agreed what to do for the best. Sometimes friends wish to re bolt some of our routes so we discuss it first of all and this is also acceptable.

Lately, "clean" climbing in cracks has been reappraised, which means using bolts only for the belay anchor, just like the American model. Do you not think that today there are too many bolts inside the cracks, and if they were taken out, these routes could one day increase in importance? Once again, this is not a novelty. Since in the seventies there were cracks and entire routes in the Alps which were climbed free only using nuts. Like others we used this style and this equipment which came from the States and the United Kingdom. In fact at St-Loup, already in 1975, the "game" we played consisted of climbing the maximum amount of routes using nuts. A photo of the first ascent of Etat de choc at Petit Clocher du Portalet shows an anchor made out of one nut transversely to a crack. Two days later a route was opened free

using nuts at Dorées, north face of Bisselx.

Routes opened with this method have been forgotten a little bit, while some, without us knowing about it, equipped with pegs... Maybe at that time we were not sensitive enough to defend this type of climbing since it was then replaced by bolts. But I don't think this is dramatic, cracks are now experiencing a new golden era. In fact there is nothing more pure and varied than climbing on "clean" cracks. The best thing is that they are climbed from the first ascent, free, with nuts and that they remain free of equipment. Bolted cracks will risk being cleaned of the scrap iron to benefit nuts, so much so that friends/camalots today have evolved remarkably. To clean all this it is best that this decision, as mentioned before, should be taken on a case by case basis by the climbers/clubs involved, and not by a committee that decides for a region (or worse still, for the entire Alps), nor by a person who decides to get rid of the equipment, as sometimes happens. This creates misunderstanding and tension.

What attracts you the most? Opening a beautiful route, a difficult one, or a route which is appreciated by who repeats it?

Opening routes. That they may be the most beautiful and longest routes possible. They do not need to be too difficult, we have had enough. If they are popular that is great, that way the pleasure can be shared.

What is the secret of your inexhaustible energy? Passion or obligation towards your sponsors?

We are both on the same wave length. From when we started climbing, and then with our first new routes in 1970, health and age did not give us many problems, consequently never missing a season. This passion and our passion for hard rock are part of our daily lives. After the inimitable Motorhead now we have Nightwish, and Rammstein (we couldn't not mention them!). This is our secret: listening to and loving loads of hard rock!

In terms of sponsors: they have never interfered nor ever influenced us. And to conclude: we thank the rock faces that have given us so much, and we thank you too for asking us such embarrassing questions and for your great magazine. Thanks.



UP 64 Yves & Claude (arch. Remy)

