

July 9th 2022

12:56am Switzerland baby!!!! Also the food on the plane was super fun. Well... actually I just really liked being able to order free red wine, "vino tinto fas favor" yum (I think the lady poured me more when I answered in Portuguese)! Makes me feel a lot older, but it's also like hell yeah this is the good stuff. It's sweet to be able to speak Portuguese. I will see Aglaia in 12 hours! I also watch Mad Max Fury Road. The movie is crazy. I was not ready for the non stop bloody action, although I found it interesting and thought provoking.

I make it to Zurich, Switzerland by 4pm and walk off the plane and make it out of the gate. It is really nice to not have checked bags for several reasons: no potential for losing my stuff, check-in and leaving is super fast, I am forced to bring a little less which makes moving around easier. Big fan! Aglaia meets me right as I exit and it's a bit surreal. We head over to hop on a bus, but my head is kind of swimming as I'm trying to process the new surroundings and convert from Portuguese to German (Getting off the plane I said "Obrigado," which is thank you in Portuguese). Whoops! lol. We come around to a cute little neighborhood with apartment-like little homes and her parent's place is nestled up a few flights of stairs in a complex surrounded by greenery with a nice little walking path going off into some fields. I meet her parents although they are getting over covid so we wear masks. I have a pink surgical mask I like. We put our stuff in her old room, and then her mom has us eat some freshly baked cake that is all gooey inside, yum :) (you can't underbake cake fyi). I love all the plants around the house including a spider plant that isn't variegated.

We have the night free so we go on bikes to the river in the center of Zurich for some swimming. Aglaia has a green cross style bike with downturned handles and orange tires that we take, as well as another bike with a super comfortable seat. We bike down through random streets mostly downhill with a few cars and the sun starting its downward descent. It is a lovely time to be outside and enjoy the rays. I'm also starting to be struck by the general trust and confidence people have in each other. The buses "require" tickets, but no one checks for your ticket and people generally feel pretty comfortable leaving their stuff out and about and later on we paid 13.90 for a 20 dollar ticket and they didn't mind. It is a very pleasant place to be.



We arrive at the river and store our stuff in a locker, lay down our towels and start walking up the river on top of a 2ft wide wall that's about 15ft high. We get to the end of the swimmable section and dive into the crystal clear beautifully turquoise blue water (such a stark difference from Boston water). We swim across the strong current to a stone wall and boulder our way up 20ft onto a ledge. A fun, little intro to climbing. With a bit of hesitation we jump off into the water. We do this twice :) Then we float down a bit and decide to swing off the bridge about 20m up. There's a few boys looking a bit scared trying to figure out how to best swing down. Aglaia and I feel super comfortable at this height with the easy traverse across the bridge. After Aglaia coaches them a bit we both send it and swing in.

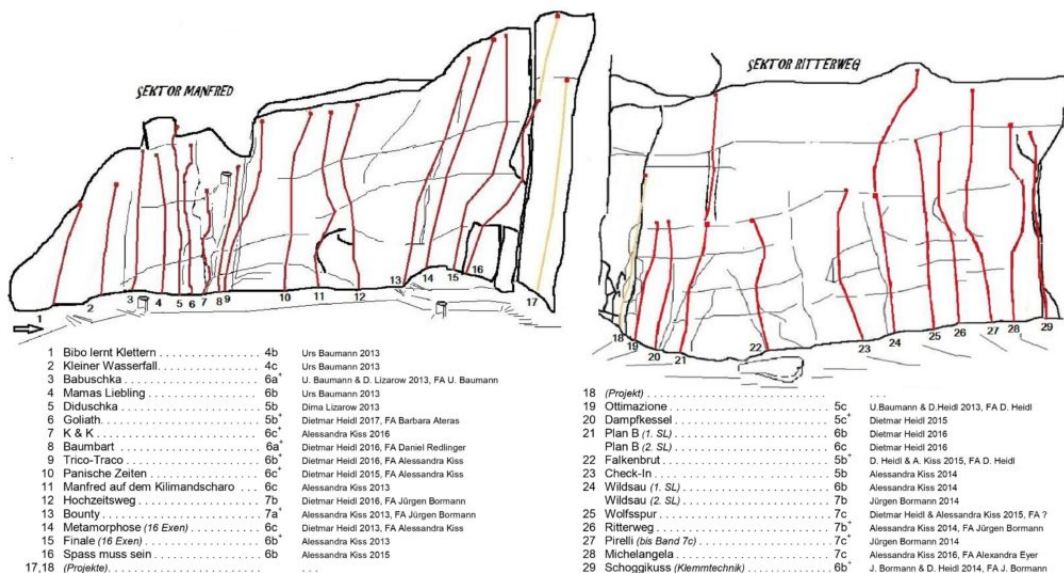
The rest of the night speeds by as we bike along the river, watch the sunset riverside, and go eat vegetarian hot dogs at 10pm at Cinema Stüssihof where a woman comes by asking for money and food—I end up offering the rest of my soda which she drinks drinkly. The hot dogs are really quite lovely and we set off to go to the latin festival where we dance some salsa and bachata. I'm a little out of practice, but not bad and Aglaia is picking it up! Super fun but tons of stuff is going on at the festival. There's even some Brazilian music and the place is hopping! We're getting a bit tired though and we have a big day and next few days ahead of us. 11:30pm We head out and bike back through the streets in the night and head to bed.

