



CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

WINTER 2012
N° 03

DESTINATIONS
30/ INDIAN ROCK
40/ MALIBU CREEK
48/ COLUMBIA



Designing
Testing
Climbing
Working
Playing
Living

In
CALIFORNIA





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NO. 03
WINTER 2012

DEPARTMENTS


08/EDITOR'S NOTE
10/CALIFORNIA CLIMBER
12/REVIEW
16/CREATURE COMFORTS
18/STAND BY YOUR VAN
20/GOLDEN STATE

FEATURES


30/INDIAN & MORTAR ROCK
40/MALIBU CREEK
48/COLUMBIA

ON THE COVER:
Nicole Zuelke on *Aries Curse* (V7 variation), in the Labyrinth Area, Columbia.
IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING

THIS PAGE:
Justin Ancira pulls down on *The Ramp* (V4) in the urban jungle of Mortar Rock, Berkeley.
IMAGE + ALTON RICHARDSON




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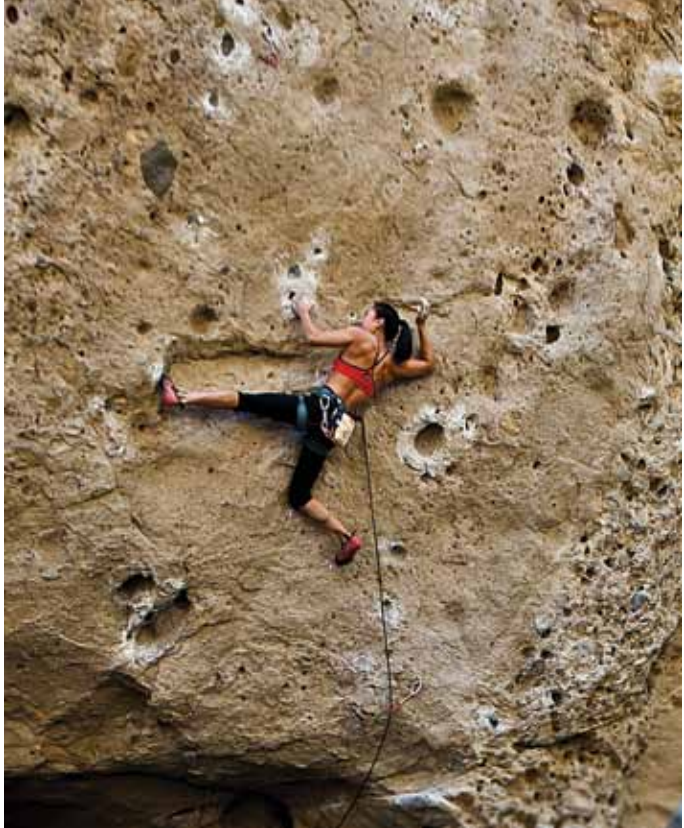
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Rock climbing, bouldering, ice climbing, mountaineering, alpine climbing and any other outdoor activity are inherently dangerous. The owners, staff and management of California Climber do not recommend that anyone participate in these activities unless they are an expert or accompanied by an expert. Please seek qualified professional instruction and/or guidance. Understanding the risks involved are necessary and be prepared to assume all responsibility associated with those risks.

Natalie Duran poised on *Urban Struggle* (5.12b), Malibu Creek State Park. IMAGE + ANTHONY LAPOMARDO



NINA WILLIAMS

DON'T LET HER SMILE FOOL YOU...
(SHE CRUSHES MORE THAN ROCK)



PHOTO: BEAU VAHLER



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LA gets his groove on - Aqua Groovy 5.10 - Sierra NF, CA JERRY ANDERSON

MOSS, TICKS AND POISON OAK

I FIRST VISITED THE BOULDERS

of Columbia Junior College at the age of 13 – nearly 15 years prior to this edition of California Climber. That day ended with a failed top-rope anchor and a hospital visit. The following decade brought more disappointing and frightful Columbia excursions. The mossy passageways were too short to bolt and seemed too tall to boulder – especially with one miniscule crashpad. I got scared and demoralized every visit, waking up each morning with growing poison oak rashes and ticks embedded in my skin.

In 2005, I thrashed my way through Columbia's thick brush to inspect a friend's newly chalked problems. At first glance I wasn't convinced – at least not enough to buy brushes and join in on the scrubbing. But as soon as I laced up my shoes and climbed the routes, I realized how truly brilliant they were: The quality of rock was impeccable and the movement creative. Since then I've seen bouldering in a whole new


light. I found a sense of adventure in Columbia. I discovered beauty in the purity of movement, freedom in the diversity of each climb, simplicity in the lack of gear and commitment on some of the most heinous top-outs on Earth. I also purchased 12 different brushes, two crashpads and gallons of Roundup weed killer to help develop the three-mile span of limestone boulders.

With increasing advances in the quality of crashpads (Check out this year's most innovative pads on page 12) and a newfound enthusiasm for highball bouldering, the potential for climbing in Columbia's corridors seems endless. Yet no matter how much it is encouraged, the chances of Columbia becoming a true bouldering destination are next to nothing. The climbing can be dirty, scary and unforgiving. It's hard to find the boulders and even harder to find your car at the end of the day. Each time you set foot in Columbia's tight passageways, you are embarking on a true


expedition – something many boulderers would quickly trade for easy approaches and clean top-outs.

For this issue's cover story, I spent eight years photographing a small and unusual group of dedicated adventure boulderers as they scrubbed and sent new problems in the area's labyrinths. Although I gain more experience each season and commit fewer rookie mistakes, moss, ticks and poison oak are still a huge part of the Columbia experience. On the other hand, there are no drum circles, scenesters, hordes of iPod-blarney college kids or rangers. So if you're starting to get sick of California's increasingly crowded winter destinations, turn to page 48 for more on Columbia's strikingly beautiful orange and blue-streaked marble boulders. And if you decide to head this way, bring a few brushes. Plenty of features remain hidden in Columbia's dense oak woodland, waiting to be uncovered and climbed.


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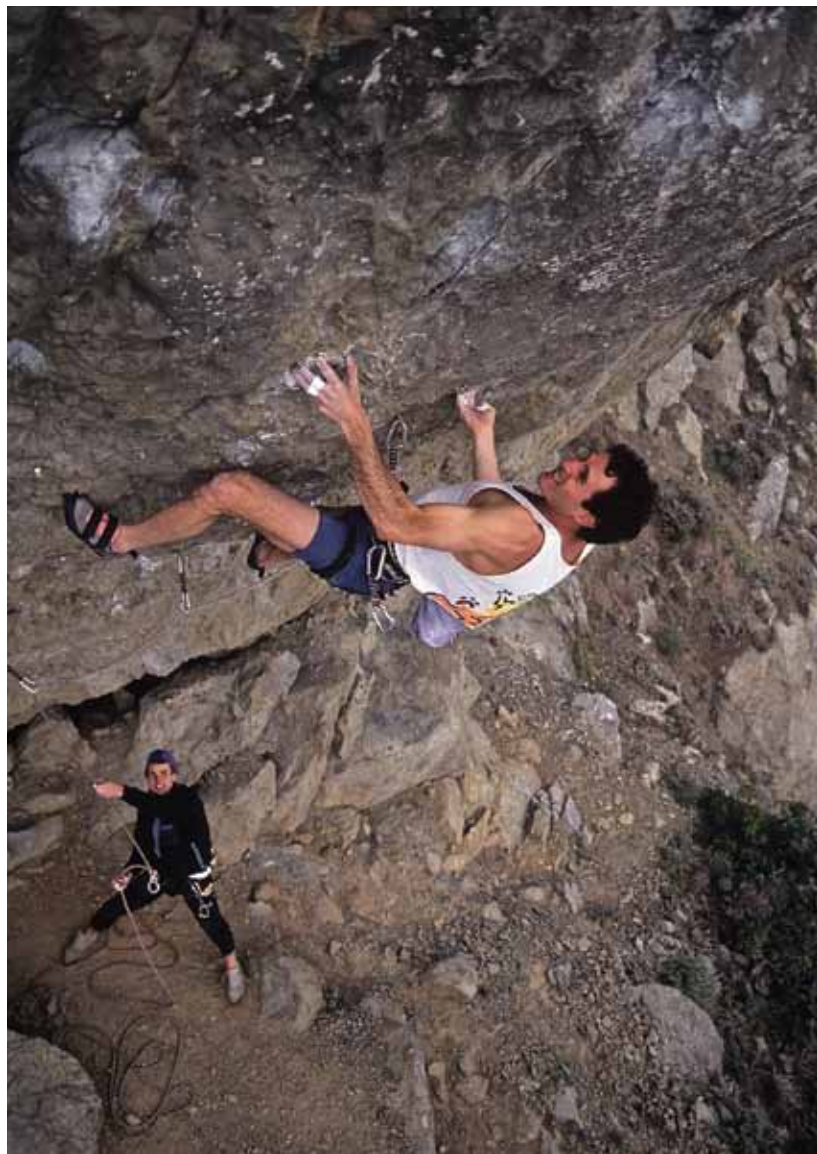




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Scott Frye on the first ascent of *Surf Safari* (5.13d), Mickey's Beach.
IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG

"All of us trained to keep up with Nat," Frye said, though he himself did a significant amount of bouldering in the Bay Area, including the 1978 first ascent of Mortar Rock's *Jungle Fever* (V8). Frye's beginnings in Yosemite Valley instilled a strong trad ethic in him, but the bouldering at Mortar Rock pushed him toward sport climbing on sandstone, basalt and limestone. "The transition from trad to sport was huge, huge, huge," Frye said. The genesis for Bay Area sport climbing began at Mickey's Beach, where the technical nature of the rock left the climbers wondering what to do next. "Weighting the rope—even topropping—was considered cheating. I didn't want to hangdog, and I brow-beat people who did," said Frye.

