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BOULDER FESTIVAL VAL DI MELLO

In early May 2016, a handful of AACZ bouldering enthusiasts attended the Melloblocco international bouldering meeting at Val di Mello in Italy. Boulders of various sizes and difficulties were climbed, scattered in a lush alpine valley. The morning sun beamed down on yoga exercises on a massive boulder, a run

across the awakening valley, or a chocolate croissant in the meadow. A couple of club activists also made sure to explore some of the overwhelming granite walls surrounding the valley, which are surely worth another visit.

Saule Simute

ADVENTURES WITH A FRENCH TOUCH IN VAL D'AROLLA

In September 2016 seven Huttli decided to confront the changing weather of the ending summer and do a Hochtour weekend close to Arolla. Their goal was to reach the Mt. Blanc de Cheillon (3870m). Three of the club members (Karen, Philip and Josquin) decided to leave on Friday, walking into the night with heavy packs up to a very comfortable looking meadow overlooking a little river at around 2500m of altitude. In this pastoral setting, the trio dined on cheap Chinese soups before bivvying under a perfectly clear sky without moon. After a brief night, only disturbed by a few falling stars, and a breakfast composed of couscous and "Studentenfutter" mix with a dash of olive oil, the mountaineers went off to conquer La Luette (3548m) by the normal route under perfect weather conditions. The mountain did not present any difficulties, as one would expect by a mountain celebrated throughout France by the

famous bedtime song "La Luette, gentille La Luette [...]" . The summit was as little a challenge to reach as the view was spectacular: it offered a stunning view over three countries and mountains as powerful as the Mont-Blanc, the Dent-Blanche or the Matterhorn.

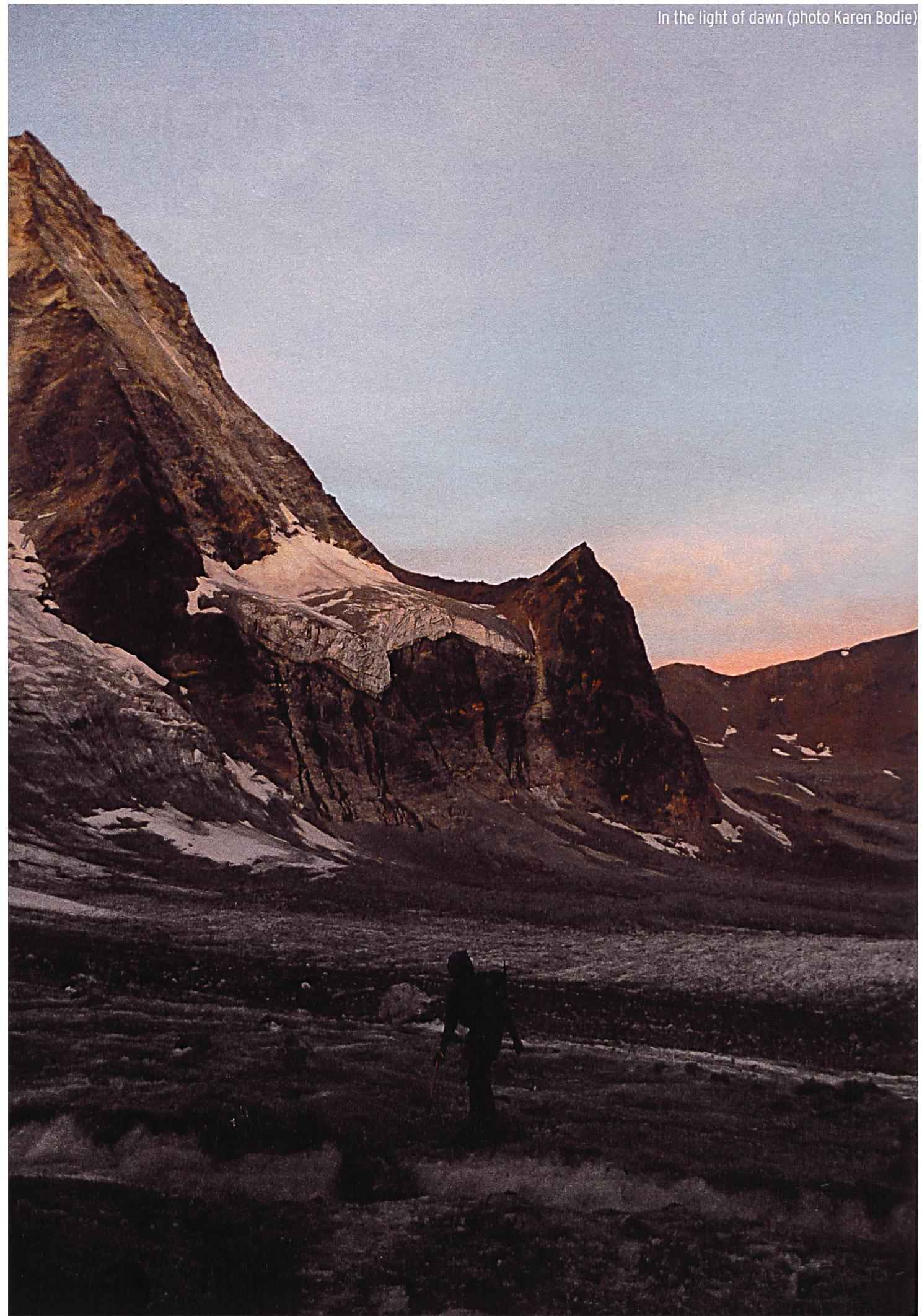
The afternoon was spent relaxing in the sun at the Cabane des Dix. The time flew by thanks to a few beers, local cheese and sausages and the recently installed zip-line (which was clearly not in line with any safety regulations). In the evening, the trio set up camp in a lunar setup, just a bit higher than the hut, and was joined by Ulla and Loïc. The quintet prepared a risotto with mushrooms, wine and parmesan, making from this dinner at high-altitude a real haute-cuisine event. The final two, Alessandro and James, arrived at the camp just after dinner to complete the international group. The next morning, before dawn, Alessandro, James and Philip