July 10th '22

We wake up and load the van (Aglaia packs some tasty food). It's a big yellow camper! (Aglaia calls it a bus) I link the two Bose speakers we have in party mode and it's time to get this party started!!!!!! Good vibes only! Today we have a chill sport day planned! I'm thinking today may be the day to send my first 6c (5.11a)... maybe Metamorphose? We are climbing at **Klettergarten Plattenwand** in Aschwald (butt forest lol) at a nice looking crag to get the climbing juices flowing (<https://www.bohrstaub.ch/>)!

Klettergarten Plattenwand

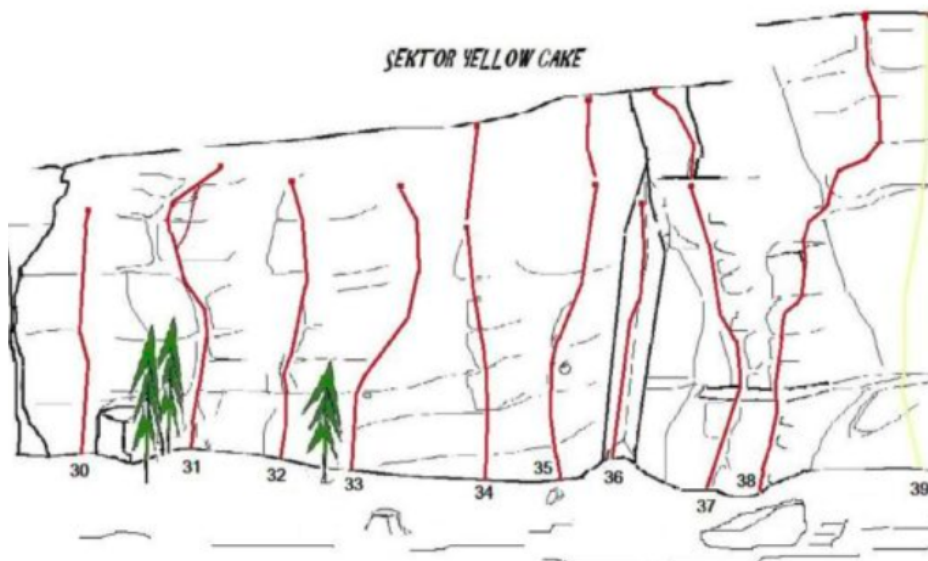
Auto: Näfels GL > Obersee, nach 3,2 km rechts ab der Strasse, 2 Gehminuten
 ÖV: Bahnhof Näfels / Mollis > Obersee > 50 Gehminuten oder Rufbus
 Routenlängen: 10 – 33m; Exen: max. 17; Ausrichtung: Ost



Might be cool to put crags like this up on Mountain Project. Aglaia just climbed two days ago though so she is a little less fresh than I am. After parking the van we walk about 300m through a pleasant forest to the crag where we are met by about a dozen climbers all doing their own things, but mostly chilling and enjoying lunch as we have arrived around 2:30pm. Really nice chill crag. We get after it and climb 6 pitches in the next 4 hours...

We stick to **Manfred** and **Bitterweg** and **Yellowcake** wall: to start I lead **Dampkessel 5C+** and **Plan B 2. SL 6C** as a warmup, but I didn't mean to hop on the 6C. Oops. I thought the 5C+ climb was sustained with a longer pitch or that I was just linking two pitches of 5.C+ and so I just continued to a second pitch. Whooooops turns out it was a 6C. Almost sent my first 6C on accident lmao! It was a nice little warm up though.

Then I lead **Metamorphose 6C** on the Manfred wall twice! Thanks Aglaia for the belay! I try to flash, but fall 2x times on the first go. I try to redpoint the second time, but I fall again at the crux move. I was close though! Aglaia also took a fall. It was tricky! The next two climbs are on the **Yellowcake** wall.

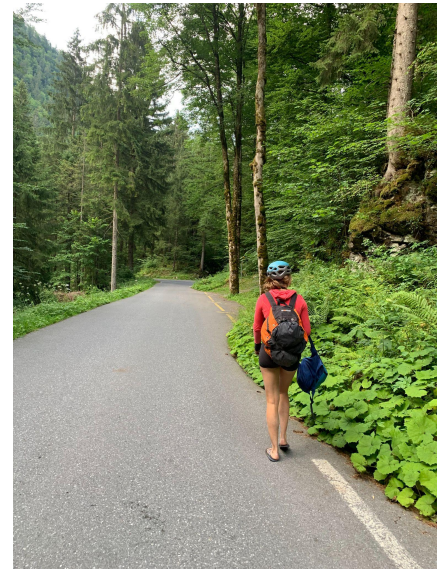
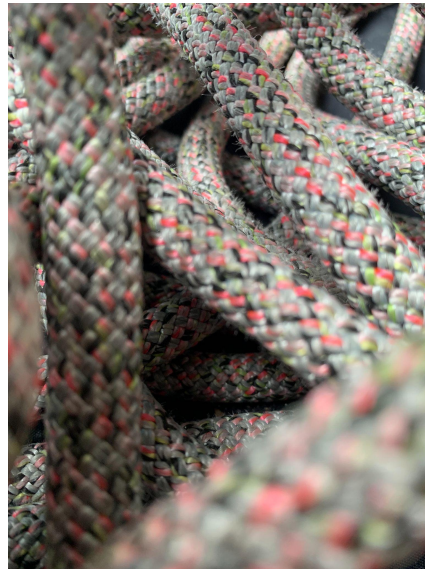