Dekker, a Bay Area hard man, helped Frye break through the psychological crux of the movements. While the pair worked on *Dreams of White Porsches* (5.13b) at Mickey's Beach, Dekker noted that to send the climb they would need to break it down into little boulder problems and hang on the rope in between. The pair discovered that what the French climbers were saying at the time was true: "You could climb harder, longer sequences if you worked it out." With these tactics, Frye traveled across the U.S. and established new, difficult sport climbs. Many of the hardest rock climbs of the day were put up by Frye including Rifle, Colorado's *Living in Fear* (5.13d/5.14a), Donner Summit's *Steep Climb Named Desire* (5.13d), the Virgin River Gorge's *Dude* (5.13c) and Marin Coast's *Surf Safari* (5.13d).

At age 44, Frye finally returned to the home of his traditional beginning, but this time he went to Yosemite to boulder. Though he had been around for the first ascent of *Thriller* (V10), he had always stayed away from the small rocks. "When people started to just boulder in Yosemite I thought they were crazy. It was a strange concept—to drive all that way just to boulder," said Frye. Ironworks hardmen Paul Barraza and Tim Medina finally convinced Frye to explore the smaller stones, and he quickly made an ascent of *Thriller* (V10), and the following year sent *Midnight Lightning* (V8) at the ages of 44 and 45, respectively. For the next seven years, Frye bouldered constantly and rediscovered his love for climbing. "I guess I just waited for the pad technology," he said.

Frye's newest obsession is ping-pong, more formally known as table tennis. Though he has played his whole life, he has renewed his focus in the past few years. Frye plays five to six days a week, running topspin, underspin and curve drills every other day. He pays for a Chinese coach, has a mentor, and teaches a youth team. When they do fitness runs, he ignores his bum knee and follows them around on his scooter.

"I'm having so much fun with it, trying to realize the skill set of an Olympic event," Frye said.

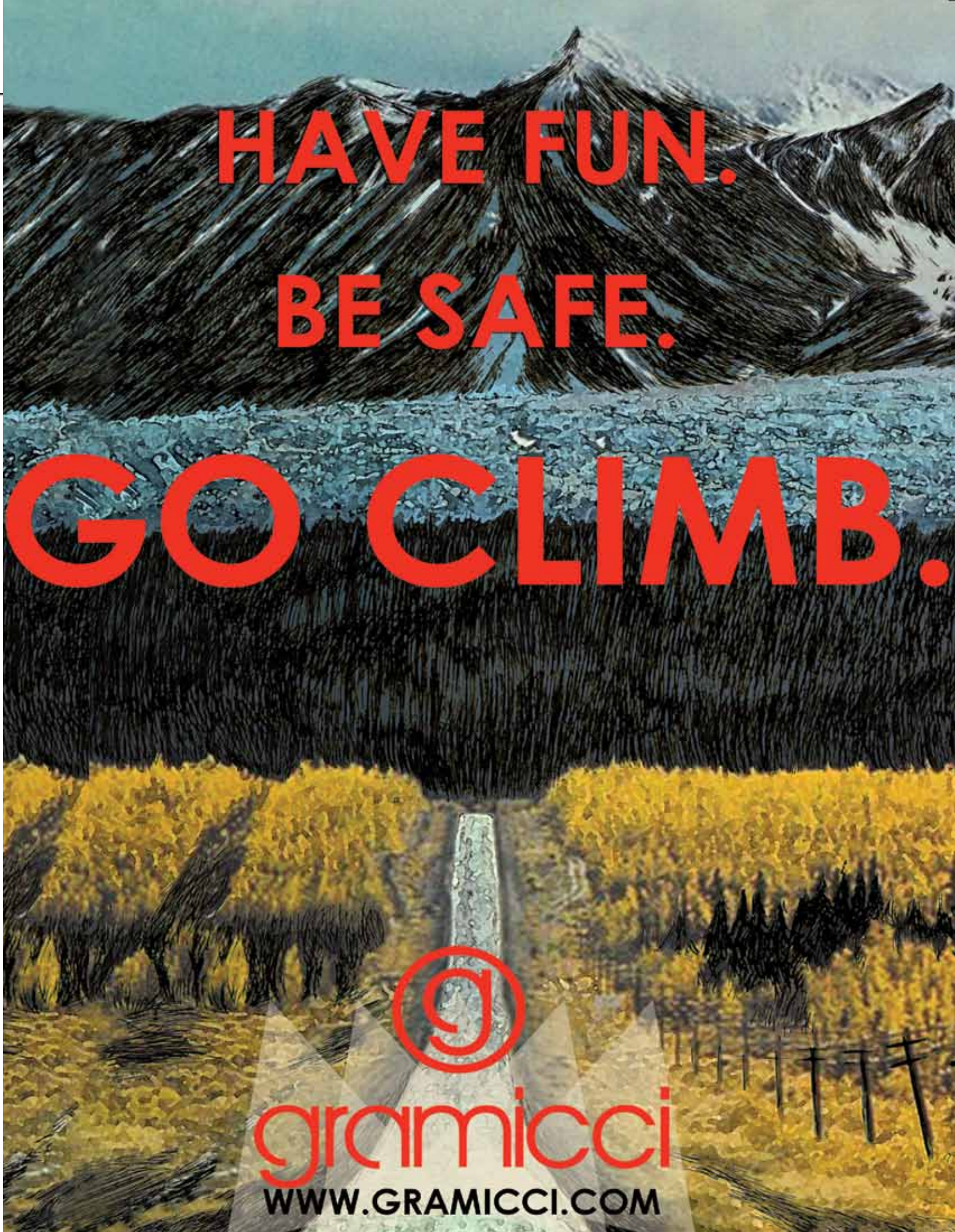
These days, the little he climbs is in the gym, where he cross-trains for ping-pong. "It's a funny thing," Frye said. "After climbing for 30 years and looking back at it all, there's one thing I wish I had done: climb more."

BEHIND THE PADDLE: [Scott Frye](#)

Eying his opponent from across the nine-foot-long table, Scott crouched and spun his paddle. The small white ball flew towards him. Scott jumped sideways and smashed the ball. The hit had enough topspin and acceleration to fly towards his opponent as a finalizing blow.

Scott Frye is no ordinary ping-pong player. The 53-year-old is also a father of modern climbing. He once climbed with the same drive and passion that he now plays ping-pong with.

Frye began climbing on the granite of Yosemite in 1973. At the same time he was learning to trad climb, Frye was bouldering at Berkeley's Indian Rock. Looking to establish something different than the sandbagged problems of that area, Frye, along with John Sherman, Harrison Dekker and Nat Smale, ventured to the steeper stone of Mortar Rock. The overhanging rhyolite hadn't been touched, and the posse of boulderers found a series of small crimps that traversed the wall in an obvious but imposing line. "No one thought it was possible," said Frye. They tried it anyway. Smale, the strongest of the group, fought through the difficulties and established *Nat's Traverse* (V8). The second ascent eluded the other climbers for a year, until Frye finally got strong enough.



MUCH OF THE OUTDOOR GEAR AVAILABLE TODAY delivers desired results better than ever before. In the last decade, crashpads have become specialized to accommodate the diverse terrain encountered by today’s boulderers. Crashpad companies have also addressed the ever-important issue of budget and the growing concern for environmental impact among today’s climbers. *CCMAG* has selected four innovative crash pads from four different companies to not only give a cross section of the variety of pads available, but also to showcase “pad systems” – an increasingly popular way to make landing zones safer for both the climber and the spotter.

ORGANIC - FULL PAD & HALF PAD
(\$185 & \$65)

SPECS
SIZE > Full = 36x28 (open), Half Pad = 24"x36"x3"
MATERIALS > The high density open-cell soy foam and very unique closed cell layer are completely sheathed in military grade ballistics nylon (for the ground side) with one-of-a-kind multi colored cordura nylon tops.

WEAR AND TEAR: The outer material and stitching of these pads are so durable that Organic sells replacement foam for years down the road. This prevents still usable materials from being wasted and thrown out.

PROBLEMS ADDRESSED: The hybrid hinge (which allows the pad to fold by dividing the main cushion while creating a continual landing surface) eliminates the dead space down the center of the landing zone. The Full Pad has a convenient oversized closure flap that allows you to carry other smaller pads (like the Half Pad) with ease. This is an economical way to build your padding quiver and allows you to only have to hike in what you need that day instead of being stuck hiking to a backwoods boulder with an XL pad on your back.

GREEN ANGLE: There is no waste. Organic’s unique pad tops (no two are alike) and chalk bag designs are created by recycling even the most random shaped scrap from their workshop. Their products are 100% made in USA.



