



Continue to the left end of the ledge and climb a corner (pegs, 50m, 4c) to a niche. Above there are two options: either go straight up the Allain Crack (6a, pegs) to a ledge on the right, or traverse right to a letterbox, gain the Martinetti Crack and then move back left onto the ledge (4b, then 5a, 50m). Step two metres left and climb the corner (4a) to a small ledge. Climb the twin cracks straight above (5a). Continue rightwards across a ledge system, then move back left to belay on spikes. Go straight up over flakes (pegs) and an overhang (5a, 25m), then head left (pegs) and climb cracks, flakes and verglassed rock to a leftward-slanting couloir-chimney that is followed (50m, 4b) to a big ledge (snow or ice). Climb the chimney directly above to a quartz ledge (belay in a niche). Continue straight up (25m, 4b) to mixed ground, then head rightwards to the second quartz ledge. There are two ways of finishing the route. The first option is to go through a hole in the rock onto the south face and then climb a flake to a platform on the right. Continue horizontally along a ledge on the right for 100m to get to a snow slope. Go up this slope and over some short rock steps to the summit. The second option is to move left along the ledge on the north face and climb a chimney (often icy) to the summit (60m, 4c).

DESCENT
Via the Drus normal route.

Top
On the leftward-slanting ledge (3b) below the Niche.
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Traversing along the narrow ledge to the Lambert Crack (5a) during a winter ascent.

77 | AIGUILLE NOIRE DE PEUTEREY [3772m]

ITALIAN FACE OF MONT BLANC — FRÈNEY BASIN

Ratti Direct

The west face of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey is a vast, complex and extremely impressive cliff, almost 700 metres high and seamed with corners and couloirs. Vittorio Ratti and L. G. Vitali's first ascent on the eve of World War II was a truly audacious achievement. Their route picks an astute line up the face before directly tackling the very steep summit buttress. Hemmed in by a jumbled web of seracs and pillars, the Frêne Basin feels particularly remote and wild, far from the comforts of civilisation. The rock on the Ratti Direct is generally quite good, except for the section above the snowy ridge in the middle of the face.



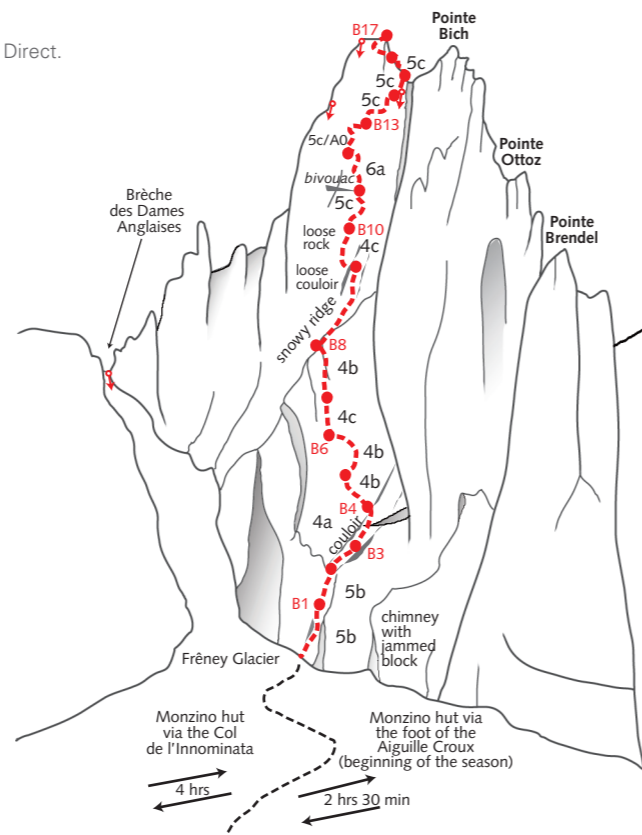
- **Difficulty:** IV 6a A0. A big route with a complex descent
- **Vertical height:** 700m from the foot of the route to the summit
- **Time:** 4 hrs from the hut to the foot of the route/10 hrs for the route/2 hrs 30 min for the descent via the northwest ridge (abseils), then 1 hr to descend the southwest couloir of the Brèche Sud des Dames Anglaises (abseils, steep snow) to the foot of the route, or 4 hrs to descend the east ridge
- **Fixed gear:** Pegs
- **Gear:** Aliens, Camalots – blue 0.3 to blue 3, wires
- **Period:** Summer
- **Access:** Monzino hut (2590m), Italy
- **First ascent:** Vittorio Ratti and L.G. Vitali, 18 to 20 August 1939

Moving up to the summit ridge — a superbly positioned belay in front of the Brouillard and Frêne Pillars and Mont Blanc de Courmayeur.