30	Need More Speed	8a	Jürgen Bormann 2016
31	Alter Riss (<i>direkt 7a'</i>)	6b	Res 1988, saniert Jürgen Bormann 2014
32	Zickenalarm	6c+	Paul Baumann 2013
33	Lachen lacht	7c+	Alessandra Kiss 2013
34	Schwertfisch (1. SL)	6a+	Dietmar Heidi 2013
	Schwertwal (2. SL)	7a	Jürgen Bormann 2014
35	Yellow Cake (1. SL)	7a+	Dietmar Heidi 2013, FA Jürgen Bormann
	Yellow Cake (2. SL)	7b	Jürgen Bormann 2014
36	Blitz-Donner-Bier	6a+	A. Kiss & D. Heidi 2015, FA Dietmar Heidi
37	Gatto Rosso (1. SL)	6b	Dietmar Heidi 2015
	Gatto Rosso (2. SL)	6c	Dietmar Heidi 2015, FA Alessandra Kiss
38	Bohrstaub.ch (~33m, 17 Exen)	6b+	Alessandra Kiss 2015
39	(Projekt)		

Zickenalarm 6c+ two cruxes. Aglaia led first. First crux was reaching very far out to get a left facing side pull that at first I didn't reach for and instead tried to hold an intermediate and fell. All fun climbing, but all the rock feels a bit dusty to me and I feel like my shoes kept getting a light layer of dust on them that

makes it hard for me to trust my feet. Aglaia wants to try some hard stuff so we start looking around for a 7.

Schwertfisch 6a+ and 7a—p1 & p2. For me the crux of p2 seems impossible, but Aglaia is able to get through it somehow! Damn! Even with her coaching for the crux sequence, I can't even imagine my body doing what she is describing. Something about holding practically nothing with the left hand and then putting a right hand up to awkwardly gaston a downward facing triangle and then move feet and somehow maintain tension to move the left hand to one of many non-existent hold options. WTF, I have no idea how she did this.



The part after this was a pumpy roof section with a bit of a layback, high foot, roof crux situation that is definitely more my style and I was able to hold it together for this and make the strong left hand pinch move up over the roof; however, these last two bolts there was no way I could truly clip the rope and I had to grab the quickdraws Aglaia had put up earlier. It was cool to grab the quickdraws though from a projecting sense, just because I had never seen this as an option when climbing. Sport climbing and projecting is a whole different animal. I finish the last hard moves to the anchor and I have to grab the chains, because I cannot hold onto the holds up here while clipping. I clip the carabiner and call it a day. Cool climb though! After this we decide to appreciate the great day we've had and leave while we're both feeling good and happy. We have climbed hard and we have a good bit of driving and a long day ahead of us tomorrow.

By the time we've walked back to the car, somehow we've decided that we are going to do **Patent Ochsner 5.11d/7a 13p**. Somehow we think that after doing Nutcracker Suite 5.8 trad 5p and Snake Dike 5.7R trad/sport 8p in Yosemite, we should do a 5.11d 13p sport climb in the Swiss Alps on limestone rock we've barely/never climbed on before with a style we haven't really gotten used to and an approach we know very little about. We're pretty hilarious. 7:25pm we drive to the lake Aglaia stayed at for 3 weeks during high school and Aglaia cooks some delicious gnocchi while I sous chef a bit cutting some tomatoes and zucchini. Aglaia makes a lovely creamy, nutmeg sauce and gets the gnocchi a bit crispy.

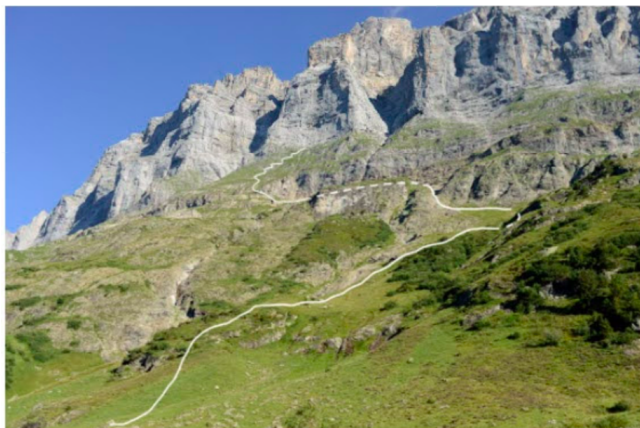
We fry up a little scrambled eggs to put on top and crack open a few ciders Aglaia has brought. We sit on the lake with a massive fountain spurting 100ft into the air and the sun setting. The gnocchi is delicious—the best I have ever had. The whole tomatoes we placed in are delicious.



9:30pm we drive to the parking lot for Patent Ochsner. After a bit of trouble getting the bus up the windy, one lane road at night, (the bus keeps stalling) we eventually figure out how to use the parking brake to get into first gear! I have to remember this trick for later. We settle into bed on the top of the car surrounded by huge moonlit peaks. The beauty is obvious.