MAD ROCK - R3
(\$189.00)

SPECS
SIZE > 55x35x4 (open)
MATERIALS > Recycled EVA foam in a UV resistant 1680 denier Polyester shell

WEAR AND TEAR: Unbreakable metal buckles for the closure system. Ground shield unfolds to protect the suspension. Double and triple stitching on critical seams with nylon binding on edges (essentially a raised, reinforced sheath over high impact seams).

PROBLEMS ADDRESSED: The baffle system design allows this pad to contour over any feature of concern. When folded it creates a huge storage space. The ground shield keeps the dirt off your back and prevents the harness from snagging when repositioning the pad. Closure system prevents items from falling out of the bottom of the pad.

GREEN ANGLE: Baffles are filled with recycled EVA foam that would normally be collected and shipped for disposal. If needed, this foam can be replaced.



METOLIUS - BOULDERING SHIELD

(\$89.95)

SPECS

SIZE > 36" x 23" x 2"
MATERIALS > Dual density foam laminate of open and closed cell foams (1" each) sheathed in 600 denier polyester on the back, while the front is Ultrasuede – used to prevent friction burns when contacting a falling climber.

WEAR AND TEAR: Hearty 600 denier polyester on a pad of this kind means that it's built to last.

PROBLEMS ADDRESSED: Reduces injuries to spotters by giving them a 'bumper' between them and the sharp appendages of a falling climber. Also mitigates finger injuries as the spotter can now grip a handle behind a pad instead of holding out her hands. It also serves as an auxiliary pad for covering seams, shimmying pad-stacks or at the start of a problem.

GREEN ANGLE: Products are designed so that excess material can be reused in other products. Unusable scraps are donated to local schools for art projects.



ASANA - PRO SPOTTER

(\$120)

SPECS

SIZE > 72" x 44" x 1/2" (open)
MATERIALS > 600 denier nylon and ballistic nylon. 1/2" dense closed cell foam inside.

WEAR AND TEAR: Heavy duty buckles, #10 gauge zipper with ballistic nylon wrapping the four sides.

PROBLEMS ADDRESSED: When 'pad-gineering' an uneven landing zone the devil is in the cracks. This pad operates as a seam sealer and creates a uniform LZ. For tight clearance problems, a 1/2" pad can offer protection while preventing dabs that detract from an otherwise clean send. Finally, at 72 x 44" this pad fits very nicely under a two-man tent for a cozy night's sleep.

GREEN ANGLE: Everything at Asana is reused or recycled. The scrap fabric goes into chalk bags and buckets. The smaller pieces go to companies that use reclaimed fabric. What is leftover is made into chews for the employee's pooches.





WINTER BOULDERING KIT

Among climbers, winter is the boulderer’s season in the Golden State. As the Solstice approaches, the rocky retreats of Bishop, Joshua Tree, Columbia and Castle Rock ripen along with the citrus grown in the Central Valley. These are the glory days when we pull without even a drop of sweat on our palms and the rock seems to bite back in encouragement and response to our efforts. Yet, there is always a downside to every up and winter climbing certainly has its share. Storms rolling off the pacific are one. Of more consequence is the cold air that spills down the mountainside and grips the lowlands with the aid of prolonged nights. At times like these, the only thing that can motivate a climber to leave the warmth of her downy cocoon is a bladder threatening to burst.

While we can’t do much to address storms, we can prepare ourselves for the cold and pack the pad full of temperature mitigating gear, food and drink.

Below is an outline of the essential winter bouldering paraphernalia that will keep you and your (possibly) less enthusiastic partner out in the field until your bloody fingers force you back to camp.

THE KIT

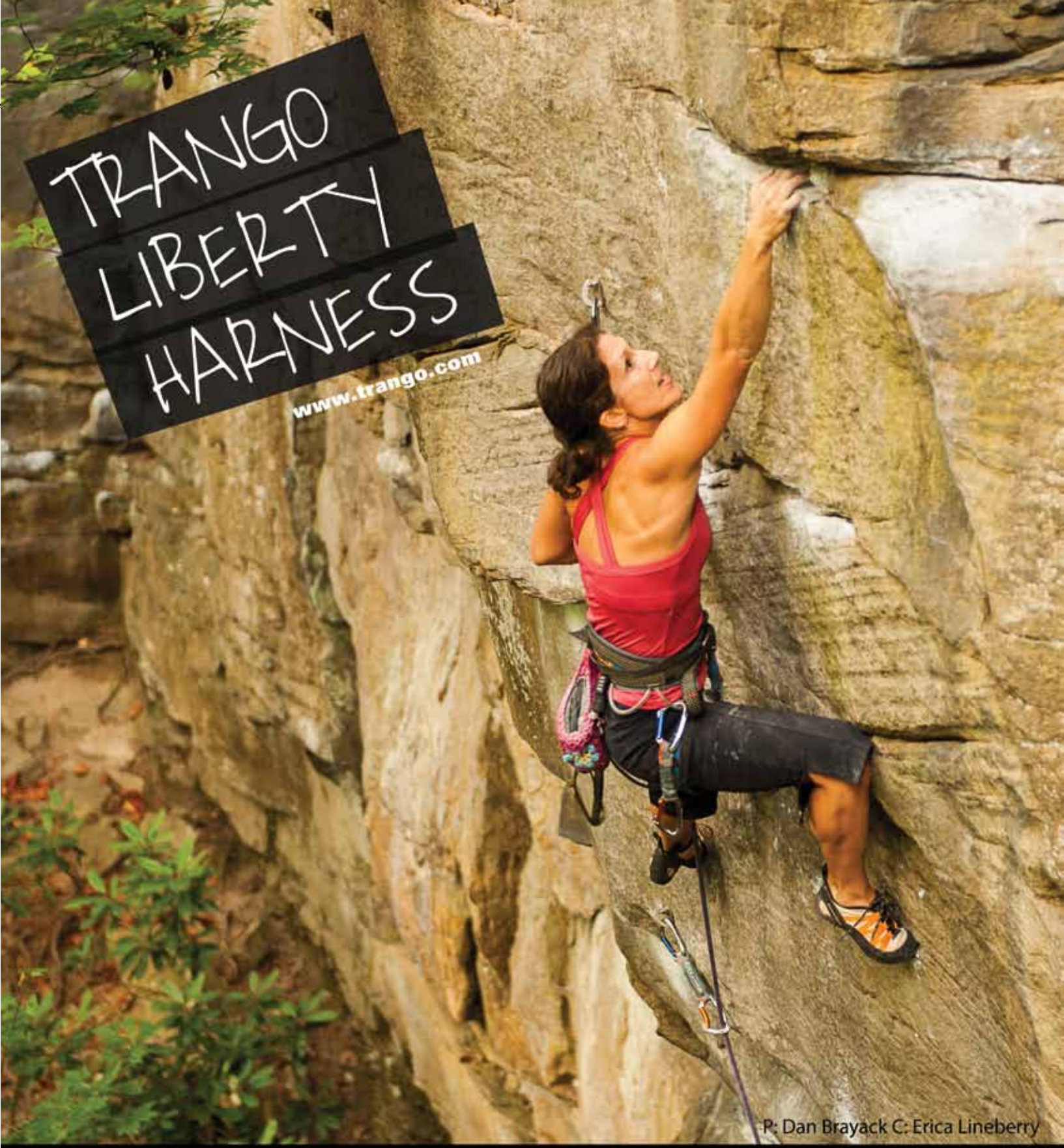
A messenger bag is perfect for organizing the smaller essentials, like [hot drinks](#), [hand warmers](#) and [snacks](#). It stuffs easily inside a crashpad, as it tends to lay flatter than a regular pack, plus you can sling it over one shoulder (with your pad on your back) for shorter approaches. Some crashpad companies make bags specifically for this purpose.

Inside the bag include a [thermos full of some piping-hot fluid](#)—tea, coffee, cocoa, whatever. Next to that should be some regular drinking water; staying hydrated is essential to keeping your body functioning and staying warm. Same goes for food; [carry granola bars, fruit and other edibles](#) to consume throughout the day so your body has energy to burn. Throw in some disposable packet hand warmers; put one in your chalk bag and two more in the pockets of your outermost jacket

or hoodie. For a true California bouldering experience, [include a flask](#) and have a nip here and there to get the blood going and warm the belly. And if your pad’s storage capacity allows it, a six-pack of your favorite canned microbrew should fit right on top.

Clothes are obviously the most integral part of the patented stay-warm system; dress poorly and your body will waste a lot of energy just trying to keep your inner temperature up. Do it right, and you’ll stay warm and motivated throughout the day. If it’s really cold, down booties can make or break you. They are easy to get off and on, super warm and cheap. Whatever shoe choice you go with, just make sure to leave the flip-flops at home. Any kind of insulated slip-ons are great because it sure beats putting your shoes and socks on after every climb. Finally, bring a warm beanie, mittens and [the biggest down jacket you can find](#) for in between burns. These will all help keep your muscles loose and warm.

Well, there you have it. Now the only excuse you have for not bouldering in cold weather is being a wuss.



