

Alpinist 22



SIMON RICHARDSON, ROBIN SHAW, KEN CROCKET, VICTOR SAUNDERS,
CHRIS CARTWRIGHT & IAN PARNELL ASCEND THE BEN

INES PAPERT, AUDREY GARIEPY & RAINER EDER CLIMB ICE IN ICELAND

IVAN CALDERÓN EXPLORES VENEZUELA'S TEPUIS

STEPHAN SIEGRIST FIRES THE ARWA TOWER

ALAN KEARNEY LIVES A CLIMBER'S LIFE

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as Papert on the first redpoint of Chocolat Chaud (M10), a route she established earlier in the day, in Breiddalsvik, Iceland, February 2007. Audrey Garipey redpointed the route the following morning. During the same trip, the

women—two of the best ice climbers in the world—enchained 1000 meters of steep ice in fourteen hours. See article on Page 52. Rainer Eder | [This Page] Papert (left) and Garipey chill out off after a 44°C soak, Lake Mývatn, Iceland. See article on Page 52. Rainer Eder

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dreamfall

FOR YEARS I'VE SEARCHED for the ideal icefall that would take all my energy and, in return, give me back everything I've desired: a continuous journey up a steep, radiant kilometer to the sky. But the allure of ice is also its frustration: the medium appears and disappears so quickly that to arrive just at the right moment for such a route seems nearly impossible. Thus, I began to fantasize about creating an imaginary 1000-meter ice route by climbing one icefall after the other until I could reach the height of my dreams.

In February 2007, Audrey Garipey, a twenty-six-year-old Québécoise, and I traveled to Iceland with Austrians Albert Leichtfried and Markus Bendler in search of virgin ice. In that realm of steaming earth, geysers and snowstorms, I felt an ambiance so surreal it seemed that any fantasy, even my own, could come true. The four of us divided into two separate teams; my adventures with Audrey began in the Kaldakinn region in the north, near Húsavík. Cheerful and irrepressible, as well as technically proficient, Audrey quickly became my ideal partner.

The Kaldakinn region offered more than thirty routes of all grades, one next to another along a vast face directly above the ocean. Huge waves pounded the coast. At night I dreamed I was surfing in the bitter cold.

It was hard to decide which routes to climb, but we soon chose the ones left untouched by Iceland's forty-odd ice climbers. Birds flew around us, playing with the wind and the salty air, while our axes hit the wall in harmony with the crash of the waves. The results: Wish You Were Here, a 100-meter, WI6+, icicle- and verglas-festooned, overhanging face that we dedicated to our late friend Hari Berger; Coconut (WI5+, 100m); and Thule (WI5+, 120m).

It was still light on the day we finished the second two routes, and as we sat drinking coffee we felt lethargic. All morning we'd been chilled: the warm earth made the ice run with water and drained our energy, yet not so much as to make us forget the magic of the sea cliffs. We needed some powerful goal to re-energize us to do as much as possible in the remaining time. I quickly sold the concept of my dream waterfall to Audrey, and the same evening we chose a number of routes, each eighty to 100 meters long, that we would start climbing at dawn.

By now, Audrey and I understood each other well enough to climb quickly and silently. Without words, we kept talking; even as she became wet and cold, her smile never stopped communicating the same passion.

By sunset, though, we were face to face with our mistakes. We had climbed 550 meters of ice, including an accidental first ascent

of Akkulaar (Bavarian for "empty batteries"), a WI6 pillar, but difficult conditions on another WI6 route cost us precious time, and some of the lines were simply too far from one another to permit the enchainment. But although the project was unfinished, we still wanted to reach those limits in our imaginations.

Our ambitions soon pulled us to the east, to Iceland's fissured fjords. After a long day's drive, we failed to find the waterfalls we had expected, but the day wasn't to end in disappointment. Just before dusk we discovered a rocky amphitheater close to Breiddalsvík; the tops of the routes all featured hanging drips. Finally we could unpack the Hilti!

The next day I set off, awed by the less-than-perfect basalt as I bolted, ground up, toward the drips. Once the route was equipped, we worked the hardest moves, and the same day I managed to redpoint the climb, a forty-meter M10 we named Chocolat Chaud. Audrey sent the line the next afternoon, while the photographer Rainer Eder hung like a spider from the static line to shoot the action.

Our 1000-meter project, however, continued to disturb our sleep. "We can do it, eh, Audrey?" I asked. My partner was enthusiastic as always. Back to Kaldakinn we went.

As we drove, we rethought our logistics. While we didn't want to forego safety, especially for the leader, we knew the second would need to climb extremely fast. We could organize our changeovers for more efficiency, improve our rope handling, reselect our routes and factor in simulclimbing on several easier sections....

On March 7, at 6 a.m., we began with 400 meters of WI5+ by the light of our headlamps. Next we moved to the steep gullies, which were much longer and distinctly harder than we had imagined from below. Constantly climbing on ice between WI4 to 5, we found the entire day passed rapidly, and after fourteen hours we reached the last of our 1000 meters, once more in the dark. At the base of our final route, totally exhausted but happy, Audrey and I embraced.

On the way back to the airport Audrey and I discussed new projects for the upcoming winter. Our fabricated "route" felt like a preliminary model. The real 1000-meter waterfall is still waiting.

INES PAPERT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
RAINER EDER

[Photo] Audrey Garipey, belayed by Ines Papert, climbing in Kaldakinn, Iceland, in February 2007. In addition to five new routes up to WI6+, the two women linked a 1000-meter enchainment in fourteen hours, with routes up to WI6.





[Facing Page] Gariepy starting up another unnamed Kaldakinn WI5. Kilometers wide, the cliff, which sits in northern Iceland, was home to only thirty routes at the time of the team's arrival. Given the small number of climbers (ca. forty) in the entire country and the crag's relative remoteness, this paucity of established lines is

perhaps not surprising. | [This Page, Top] Gariepy (left) and Papert enjoy Kaldakinn's unique approach. | [This Page, Bottom] Papert studies the map. The capital of Iceland, Reykjavik, hosts some 116,642 of the country's ca. 300,000 inhabitants. The remaining 102,000 square kilometers are relatively unpopulated.





[Facing Page] Papert on Chocolat Chaud (M10), which she bolted ground up in a rocky amphitheater near Breiddalsvik. She and Garipey left Kaldakinn in search of longer waterfalls, but contented themselves with Chocolat Chaud when their search came up short. | [This Page] Garipey on her redpoint of Chocolat Chaud. | [Overleaf] Papert back on Kaldakinn ice. The pair returned to the northern-coast ice venue intent on their dream climb: 1000 meters of ice in a day. They accomplished it on their last day in the country, in a fourteen-hour push.