July 11th 2022

Patent Ochsner 5.11d/7a today! Let's go! 6:15am wake up time. Aglaia makes two little breakfast plates—a few grape tomatoes, half of an avocado with nutmeg and salt and pepper, two little carrots and bread with honey and butter, and a little cheese on the side—as I get our gear and bags ready for the day. Somehow we manage to take until 8am to finally start hiking up and I am starting to get a bit antsy about doing 8 to possibly 13 pitches today. It's getting a bit late in the day and it's getting hot! We both feel a bit tired from lack of sleep the past few nights. But the day is beautiful and we start up steep grassy slopes following a barely distinguishable trail that suddenly fades to nothing and then picks back up again and again. I'm using [a picture from a blog](#) with a little yellow line superimposed on it to show the approach, but it still feels like a lot of guesswork.



Approach from the parking



At some point we've done about half the elevation gain and we have to traverse out left towards the base of Patent Ochsner. Here the trail is very unclear. And the terrain is a bit more treacherous with loose rubble and steep cliffs and two treacherous snow packs we don't dare to cross directly and that we eventually skirt behind. The first snow pack has a really lovely ice cold crystal clear and very tasty little stream above it that we take a small rest at. Then we pass above the second snow pack with a semi sketchy traverse above a 20ft drop into the bottom of the top of the melting snow pack. We don't want to chance going across the snow pack since it is mid summer and the ice is melting rapidly with high risk for falling through and we don't go below the cornices because we don't want to lose the elevation gain. We make it through the traverse and then walk around a fairly exposed corner on a little trail and head up loose rubble.



The last elevation gain we have to do is straight up some really steep grass with somewhat of a trail that we keep losing. But soon we see we are approaching the base of our climb and at long last we see the small trash can lid 30/40ft up the wall that marks the start of the climb—Patent Ochsner is the name of a Swiss trashcan company so it's a little joke. Super helpful to determine if we're on the right climb though! We are both super tired from the climb and the heat is getting to us. We are both surprised to have taken almost 3 hours on the approach! Others reported 1h 40m and a German couple even reported finishing in 70min! Are we out of shape? Or is it just hot and we are tired and maybe a little out of shape lol :)

By the time we flake the rope and assemble the gear it is 11:35pm when I start up the wall. I'm bringing cams .1-.75 and 11 draws with a 9.8mm rope we're using as a tagline attached to the back of my harness as I climb (4 of the quickdraws are alpine draws and I also bring one long double sling)—in the future I might just bring .25-.75 and ditch the super small cams and it would probably be really nice to climb on double ropes. This pitch is 5.10c/6b so it's a bit tough to warm up on, but I should be fine to cruise it without falling is what I thought... since at this point I feel like I can flash 95% of the 5.10C's I get on. The first clips feel a little spicy because they are a little runout and I still have to get my lead head screwed on right. I yell "Take" after clipping 3/4 draws, because I'm feeling very unsure about the next section. One of the draws includes a draw underneath the trash can lid which I think is really funny.

I later take an actual fall on this weird slab section with these really big vertical runnels that you can kind of pinch. I think it's just 5.10C slab with basically nothing to hold onto. It's not by style, but I pull myself together and as delicately and as confidently as I can muster, I walk up the section and somehow get a semi crack foothold in one of the shallow runnels and technique my way up the near vertical slab. Some of my proudest climbing of the trip! Eventually I make it to a pretty good 90 degree rail I mantle onto and step on top of. Then I can clip something to my right, but it's super far right even when I clip it with a double length sling. I eventually opt for unclipping it once I clip something far left, but even still the rope drag is quite impressive (later I find the rope at around the 4th draw is right on the bolt and rubbing in a weird way instead of just running through the carabiner on the quickdraw—kind of a weird situation that I think generally would just never happen so we were unlucky). I do a little more climbing and get to another slab section. I get pretty high on the slab section and am almost past the hard part, but then my body weight shifts and my foot slides a bit and I've lost the game. My body tilts backwards and I am off the wall falling. My last draw was pretty far down and I am falling for longer than I expected and kick off the rock as I am falling down. Thankfully I don't plant my foot on one of the small ledges as I fly down. Suddenly the rope goes taut. Aglaia has me. It's one of the bigger falls I've taken outside. I talk to Aglaia later and I think she was giving me a bit too much slack and also I am about 20 pounds heavier, and I think the rope was difficult to manage with the weird rope drag. Altogether it was a good catch.



While I am a bit spooked by the fall I know I can't just dilly dally and after about 20 seconds I start pulling up on the rope to get back to the same spot. I'm not feeling like doing that slab section again and I know to my right there is a really nice diagonal ramp flake with a big right-facing crack leading up to the anchors that I saw down below, so I decide to do a sketchy little traverse out right. I'm stretched out on a shitty left hand hold to reach the edge of the good flake. I'm completely stretched out using all 6ft of my wingspan and a lot of tension to wiggle my fingers onto the flake. I barely make it and quickly dance my feet over to position my body to stay on the wall. Once I get both hands into the crack I am feeling confident again. YES! I walk up a bit and then plug a yellow totem with a sling and then a blue totem 5ft up and 5ft below the anchor just because I can. I get up to the anchor and clip in. Damn that was a

tough 5.10c! Much harder than any other I'd done for sure. It is now 12:40pm. I have been climbing on the wall for 1hr 5min...!