P: Dan Brayack C: Erica Lineberry

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“EL JEFE”

Julie MacKenzie and her 1978 Toyota (20R) Sunraider

I met Julia at the 2nd annual Meyers Climbing Festival in early fall of 2012. After a day of bouldering with her and the group of enthusiastic climbers she traveled with from the north coast town of Arcata, I overheard a wonderful conversation. “Yeah, you can grab a beer out of my truck. They’re underneath the sink in the bottom cabinet...” I had to investigate. What I found was one of the sweetest road-trip machines Toyota has ever manufactured: A nearly stock 1978 pickup with a Sunraider camper unit aptly nicknamed El Jefe. We cracked beers on El Jefe’s cozy couch seats and recorded this short interview.

(DF) Where did you get El Jefe?

(JM) Pretty much everything good in my life can be traced back to Craigslist. I found my job, my home, my bed and my cat on that site. I took my sister with me for back-up because as any experienced Craigslister knows, you do NOT go look at campervans in the depths of San Jose alone. The guy selling it actually turned out to be a rad dude with a full

set of teeth. (If you’re familiar with the world of 1970s campers, you know where I’m coming from.) So the three of us and his five-week-old kittens hit it off. He bumped his asking price down from \$4,500 to \$3,200. I think my sister was more excited to play with kittens for an hour, but I was the pumped new owner of El Jefe!

How did the truck get its name?

One of the previous owners

was at a gas station in Oakland, and a group of Mexican gangsta-looking dudes walked up to him and started pointing at the truck and yelling “El Jefe! El Jefe!” He thought he was about to get jumped, mostly because he didn’t understand a word they said. Later he found out El Jefe means “The Boss,” and the guys were just really psyched on the truck.

Have you done any modifications?

The “El Jefe” on the side of the truck was added by the previous owner. If you look closely, you’ll notice that the E’s are actually backward 3’s. I think the hardware store was running low on mailbox lettering. I added a second battery to power the rear. This was a necessity after my first trip when we killed the battery on the daily. I’m not sure how the previous owners managed this problem with only one battery... Not too much beyond that. Some décor, the classy needle point on the inside, but for the most part it was road-trip ready when I got it.

Have you ever outrun a police car in El Jefe?

It goes zero to 60 in about five minutes. It’s a four-cylinder engine trying to pull a few thousand pounds, plus I think the transmission is going out—its top speed is about 58 miles per hour. There’s pretty much no way you can outrun anything.

Have you had any close calls in it?

Nothing as far as car accidents, but there was a small electrical fire mid-route once. That was really scary. I was driving down Buttermilk Road going its top off-road speed of 22 mph, glanced into my rearview and saw dark billowing flames coming out what used to be the 12-volt plug-in. After immediately pulling over and jumping back there, I found the cigarette lighter hanging by a single wire and the source of the electrical short. Electrical fire—not so scary; the location, conveniently just next to the full and open 20-pound propane tank—terrifying!

If I were hanging out in the back of El Jefe and we crashed on the freeway, would I survive?

The whole thing is just a big refrigerator: a fiberglass box with no roll bars or frame or anything. Someone could probably punch through it pretty easily. If you were in the back seat and it crashed, there’s absolutely no way you would survive.

Well, it’s probably worth the risk. How’s the gas mileage?

The whole camper rig is really light, so it gets great gas mileage, about the same as my old Toyota pickup - about 23mpg?

Do you ever get annoyed when you pull up to a camp spot and everyone starts a dance party in El Jefe?

I think that’s to be expected in El Jefe. Sometimes after a long day of climbing you just want to come home and crawl in bed, but who can say no to a shot of tequila and a spliff? Next thing you know, there’s a dance party in your kitchen/living room/bed. I am always amazed at the amount of people you can fit into a space that is nine-feet by six-feet.

We, meaning myself and the random dirtbags who have crowded your living space and disrupted your sleep-cycle over the last few years, are all truly amazed by El Jefe. I think it’s safe to say this truck was the smartest \$3,200 you ever spent. Next time I see a cloud of black smoke coming down Buttermilk Road, I’ll be sure to stop by with a bottle of tequila.

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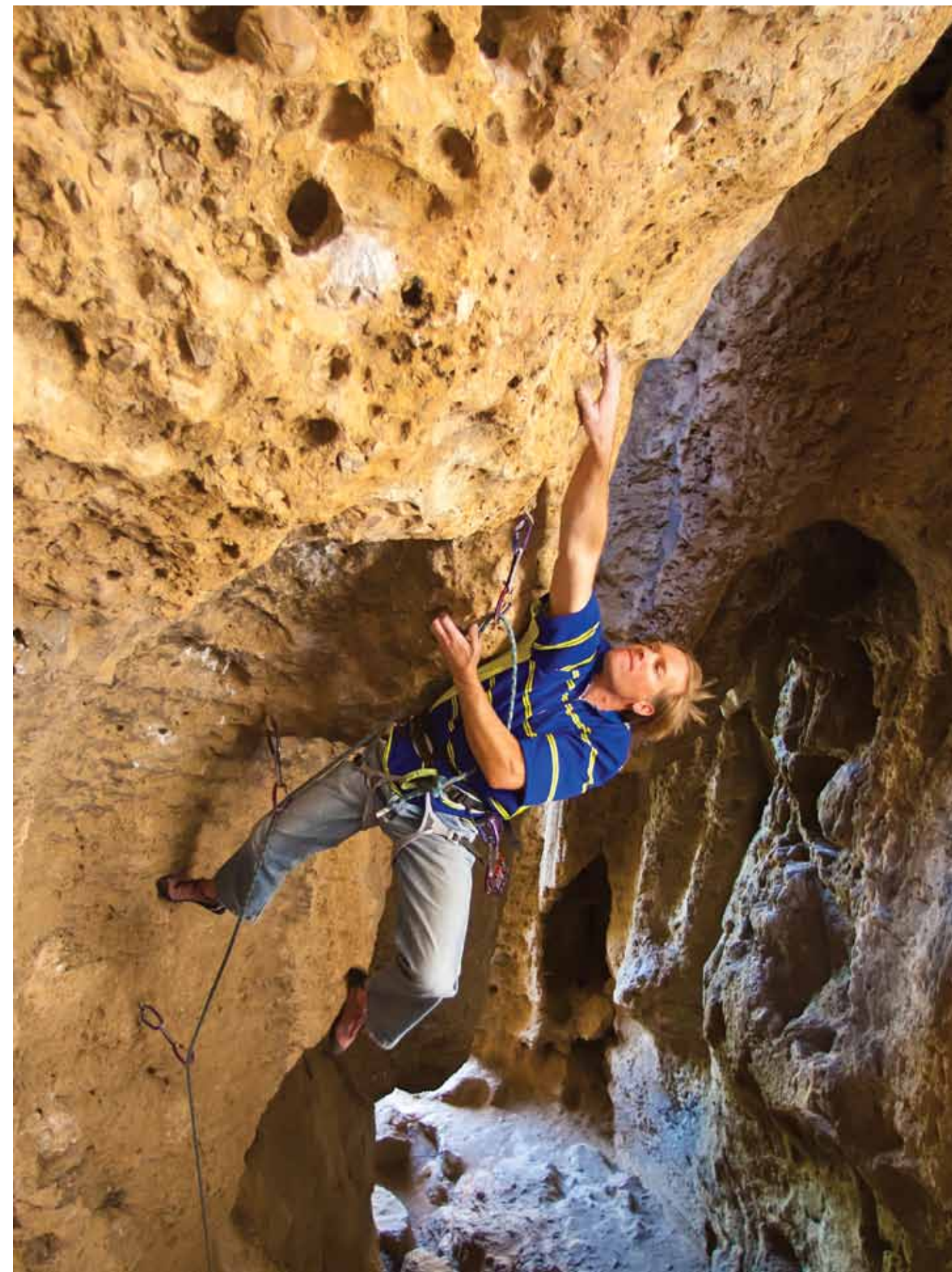


..kuat..





Mirko Cabalero, *Hot Lava Lucy* (5.12c), Pinnacles **IMAGE + ANTHONY LAPOMARDO**



Tony Sartin, *The Worm* (5.12a), Heshher Cave, Santa Monica Mountains **IMAGE + GREG EPPERSON**

Tiffany Campbell
Solid Gold (P1, 5.10a),
Joshua Tree,
IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG





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Tim Terry and Jessica Flynn on Separation Anxiety, 5.9 Mt. St. Helena, Photo: Jerry Dodrill