Pitch 13 of the Ratti Direct.



APPROACH

From the Monzino hut, follow the path to the Châtelet Glacier. Go up the glacier and move onto its left bank. Head right past the ice-polished slabs, then move back left across a snow slope. Climb a couloir-chimney to get to the Col de l'Innominata (3205m). Do two abseils down a couloir of poor rock to get to the Fréney Glacier. Traverse towards Pointe Gugliermina and go up to the foot of the west face of the Aiguille Noire de Peuterey (4 hrs).

At the beginning of the season, when there is a lot of snow, it is quicker to go past the foot of the Aiguille Croux, reaching the Fréney Glacier by a short abseil (10m, fixed rope). Cross the glacier and go up along the foot of the Aiguille Noire to the route (2 hrs 30 min).

ROUTE DESCRIPTION

The route starts about 50m to the right of the bergschrund below the couloir that comes down from the Brèche Sud des Dames Anglaises. Go up a system of rightward-slanting ledges (40m) to a chimney with two jammed blocks. Climb the chimney (5a), exiting right onto a platform. Go over the overhang directly above (4c, pegs) and climb chimney-cracks (4b) to a couloir. Go up the couloir (50m), then climb the cracked slabs on the left (3a to 4b) to a snowy ridge. Follow the ridge to a notch. Climb the couloir directly above the notch (60m), then make a rising traverse leftwards across loose rock (50m, 4c) to get to and climb a corner (50m, 5b). Climb rightward-leaning corners, then move back left across a slab (40m, 5c, possible bivouac site on the left). Climb the corner (6a, 40m, pegs, belay on a small platform). Traverse a few metres left and go up an overhanging corner (A0, numerous pegs). Exit right across a slab. Climb a crack (6m), then traverse right across a slab (5b) to a corner. At the top of the corner, head diagonally rightwards up cracked slabs (pegs) to join the south ridge 20m from the summit (10 hrs).

DESCENTS

- Via the east ridge: abseils and numerous cairns (see route 64).
- Abseil down the north ridge (Peuterey Integral, route 92), then go down the couloir below the Brèche des Dames Anglaises.

78 | PETIT DRU [3733m]

AIGUILLE VERTE

American Direct with the North Face Finish

'It is the perfect mountain. It is symbolic, the archetypal shape of a mountain. Its taut, vertical lines make it the mountain par excellence.'

Guido Magnone, interviewed for the film *Les Amants des Drus*.

The west face of the Drus has undergone several major changes in recent years. During the heatwave of 2003, the base of the famous Bonatti Pillar collapsed. During another heatwave, in 2005, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of the Bonatti, the whole pillar – 600 metres of granite, millions of cubic metres of rock – came crashing down, destroying almost a dozen routes. The impact shook the earth as far away as Chamonix. Only the western side of the face remained unscathed and the routes on the left do not appear to be any more dangerous than before. The most recent landslide, during the summer of 2011, affected the top part of the American Direct. The route has been repeated since, but it was necessary to climb through the affected area on dust-coated rock of doubtful solidity. The route described here seems to be the most solid at the moment. It climbs the American Direct past the 90-metre diedre and then follows the German rescue traverse to join the Allain Route on the north face.

- **Difficulty:** IV 6c max. 5c obl.
- **Vertical height:** 900m
- **Time:** 1 hr 15 min for the approach from the Grands Montets or 2 hrs 30 min from Montenvers/9 to 12 hrs for the route. It is possible to bivouac at the jammed block
- **Fixed gear:** Glue-in bolts on the lower slabs, in-situ belays up to the jammed block, a few pegs in the pitches
- **Gear:** Camalots – blue 0.3 to blue 3, Aliens – blue to yellow, wires
- **Period:** Summer. The lower slabs are subject to stone fall from the Niche des Drus. Stone fall is less frequent when there are good freezing conditions and a lot of snow, as is often the case in late spring/early summer. The Drus should be avoided during heatwaves, when there is a greater chance of landslides
- **Access:** From the Col des Grands Montets or Montenvers
- **First ascent:** Gary Hemming and Royal Robbins, 24 to 26 July 1962

Exiting onto the south face after going through the hole at the top of the north face.