Before Aglaia starts up she admits she is feeling very tired and not feeling confident about more climbing. She says she might be ready to just head down already. I tell her that maybe that is the right play and tell her to just follow up this pitch and maybe we can do the next pitch or two. Aglaia agrees and then starts up with my orange North Face follower bag. It's heavy/bulky/awkward and Aglaia is struggling to climb with it, especially the crux slab part with the vertical runnels and she takes a couple falls over the course of the climb and even uses the bolts as footholds twice. This is a tough first pitch! By the time she reaches me I think we've both internally decided that maybe this is not the day to send Patent Ochsner. The next pitch is 5.11c/6c+—about 4 grades harder than the pitch I just led—and on top of the difficulty of the climb it seems we are not managing this alpine route well with our time management, tagline and follower pack strategies.



When Aglaia arrives at the anchor we discuss and she says she would be down to try the next pitch, but I can feel in her voice and in her body language that continuing is not in the cards. I make the call that we should just cut our losses and head down. The view is BEAUTIFUL and even though we have only done one pitch of climbing it really has been an awesome and adventure filled day already. We've also learned a lot more about this route and doing harder alpine multi pitch. So while in some ways it may look like a huge failure, it was actually a great day for us! We rappel down on the two ropes tied with a double fisherman since we had brought them up. (even though just one rope would have sufficed) I rappel down slowly, enjoying the view. WOOOOOW it's just so beautiful and we are up this long steep grassy slope—everything, the whole valley and the mountains are laid out before us. Above us we can see clouds and fog swirling around the upper pitches and overhang of Patent Ochsner. I land at the base of the climb after rappelling and am feeling exhausted. I eat a bit, rest my eyes for about 10min while Aglaia does a little packing and we start moving so as to not be on this mountain too much longer than we need to. It's already a little after 2pm by the time we start down the mountain despite having done only one pitch.

The descent is a little sketchy as we're now pretty tired and the descent is pretty technical we slippery grass and loose rubble and some sketchy traverses. We decide to take the same path back since we know it works, even though we see a possibly easier, less technical path down once we get to the snow pack again (might be worth checking out in the future as both a better descent and ascent path). We do the sketchy traverse above the cornice again and this time it feels worse traversing in the opposite direction. Maybe it is more difficult or we are tired or..., but we make it back to the very pretty little crystal stream and take a break to eat our butter and cheese sandwiches, yummmm!

An Ibex goat suddenly appears and whether she is defending her territory or just very curious we are unsure, but she comes very close to us (at one point only 10-15ft away). She is very curious and keeps pacing around and posing picturesquely on the mountain. It's comedic to see how easily and beautifully she traverses the difficult terrain as we stumble through it. She follows us for about another 400m down the hillside. I think she is our spirit animal and I take it as a good omen and amazing experience. The rest of the downhill goes relatively quickly as the trail becomes more and more defined and our bright, yellow bus in the distance becomes a larger and larger speck. We made it!



What a day! There's supposedly some fresh "Alpkäse"—cheese from the Alps— so we go get some from a random little fridge outside of a small stable and drop our cash in a little container inside the fridge. The people here are so trusting it's incredible! Back in the van the vibes are good, but we have to figure out where we're going. Time for a lake! Aglaia navigates us to the closest one and it turns out it's the beautiful lake we saw in the distance while on Patent Ochsner. The lake has this stark, milky, emerald color fed by imposing, but apparently ever receding glaciers. It is saddening to think that in a decade or maybe even in a few years these glaciers will cease to exist...

Before reaching the lake however we stop at an "Alpkasérie"—alpine cheese shop! I eat all the dairy. I get some strawberry ice cream and we get this bitter fresh runny cheese with chives in a cup that goes beautifully on the pancakes we have later yummm. And a blueberry yogurt and some fresh butter. The strawberry ice cream is the best I've ever had, hands down. We have no spoons so we just push it out of our small plastic cups into our mouths. It's messy, but fun and delicious. 7pm we arrive at the lake (called Steinsee) and of course we have to jump in even though it's getting a bit windy and the sun is

setting. Aglaia has high hopes of washing her hair, but after about 2 seconds of wading in it's clear this is not going to happen. The water is as cold as ice and she barely succeeds in dunking her body up to her neck for a second before rapidly exiting. I don't do much better and go in a bit farther and quickly dunk my head in and then slip and slide on the soft and slippery bottom as I frantically try to get back to shore. So refreshing though!

Dinner is beautiful savory pancakes made with butter, cream, flour and eggs. We add in some fleisch (meat, but specifically it's thinly sliced, and prosciutto-like quality that crisps really nicely in the pan) and Alpkasë and butter. Dinner is served outside on chairs overlooking the lake 🍷

July 12th '22

6:45am we are awoken by the sound of 20 bells clanging outside. The cows are outside making a cacophony, but they are pretty cute and a funny sight. We fall back asleep and I am the last to wake up around 10pm. The lake calls us and we go in for a mandatory glacial dip. Today it's a bit warmer out and we are both able to stay in longer than the night before. Aglaia spots someone playing a hang ([a type of musical instrument called a handpan... based on the Caribbean steelpan instrument](#)) and we chill and listen to him play along the river while a group of climbers climb some chill multi pitch to the right with glaciers and imposing mountains in the background. We walk back to the car and have a lovely breakfast of leftover pancakes from the night before with some of the chive cheese and tomatoes and butter :) while stretched out on our lawn chairs with a view of the lake. Just spectacular.