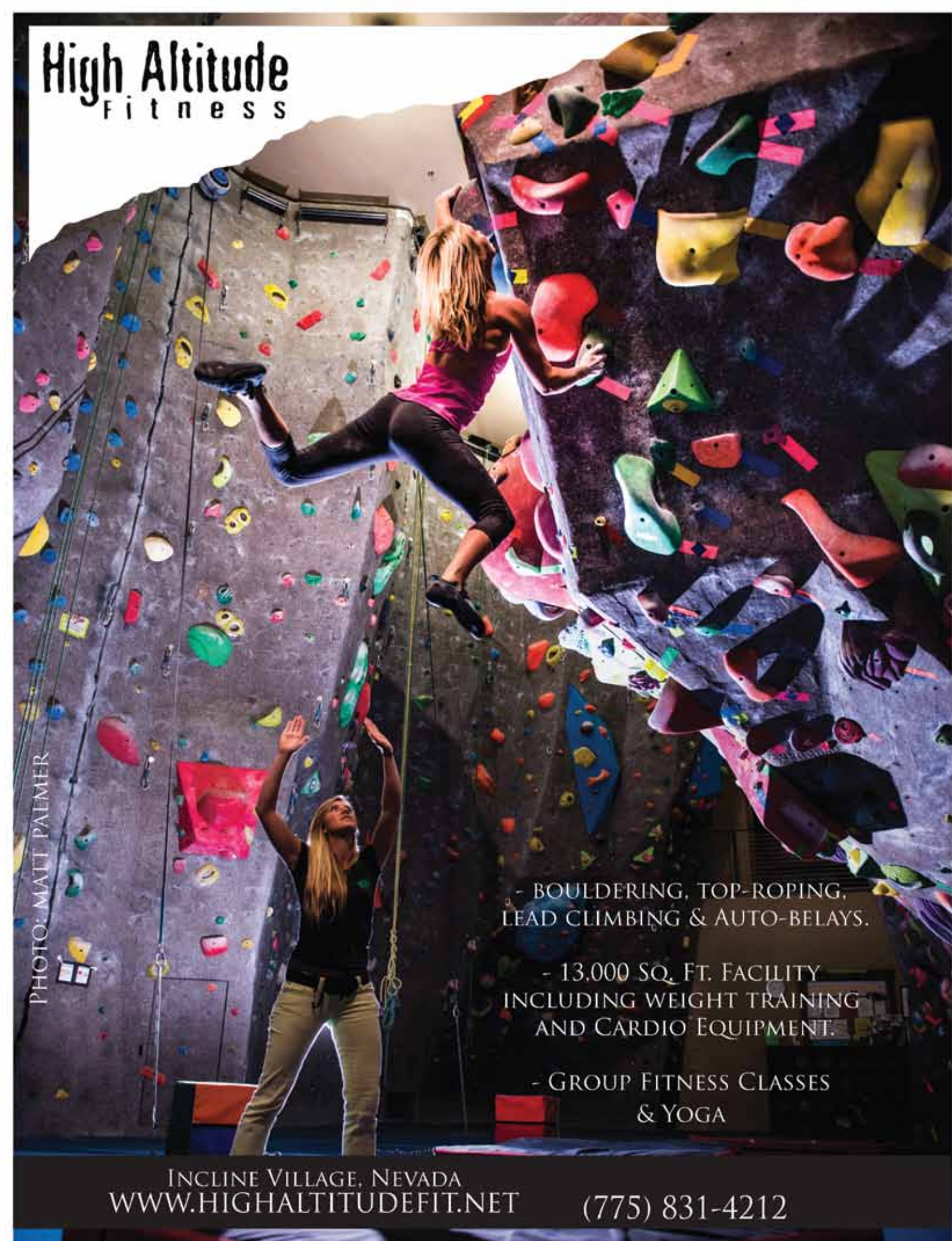


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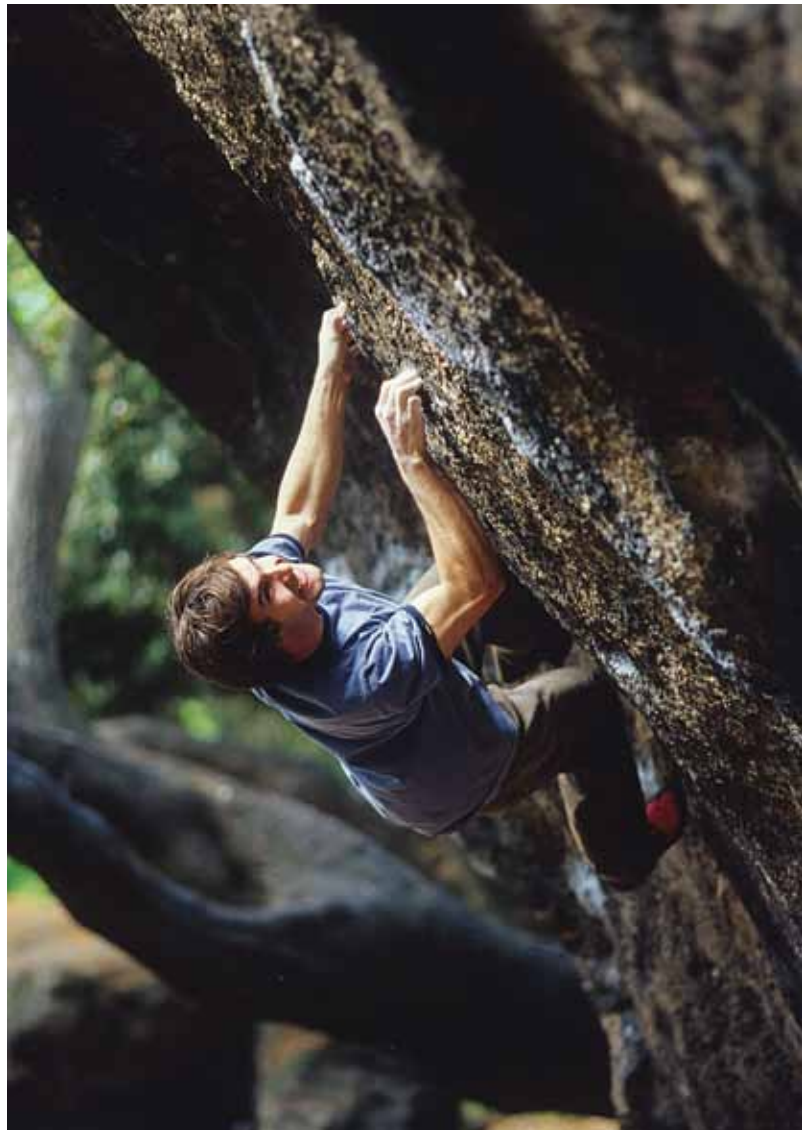
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PROVINCGROUNDS



WORDS + JAMES LUCAS
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BROKEN AND POLISHED, THE ROCKS OF THE BERKELEY HILLS APPEAR INSIGNIFICANT, BUT THESE GREY JUMBLES OF RHYOLITE PLAYED A PIVOTAL ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN CLIMBING. WHILE MOST VISITORS OF INDIAN ROCK SUMMIT THE FORMATION FOR THE SUNSET VIEW OF ALL THREE OF THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY'S BRIDGES, BAY AREA CLIMBERS HAVE DISCOVERED MORE AT THE CRAG AND DEVELOPED A RICH HISTORY OF STANDARD-SETTING CLIMBING AT THIS URBAN AREA.

LEFT Chris Sharma on the first ascent of *Impossible Traverse* (V13)

ABOVE Ryan Moon on *The Hand Traverse* (V0)



In the 1950s, Dick Leonard tied a hemp rope of doubtful strength around his waist and jumped off Indian Rock. He hoped that the rope and hip belay would hold as he plummeted 25 feet. These early rope jumps helped members of the Sierra Club refine their belaying technique. Prior to these practice falls, the leader and belayer would be seriously injured in the case of a fall. Now, with their newly developed skills, climbers were only slightly maimed by large falls. These sessions put courage into the climbers and allowed them to push free climbing standards in places like Yosemite.

Indian Rock, beyond being a venue for developing roped climbing technique, also served as a place for practice climbing, more modernly known as bouldering. In 1939 Dick Leonard attempted a 45-foot tall overhanging groove on the giant boulder that hangs precariously above the Pit area. Of his 1-hang top rope ascent, Leonard described the V2 problem *I-12* in an early guidebook: "It can be done, but one will have to be good."

With the introduction of better climbing shoes, the use of gymnastic chalk, and the eventual introduction of crash pads, many of the Indian Rock former test piece rope climbs became introductory boulder problems. Local climbers separated the vines, trees, and bushes from the rock and gave themselves more area to climb on. As they ran their fingers over the denuded rock, climbers began to eliminate holds and make the already difficult climbs that much harder.