Get-together for bouldering enthusiasts (photo Saule Simute)



Loïc before arriving at the rock ridge. In the background Pigne d'Arolla and Matterhorn (photo Karen Bodie)

In the light of dawn (photo Karen Bodie)



climbed the Mt. Blanc de Cheilon by the normal route (PD, II) over the Col de Cheilon. The trio scrambled over the West Ridge up to the steep upper glacier. Without any particular difficulties, the glacier lead to the final ridge which was scrambled up by the club members who then reached the summit and were able to enjoy a clear view over the Alps. The four other Huttli decided to do the traverse over the East Ridge (AD, III). After a nice hike on the glacier with a bit of route finding through open crevasses, they reached the Col de la Serpentine. From there, the terrain got

steeper on firm snow, up to about 3810m, where the most interesting part of the tour started: a clean rocky ridge leading to the summit. The climb, quite aerial most of the time, was secured by running belays and a gendarme that had to be rappelled down 10-15 meters. Both groups descended over the normal route and scrambled down the West Ridge over loose rocks until they reached the campsite. A couple more hours were needed to hike back out to Arolla.

Josquin Pfaff

LVS TRAINING AT DIAVOLEZZA

In November 2016, Moritz Wälde and I organized an avalanche training weekend at Diavolezza, with the aim of providing a refresher training in avalanche rescue and prevention skills. The plan was to conduct a beacon (LVS) training on Saturday afternoon, organize some talks in the evening about prevention techniques, and finally enjoy a nice tour or some skiing on Sunday.

Upon arrival, we found that much of the skiing area had been closed for race training. Thus the group passed on the gondola ride to Diavolezza and skinned up to the slopes. While disappointed with the lack of skiing options, the uphill trek woke our minds and legs for the upcoming winter season. Later in the afternoon, we began our LVS training, splitting into two groups. Despite the variable depth of snow (including some very shallow areas),

the groups were able to bury the beacons and retrieve them. We also discussed the finer points of the initial search, as well as techniques to make the close-range search fast and efficient. The participants' wide range of experience served as an excellent opportunity to share different techniques and expose the new club members to the basics of LVS rescue.

After the training, we retreated to Diavolezza, where we talked some more about avalanches and enjoyed live music and a tasty dinner. The following Sunday, several of us enjoyed a climb on a nearby peak while others continued to freshen up their legs with skiing on the available slopes. And with that, the ski season 2016–17 was under way.

Ian Delaney