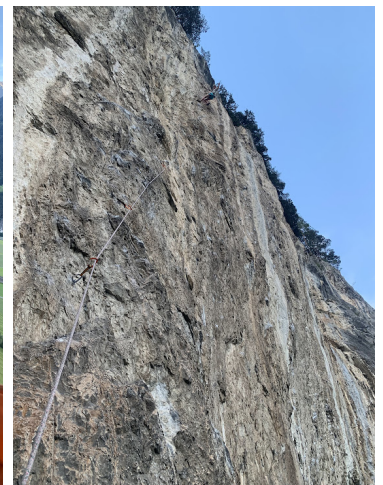
Well it's the last full day in Switzerland! What are we doing? We are both thinking that we should do some chill sport crag somewhere and as Aglaia fixes up the car and puts away the bed I do research to find a good place for the day (but really I'm just using the list of crags Aglaia has already picked out). At first I'm thinking of a place near Zurich, but it's a little out of our way and I figure if we're already out here we should take advantage and climb at a place farther away and explore. I settle on Acherli near Altdorf. The climbing here looks beautiful, but there is really very little information about the place (also it seems like no one goes in the summer because it's so toasty). Between several different pages and people's reports I'm able to piece together an approach to the crag that unintuitively seems to start high above

the climbing area near a workshop and then go down to the crag on the cliffside. I shrug... we'll figure it out.

With the bus packed we drive up to the pass (Sustenpass) with a quick stop to admire the view and a collection of garden gnomes someone has put up there! On the way down the pass we pick up a young man and 2 kids who are doing a challenge to get to Lucerne by the end of the day without using money or a phone. We drop them off at Altdorf station and drive up Acherlistrasse (Acherli street I think) and park at a workshop and head down a meandering cute forest trail.

Suddenly we're on the side of the cliff and we have to tread carefully. We see ropes tethered to the wall to attach to/use to traverse the cliff. We also see the furthest left and easiest climbs numbered 6-8, and rated 6a+, 6c and 6b. Aglaia starts up number 6, rated 5.10b/6a+ and struggles a bit to find the line since there are bolts going in so many different directions. We are still not sure we did the right line. We thought it was harder than 6a+ maybe... At the very least it was confusing and weird movement with a good amount of potential for weird falls into ledges. We wrapped up there and almost considered going home. Honestly I was feeling pretty tired and I was perfectly content to just leave after one pitch. But I guess we can't keep having 1 pitch climbing days lol. Aglaia really wants to get on this 30 meter 7a+/5.12a Z'Brichli number 19 that she's been eyeing on the website. It apparently is very good, but I'm concerned that if we didn't feel that good on the 6a+ then what is this going to feel like!? I'm apprehensive, but I'm always down to do more as long as we're safe!

Getting down to Z'Brichli is more treacherous and we tether into the ropes on the side of the cliff as we walk down the rock leaning back against the rope. I'm also apprehensive because I haven't even redpointed my first 6c! I'm just skipping 6c, 6c+, and 7a. Aglaia ties into the sharp end and starts up. The movement is great and she loves it! She takes a couple times and then sends the crux move! She's in love with the climb by the time I lower her to the ground. Looks like it's my turn. I don't really know what to expect because the route is so long (30m) and I really have no idea what she was doing during the upper two thirds of the route. I decide to take this seriously as a redpoint because the draws are up and why not? I start up.



The movement is sustained and there are some jugs to rest on. I keep moving my feet around and really try to keep my feet underneath me to support my weight as much as possible. By the time I throw a high left heel hook halfway up the route the exertion is starting to set in and my breathing grows louder and more intentional. It's getting serious. At this point things are getting more overhung. I scan the route ahead of me and start moving. The next 3 clips I can barely rest, I just have to keep moving and my body keeps saying to give up and make blind throws, but I stay focused and even with my power waning I quickly scan ahead to try to find the best possible holds before committing. Suddenly I'm on the crux sequence—I move my feet up and then bump my right hand to a tiny little flake that I can put a few fingers on. I pull hard on the crimp and try to look for the best hold, I almost commit to a shitty sloper, but just above is something that looks a bit more positive. I tense my body and with my power waning I throw for the hold. It's not great, but it is positive and much better than my right hand. I change my feet very quickly and then am able to move my right hand up to better holds and suddenly I'm on a small ledge completely and utterly pumped.

So many thoughts go through my head: whoa I did a 7a+ and whoa I'm so tired and this is so cool and ahhhh my arms are so pumped—I calm myself down and force myself to focus. I stand on that ledge trying to shake out the pump for at least 5 minutes. The pump is still not really gone, but I have to get moving and I'm pretty sure the end is a lot easier. Thankfully it is and with some thoughtful feet and some tricky, but good handholds. I clip another bolt, run out the rope past the second to last bolt because I'm out of draws and suddenly I'm right below the draw for the anchor, unscrewing the clip and passing the rope through... Whoa... Just wild. Did not think that was possible at all and I felt like I used everything in my climbing toolbox, from the mental game, to my breathing, to my footwork, to my technique, and my raw power. So satisfying.