Galen Rowell, Dave Altman, Royal Robbins, Chris Vandiver, Peter Haan, and others set the standards at Indian Rock through the 60s and 70s, making endless loops around the problems, hiking all the eliminates with one hand, and then doing it with their other hand. Although the first ascent is lost to history, by the late 60s it was not uncommon to

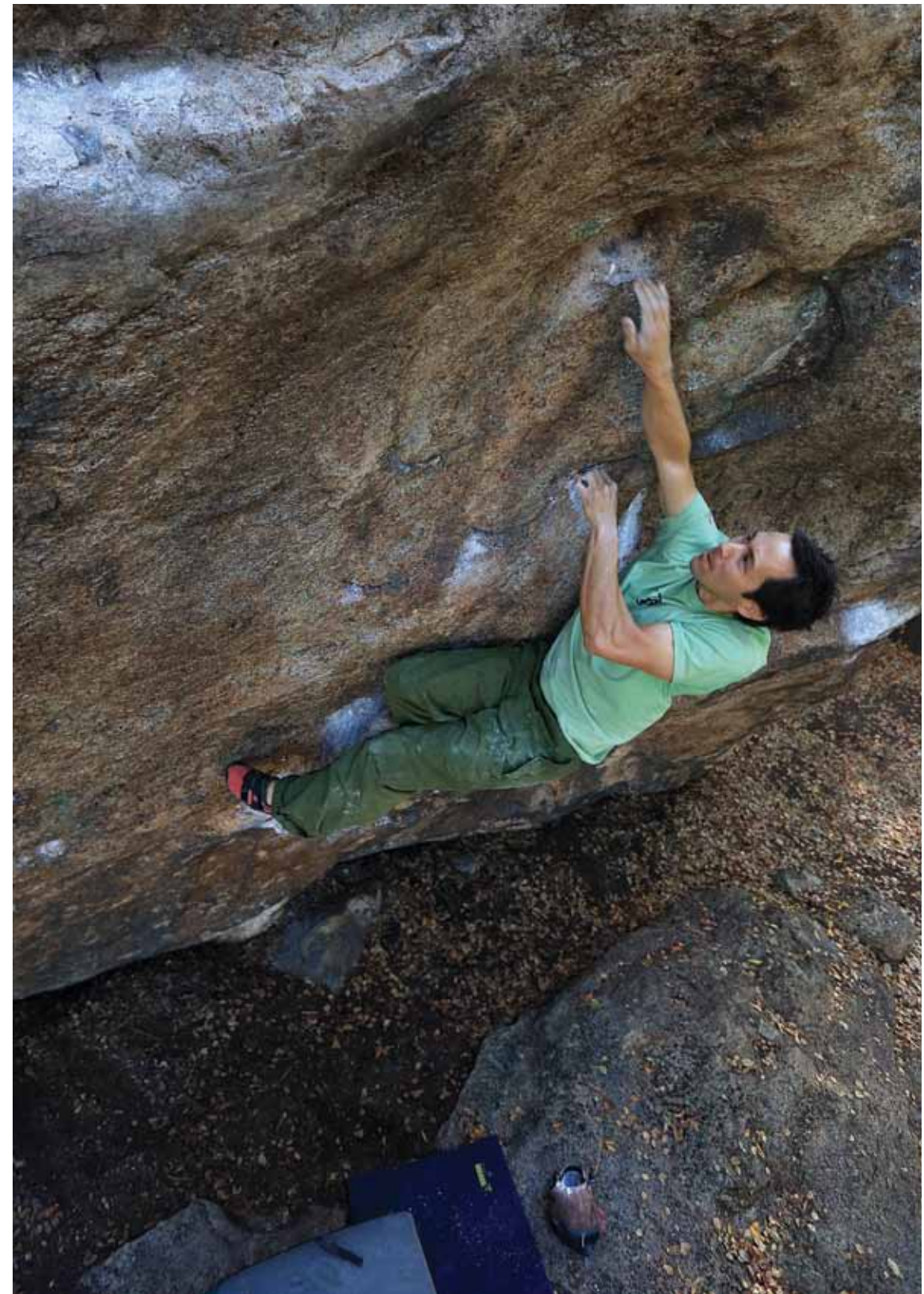
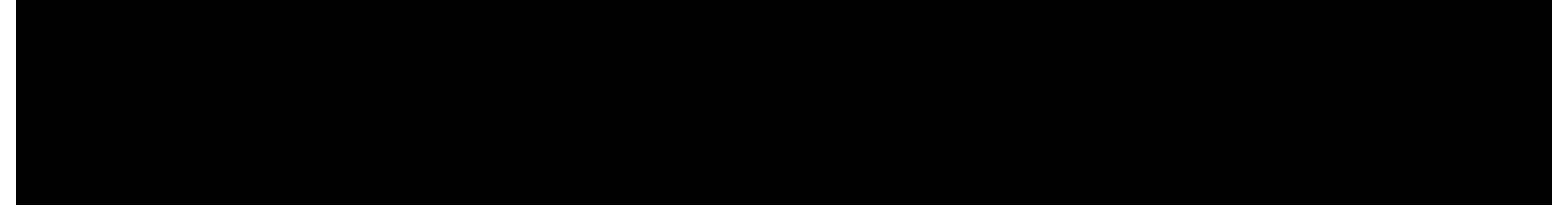
see ropeless ascents of the intimidating *I-12* (V2) by Haan and Vandiver. Their dedicated climbing helped to push the next generation of climbers through the Indian Rock testpieces and onto new areas where modern standards were set. One such boulder, just footsteps up Indian Rock Avenue, has steadily grown to host the largest concentration of difficult climbing per square foot in California.

+++

"It's like Cresciano but better," said Bay Area climber Ethan Pringle. Pringle's tongue-in-cheek comment on the local area represents the common view of Berkeley's Mortar Rock Park, yet there's a solid history of climbers who are unable to resist the boulder's charm.

One-hundred-feet long and 25-feet-tall at its apex, Mortar Rock hosts a number of difficult problems. The average boulder problem on the sharp rhyolite falls in the solid double-digits. "As a boulderer in the Bay Area, it's a pretty awesome place to work on advancing your skills. Some seriously stout problems, and a shit-ton of climbable days throughout the year," Mortar rock first ascensionist Randy Puro says. Perhaps the most interesting bit about Mortar is the history of the bouldering there.

A small posse of climbers started the action at Mortar Rock. Scott Frye, Nat Smale, Harrison Dekker, John Sherman, Chris Vandiver, Dylan Williams and others, tired of the regular circuit down at Indian Rock, walked up the hill to Mortar Rock. "We suffered through years and years of eliminates," Frye says. "Like the kids got tired of street tricks and found swimming pools to skate board in, we found more physical and more dynamic climbing after we'd put in our years working footwork and crimp strength."



**AT ONE POINT
STEVE MOYLE
CHALKED A
COUPLE OF
DESPERATE
HOLDS - A
FEW WEEKS
LATER - NAT'S
LIEBACK WAS
BORN**

FAR LEFT Ryan Moon sticking the "Rose Move" on Nat's Traverse (V8)

LEFT Randy Puro on Egypt Air (V9)



WHEN THEY HAD THAT
PROBLEM DIALED, THEY
CLIMBED IT BACKWARDS,
THEY CLIMBED IT WHILE
DRINKING A BEER, AND
THEY CLIMBED IT PLACING
A COOKIE ON EACH HOLD
AND STOPPING TO EAT THE
COOKIE

RIGHT Chris Clay
on *The Bubble* (V5).

The initial development of Mortar Rock included just a few problems on the rock itself. The crew stole a bench from a nearby park and placed it beneath the right side of the wall creating the appropriately named *Bench Wall*. When the city moved the bench, the climbers moved it back. “The bench was an immediate hit. We even jokingly used to give each other ‘psychic spots’ because we were too comfortable on the bench to get up and give a proper spot,” Dekker said. On a small boulder next to Mortar, Dekker and Vandiver competed for the first ascent of *Pipeline Traverse* (V4). A few days after working the problem with Vandiver, Dekker found a matchbook cover folded inside-out and placed on the starting holds. The writing “Done. –CV” and the date marked the completion of the coveted first ascent. A few weeks later, Dekker sent a top-rope problem above the Pit at Indian Rock before Vandiver was able to do it. He scrawled “Done” in 12-inch chalk letters on the wall. These types of competitive tactics were common in the early days. The boulderers were young and prone to hassling each other. At one point Steve Moyle chalked a couple desperate holds, thinking the line was impossible. He lied to Nat Smale, telling him the boulder problem had gone. A few weeks later Smale climbed the problem and *Nat’s Lieback* (V8) was born.

The boulderers tried to keep up with Smale when he made the first ascent of *Nat’s Traverse* (V8), which in 1976 was one of the most physically difficult climbs in the United States. All the while, locals focused heavily on repeating Nat’s Traverse. When they had that problem dialed, they climbed it backwards, they climbed it while drinking a beer and they climbed it while placing a cookie on each hold and stopping to eat the cookies. The standards at Mortar Rock reached a plateau with few additional difficulties until John Sherman added the top-rope problem *Impossible Wall* (V9) nearly 20-years later.

