

Egger the giant gave up at third attempt

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Matteo Della Bordella was born in Varese on the 4th July 1984. He grew up in Malnate and in short time it became one of the strongest climbers in the world. He started climbing up the cliffs in Campo dei Fiori and from then to the difficult sides in Lecco area. Then he entered in the famous group Ragni di Lecco (Lecco's Spiders) with whom he has just concluded his last and up to now most important adventure, the opening of a new route on the West side of Torre Egger, Patagonia peak, which had rejected all attempts on that side. Now Matteo has come back to Italy; here there is his story and his still "warm" feelings (photo from www.ragnilecco.com).

Matteo, first of all, tell us how you began climbing.

"I began when I was 12-13 years old with my dad. When he was young, he climbed, but then he gave up: one day I asked to him to carry me and since then we restarted together. At the beginning, I started climbing up Campo dei Fiori or Valganna sides, then my passion became stronger and stronger, until I couldn't help dealing with it."

Then the mountain carried away your dad, Fabio. How did you react after his death? And now, how do you approach climbing?

"For me it was a strong blow; I suffered very much, but then I managed to realize it. Perhaps it had to happen, because some things happen, no matter if you don't want them; if I have to look for a "positive" aspect in this terrible experience, I'll think of the fact that it helped me to open my eyes and to become more responsible and more careful. It made me understand better how little I am in comparison to the mountain, no matter if it is Egger west or the cliff near home."

Let's talk about more beautiful and present topics; why did you choose Egger?

"This plan was born three years ago, together with "Berna", Matteo Bernasconi; we wanted to live a special experience opening a new way in Patagonia. Therefore, one day we met in Lecco with the two "Spiders" Mario Conti and Carlo Aldè, great experts of these mountains. They indicated the west side of Torre Egger, like the last great wall, the last important bastion on which no way had been found. We have said to ourselves "Why not? Let's try!".

In order to carry out this operation, we had to have lot of patience.

“Yes, we made three expeditions, but we never thought it would be an impossible experience or that it would have been better to give up. Also the first year, in spite of the expedition going relatively bad, we learnt very much and we understood how to move on these great mountains: crazy weather, how to climb the best side in the best way, that is, how we should train. We learnt a lot. Therefore, when we came back for the second year and we arrived near the escape of the side, we understood how the enterprise was feasible; we also had equipped a big part of the way, things that turned out to be very useful. This year we have gone back to the base of the side and we could climb it: unforgettable, fantastic, hard moments, but I felt unique emotions”.

When Patagonia normal bad weather raged, didn't you lose hearts? What did you do during those days of inactivity?

“Telling the truth, we passed most time in town, in El-Chalten, so we have always had something to do and it wasn't an excessive weight. However, at the base of the side, we waited for good weather to come for a week: in those moments you want to mess everything up, packing up and going back home, but in the end you think about it. You are there for the mountain and it is also part of the game: you live better in your dream than in the city.”

Let's talk again about this year expedition to Egger: what was the most difficult part in the way?

“The greatest part was already equipped since last year, therefore I'd say the last part: it was on a cliff and there was really a little possibility to make sure ourselves with fast protections (friend, nut.). In the end I put a spit (a particular nail for anchorage in the side of the mountain Ed.) and we passed!”

The first attempts were made together with Matteo Bernasconi; instead this year he had to give up in advance and with it only remained young Luca Schiera, at his first experience. Did you feel greatest responsibilities?

“Well, yes I did: Luca is a young, very strong mountaineer, but he didn't have any experience in Patagonia and therefore he completely trusted me. I took decisions, I chose if climbing or not the side: I couldn't make any mistakes, less than usual. He completely trusted me and from my decisions could depend our lives, but I think everything went well. Luca behaved in a very good way.”.

And now? Will you take a rest climbing the cliffs in our province or have you already got new plans?

“We already have a new plan and I use the plural because the team should be composed of "Berna", some other Ragnos and me: the ideal should be four or five. The goal should be Pakistan, where we would like to climb up to a big side (big rock cliff) of a mountain around 6,000 meters. A kind of Egger with elevated difficulties, in order to get the altitude. We are organizing in these days, also because we are late on scheduled times”.

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