Thanks so much to Aglaia for the great belay and encouragement and for hanging the draws. I mean I had almost left the crag after that first weird climb and suddenly the day had a whole new dimension to it. Wow—and we had the whole crag to ourselves the whole time! That just about ended the trip—we hiked back up to the car and drove back to Zurich where Aglaia serves up a celebratory dessert—Vermicelle (a swiss dessert)—and we head to bed.

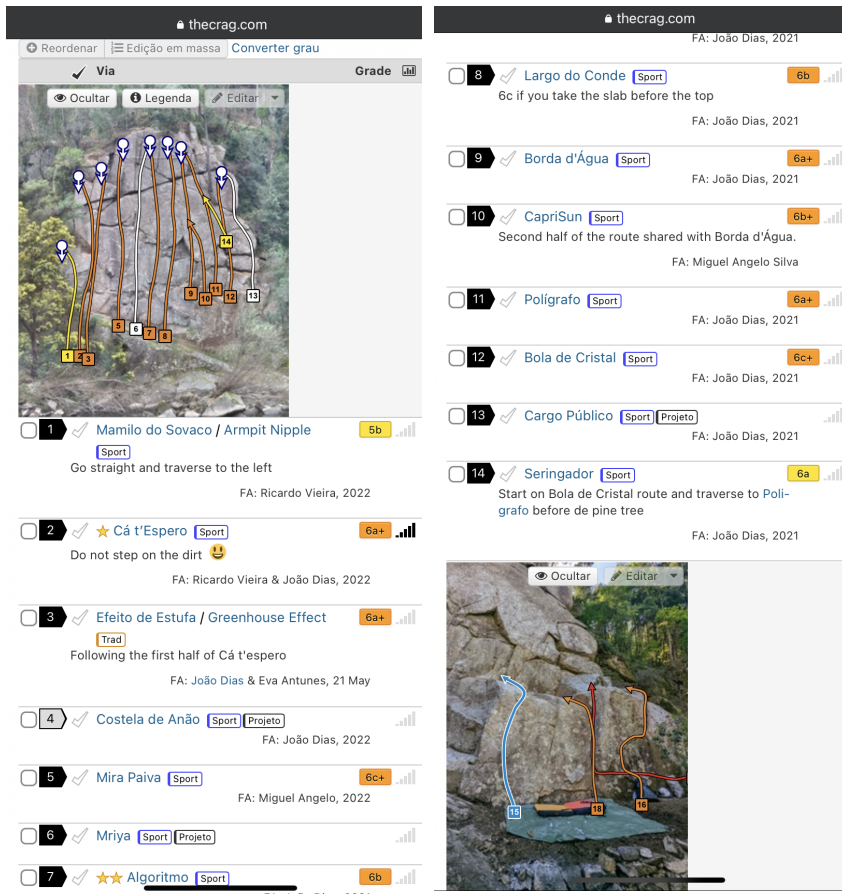


July 13th '23

We get up at 7:30am after some coaxing and I hop in for a quick shower to get me up and moving. I have a lovely soft-boiled egg (I love soft-boiled eggs) and half a croissant and do a little rush to get on the 8:07am bus to the airport for my 10:05 flight to Porto, Portugal for work! Thanks Aglaia for taking me to the airport, because I am lost on the bus and public transport system. It's so extensive! On to Porto, Portugal! What an amazing and beautiful time in Switzerland.