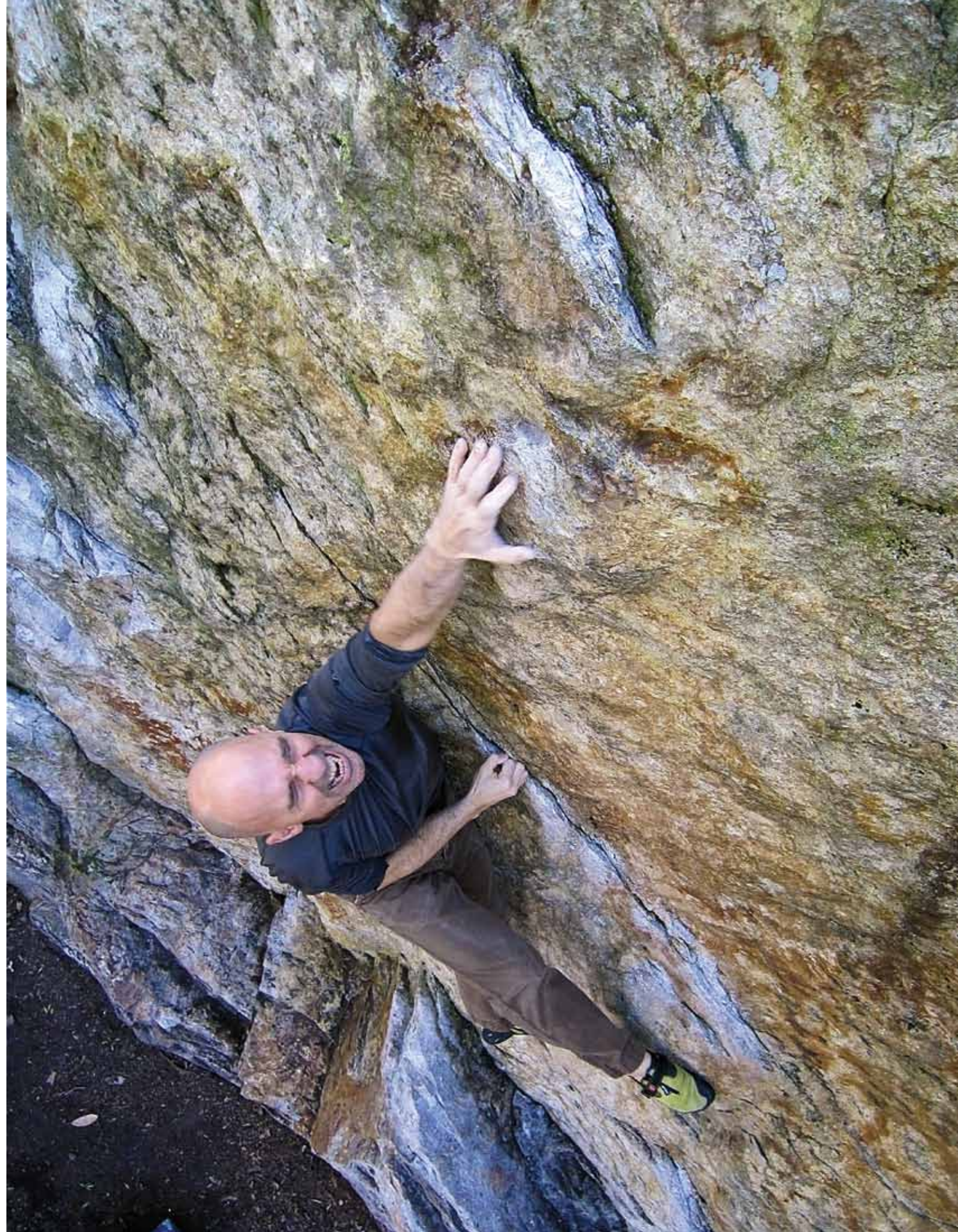
Just to the right of *The Ramp* (V4), the finish to *Nat’s Traverse*, sits *Jungle Fever* (V8). Frye named the problem after the root he grabbed at the top when he completed the problem in 1977. Vines covered the entire rock face from *Jungle Fever* to the *Bench Wall*. “The vines were weird, thick things, and over *Impossible Wall* they arched away from the wall then curved back in towards the base,” Dekker says. “You could get inside them and see that there were holds and problems to be done.”

The thick vines remained for many years until Greg Loh arrived at Mortar. Loh worked his way through the established problems, climbing *Nat’s Traverse*, *Pipeline* and a rare ropeless ascent of *Impossible Wall*, which had a large tree underneath it at the time and a dangerous landing. “One rainy afternoon I got a wild hair and decided to pull a few of the vines down. Once I started to see the wall, I began to pull more down. All told, I spent about two weeks digging, cutting and removing any trace of vegetation on the wall,” said Loh. In the summer of 1996, Loh completed *New Wave* (V9), the first problem on this uncovered section of the wall. “*New Wave* to me was literally that,” said Scott Frye. “A new wave.”

The removal of the vines brought about a whole new area. “This opened up new possibilities for fresh lines, a pretty rare opportunity at an urban bouldering area that has been climbed on for several decades,” said Tom Richardson. Richardson added *Egypt Air* (V9), a highball finish to *Impossible Wall*, and the difficult *Don’t Worry Be Snappy* (V12). Loh continued his development with *The Kraken* (V11), and *Beached Whale* (V8). The removal of the tree beneath *Impossible Wall* by the city of Berkeley resulted in another flurry of new problems, including Loh’s lower start to *Impossible Wall*, dubbed *Chinese Connection* (V12) and an ascent of the obvious and extremely difficult *Impossible Wall Traverse* (V13), a line established by Chris Sharma that has only seen one repeat by local Brian Hedrick. Puro contributed to the modern development as well. “I myself have added a handful of sit starts to the existing lines,” he says. “Simply additional challenges, more of the same really. A toolset for developing a blend of finger strength, technique and power (and skin), which can go far in helping someone move forward in the sport.” To a large extent, the plums of the newly cleaned Mortar had been picked.

“I hear you’re developing a new wall in Berkeley,” a Bay Area climber said to Scott Frye. There was some truth to the rumors. In the past few years, Frye used the *French Fry*, *Putting Green*, *Milk Shake*, and *Lettuce Leaf* holds to create hundreds of different combinations of eliminate boulder problems on the 10-foot-wide section of Mortar called the Garbage Can Wall. “There had been a garbage can, and we removed it,” said Frye. “We called an ultra eliminate session garbage canning. It became about the lowest sit start. That’s how we grew up at Indian Rock.”

While the limits of variations and eliminate boulder problems are endless at both Indian Rock and Mortar Rock, there remain a few proud testpieces up the street. One ongoing project is a link of *Nat’s Traverse* to the *Impossible Wall Traverse*, estimated at a solid V14. With the old school and the modern test pieces, Indian and Mortar Rock offer a significant amount of climbing and history. Puro summed the Berkeley Hills climbing experience well, “Most anyone who gets the bouldering bug can find a real growing experience there as a climber, and still to this day, you’d have to be something pretty special to climb the place out, even after years of trying.”





LEFT Michele Goodhew on *Center Overhang* (V4).
ABOVE Lauryn Claassen on *Watercourse* (V2).

THE BETA

GETTING THERE: To get to Indian Rock Park and Mortar Rock Park from downtown Berkeley (we'll call that Shattuck Avenue), head north on Shattuck Avenue toward University Avenue. At 0.6 miles stay right at the fork. After 0.9 miles turn right onto Indian Rock Avenue. The largest group of boulders at Indian Rock is on the left (west) side of the road. A nice warm-up traverse can be found across the street. Mortar Rock is about 100 yards farther up Indian Rock Avenue on the right (east) side of the road. Most people will park/warm-up at Indian Rock, then make the short walk to Mortar.

WHERE TO STAY: You could try "urban camping" AKA: taking a frightening nap in People's Park (not recommended). Honestly, there is no camping even remotely close to the boulders. There is an RV Park in El Cerrito, but you're better off staying with friends or finding a room for the night.

GUIDEBOOK: *Jim Thornburg's Bay Area Rock, Second Edition* released this fall and is available at California climbing gyms, outdoor retailers, and online at www.jimthornburg.com.

THE TICKLIST:

Bench Wall (V2): In keeping with the grades of many problems at Mortar and Indian Rock, this technical face problem is considered a stout V2. Colorful history, interesting moves and a tall topout have kept this Mortar Rock classic on the must-do list.

Center Overhang (V4): Tall and intimidating with a flat, relatively safe landing zone, the Center Overhang is a great introduction to Indian Rock's bizarre rhyolite features.

The Bubble (V5): An amazing cross-through to a perfect pocket leads to a cruxy recoil and committing topout.

Nat's Traverse (V8): This 40-foot traverse is the quintessential Mortar rock testpiece - challenging nearly all the tricks in a climber's quiver. Expect to encounter slick technical footwork, creative beta through the bulge and a screaming pump at the end.

Impossible Wall (V9): or the sit Chinese Connection (V11) Enticing start holds lure many climbers to the sit and stand problems on this wall. Both are well worth doing, yet notoriously difficult for the grade.