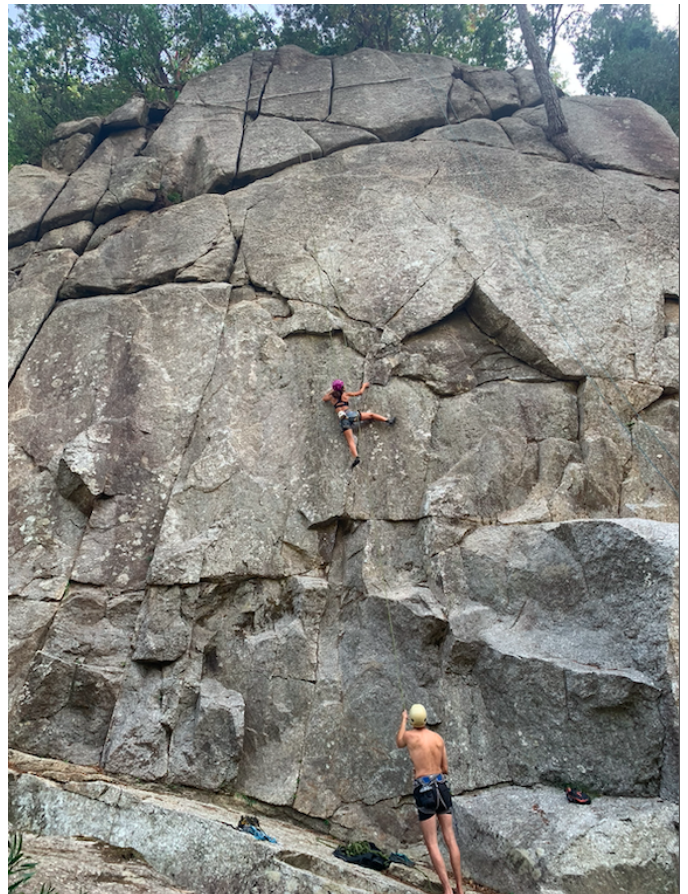
July 17th

I thought I'd add a bit about climbing in Portugal! I was able to get out once with André and Mafalda who I didn't know, but who are friends of Nuno, who I also didn't know, but who is friends with some work colleagues I have at INESC TEC in Porto. Soooooooooooooo basically I didn't know either of them at all haha. Mafalda picks me up from my hostel (PILOT Design) at 2:30pm and we head out to pick up André and then to the Ratão Crag next to a lovely river. The drive up is about an hour and then we have a short, but steep descent with ropes to the base of the climbs. We get on three climbs today and I am the rope gun! Which is kind of weird... I am not used to being the rope gun in a group, but it's kind of fun :)



The screenshot shows the website interface for 'thecrag.com'. On the left, there is a map view of a rock face with several routes marked with colored lines and numbers. On the right, a list of routes is displayed, each with a checkbox, a name, a difficulty grade, and a 'Sport' or 'Projeto' tag. The routes listed are:

- 1. Mamilo do Sovaco / Armpit Nipple (Sport) 5b. Go straight and traverse to the left. FA: Ricardo Vieira, 2022.
- 2. Cá t'Espero (Sport) 6a+. Do not step on the dirt 😊. FA: Ricardo Vieira & João Dias, 2022.
- 3. Efeito de Estufa / Greenhouse Effect (Trad) 6a+. Following the first half of Cá t'espero. FA: João Dias & Eva Antunes, 21 May.
- 4. Costela de Anão (Sport) (Projeto) 6a+. FA: João Dias, 2022.
- 5. Mira Paiva (Sport) 6c+. FA: Miguel Angelo, 2022.
- 6. Mriya (Sport) (Projeto) 6b+. FA: João Dias, 2021.
- 7. Algoritmo (Sport) 6b+. FA: João Dias, 2021.
- 8. Largo do Conde (Sport) 6b. 6c if you take the slab before the top. FA: João Dias, 2021.
- 9. Borda d'Água (Sport) 6a+. FA: João Dias, 2021.
- 10. CapriSun (Sport) 6b+. Second half of the route shared with Borda d'Água. FA: Miguel Angelo Silva.
- 11. Polígrafo (Sport) 6a+. FA: João Dias, 2021.
- 12. Bola de Cristal (Sport) 6c+. FA: João Dias, 2021.
- 13. Cargo Público (Sport) (Projeto) 6a+. FA: João Dias, 2021.
- 14. Seringador (Sport) 6a. Start on Bola de Cristal route and traverse to Polígrafo before de pine tree. FA: João Dias, 2021.



We start off on **Polígrafo 6a+/5.10b**. This climb is barely in frame in the picture above. Weird start off the deck with some tricky underclings and a hidden hold to the right. Or you could do a lieback situation and start a little off to the left. Then you go up to some good holds and basically keep your arms

stretched apart and reaching to good holds on either side of you. At the tree you take a left and the climbing gets easier/you can jam your hands in the crack if you want on your way up to the anchors.

Algoritmo 6b/5.10c: The best rated climb and I think the most straightforward. Super fun and had a thoughtful midsection. The picture above shows Mafalda on the climb. Beginning has a bit of fun stemming. Then you get to a bit of a blank section where you can do some funky pinches/crimps or reach behind the flake to the right and slot your hand in a really nice crack (which I missed when I led). Mafalda is right at that spot in the climb. Then you stand on top of a little ramp and dance your feet up and right to be able to reach some pretty positive rails (definitely the technical/problem solving crux of the route). From there the rest just kind of follows and I went into the crack on the right at the top to then reach over left and clip (the tops of a lot of these climbs don't really make sense).

Mira Paiva 6C+/5.11b: André is like “Esta a tua escolha”: basically I'll belay you on whatever, but if it's harder than 6b I can't follow and clean. In my head I think well I probably shouldn't go much higher, but then I'm like well... might as well :) So since I guess I do 5.12a now I thought I might as well send my first 5.11 grade. I've been eyeing Mira Paiva so it's the natural choice. The climb is mostly very thoughtful. I definitely exert myself, but the main challenge is mental. I'm just breathing and really trying to weigh my options before committing.

Off the deck I just move quickly. About a third of the way up I move over left onto a little slopey rail and then keep moving up, making sure to set up my feet as best as possible. The ledges are maybe the hardest part because they are deceiving. I want to just blind throw to the ledges, but I am glad I don't because the first ledge is very slopey and difficult to hold on to. I set myself up quickly and then quickly get my right hand a foot higher to a better rock to the right. The next part is pretty blank except for a couple sparse small holds that are a bit raised from the rock. I move carefully up and then reach another slopey ledge and mantle using the backside of a rock above. Then I wedged myself in between the rock leaning out and the wall. I move up and am confused. I can see a diagonal little rail and some sparse small holds going up to the anchor, but it looks very difficult. I can also see a route slightly to the left where I reach on top of a boulder with my left hand and then span across to the anchors and go ahead with this. It still requires a powerful shouldery move to get to the anchors and it leaves me confused as to what the actual route was. In any case, my first 5.11!

Tomorrow I will go to the Açores to visit my family in Pico and São Jorge!