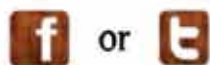


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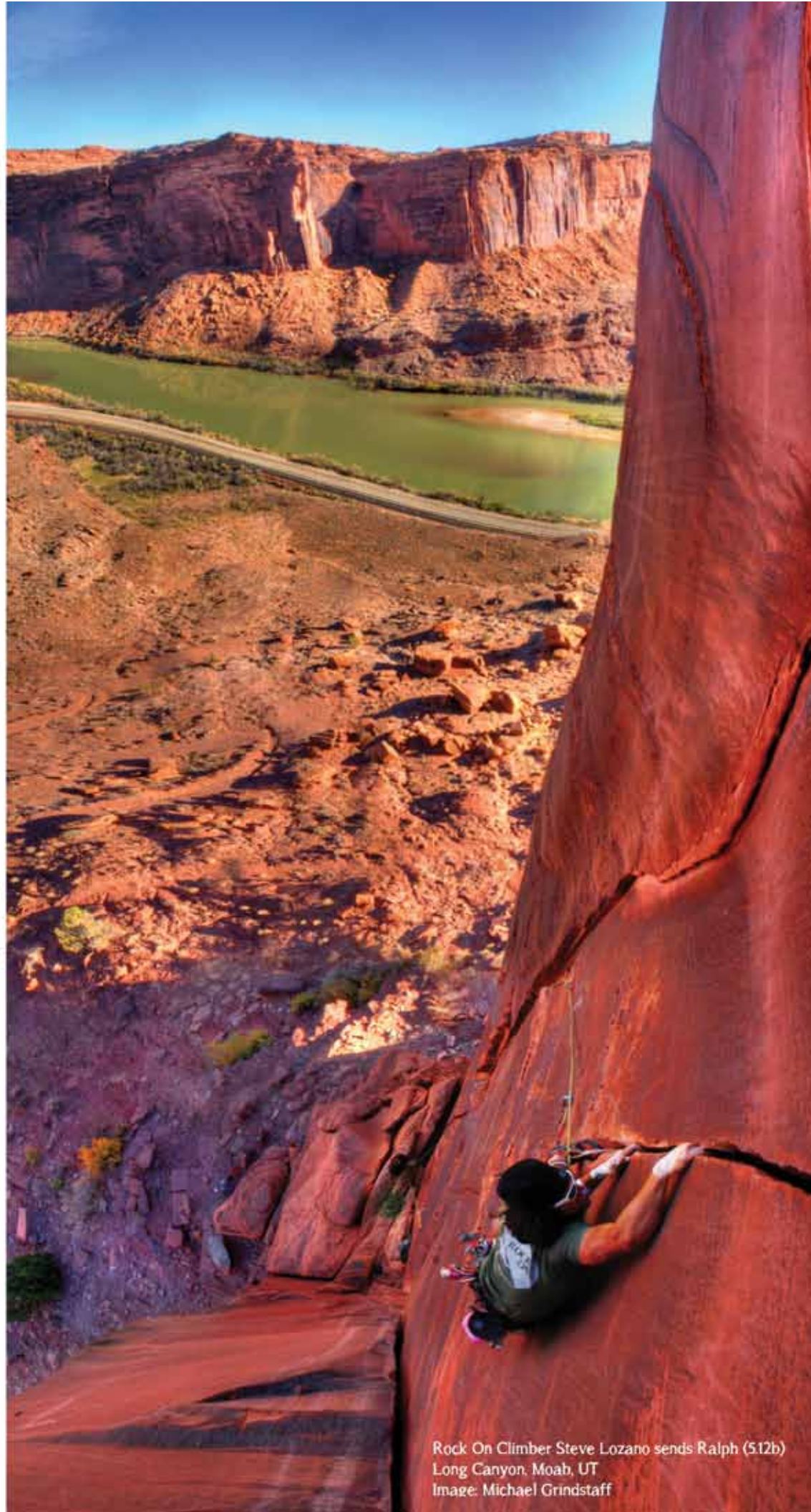
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Rock On Climber Steve Lozano sends Ralph (5.12b)
Long Canyon, Moab, UT
Image: Michael Grindstaff

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Charlie Andrews winding into the crux of *Ghetto Crossing* (5.13a).

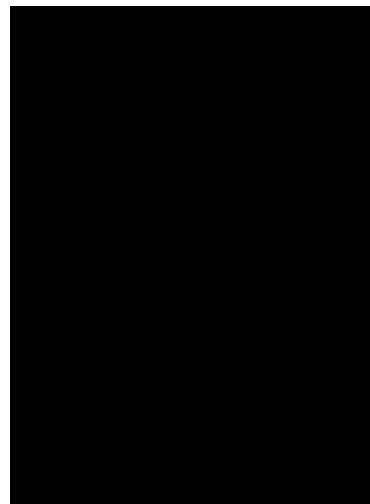
IMAGE + ANTHONY LAPOMARDO

PULLING POCKETS IN

MALIBU CREEK

WORDS + ANTHONY LAPOMARDO
IMAGES + JIM THORNBURG & ANTHONY LAPOMARDO

The entrance to Malibu Canyon was teeming with families basking in the afternoon sun and cooling off in the emerald-green water. As we approached the main pool, the sounds of laughter, music and splashing bounced off the canyon walls. This portion of the canyon is primarily visited by locals looking to enjoy their weekend and down a few beers, but for climbers, Malibu Creek State Park's first natural wading pool marks the entrance to some of Southern California's finest overhanging pocketed sport climbing.





Situated inland from the rolling Highway 101, the canyons of the State Park are steeped with local history and the ghosts of Hollywood past. The area has changed hands several times between the Hollywood elite. Today, the area is a child of the state park system and is home to some of the most finger-intense testpieces in California. Malibu Creek has been a playground for past elites such as Shawn Diamond and Michael Reardon. Diamond's contributions came in the form of difficult and mono-heavy 5.14s. Reardon started and ended his days with mentally challenging solo efforts over the canyon's rocky floor. Both left a lasting legacy, and the canyon remains an open proving ground for anyone looking to test their finger strength and mental game.

Wide fields surround the mouth of the canyon, and the approach is a scenic 20- to 30-minute stroll, which takes you past rolling hills that served as a backdrop for the popular 1980s sitcom M.A.S.H. The landscape can be seen in the opening credits as helicopters carrying the wounded fly overhead. The hillsides and approach trail played host for medical tents, military Jeeps and rolling film cranes. Other remnants of its entertainment history are still evident; the last leg of the approach goes past a slightly overhanging wall—a key feature in several Planet of the Apes remakes.

Generally, large crowds who only seem interested in splashing around in the deep pools fill the lagoon at the canyon mouth, which

feels obtrusive at first. But after our group took the mandatory, wet 5.3 traverse over the lip of the deepest pool, we quickly separated ourselves from the other weekend warriors. Once the noise subsided, we were left with the serene silence of the open canyon, flanked on either side by rising pocketed volcanic walls.

STUMBLING BLOCKS

The first area accessed after crossing the first pool is the aptly named Stumbling Blocks. One of the most highly trafficked areas due to the plethora of easy warm-ups, these stacked pedestals offer vertical to slightly overhanging terrain. Farther back and away from the water in the overgrown trees are some featured routes, but we did not linger long, since the mid-morning sun was driving most climbers toward our shaded haven. After a swift warm-up, we cleaned the draws from the last bolts and moved on.

Moving past the Stumbling Blocks, we headed toward the north-west wall and passed some old-school highball boulder problems. At this point we had another deep-water traverse that, combined with the quick warm-up, threatened a flash-pump and tested our route-finding prowess. The traverse quickly ran out of holds just when the water gained depth, and swarms of crawdads could be seen fluttering beneath the next dry foothold. Shortly after, we crossed onto dry land and made our way into the next alcove.

GHETTO WALL

Three distinct arched hallways with looming shadows outline the Ghetto Wall. The area sits in the shade for most of the day, and several of the routes are not to be missed. This area offers the steepest climbing in the canyon along with a concentration of five-star routes ranging from 5.9 to 5.14a. Clipping the chains on most of these routes means powerful, tendon-intensive pulling on miniscule holds while pasting sticky rubber on polished nubs.

Our group met up with local Charlie Andrews that afternoon. Andrews had been a strong gym climber, who in his younger years made the rounds at the local ABS comps. Since returning back to L.A. County, Andrews continued to prove himself, in the outdoor scene and indoor scene alike. His intelligence and quiet demeanor mislead many about the truth of his age—an age where filling out college applications is at the top of his priorities.

For the weeks prior to our trip, Andrews had been working two of the Ghetto's most revered lines: *Brenna* (5.14a) and *Ghetto Crossing* (5.13a). We sat and watched Charlie tie in and make his way up the casual intro to Ghetto Crossing. After chalking up at the second bolt, he locked off and reached out to an extended third clip over the center of



LEFT Natalie Joseferg eyeing the opening pocket that guards the crux of *Urban Struggle* (5.12b).

ABOVE Natalie Duran crossing through to a large just before the final push to the anchors on *Johnny Can't Lead* (5.11b).
IMAGES + ANTHONY LAPOMARDO (BOTH)

the alcove. The moment the gate of the draw snapped closed, his feet cut. He stayed on while his lanky arms flexed and tendons flared as he moved through thin two-finger pockets, shallow dishes and heinous drop-knees to the anchors.

Next to tie in was Natalie Duran. The canyon local warmed up on *Johnny Can't Lead* (5.11b), a pumpy jug-fest that follows a limestone spine directly up a 45-degree wall, culminating with a dynamic lunge to a large hueco. The line is a bit greasy from high traffic, but Natalie made quick work of the crux section, firing into the hueco and clipping the chains.

Michael Reardon free soloing *Hole Patrol* (5.12b).
IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG



MALIBU CREEK

Nicky Dyal on *The Drifter* (5.12a).
IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG

The last climb we visited at the Ghetto Wall is one of the most traveled 5.12s in the area, *Urban Struggle* (5.12b). This aesthetic line moves out the belly of a steep cave and ends with a signature crux at the third bolt—a static cross-through to a three-finger undercling. Another young climber, Natalie Josefberg was running laps on the line to warm up before she tackled *Ghetto Blaster* (5.13b), another 5-star line found 10 feet from the alcove. Every route we found in this area is worth roping up for, but our group had one last stop before hiking out.

CANYON CREEK

We scrambled along the creek to the farthest end of the canyon to check out two more routes that sit beneath the Rindge Dam. The Canyon Creek area houses more than a dozen routes, all of which are off the beaten path but well worth the hike. To finish out the day, our group jumped on two of those lines, *Tut* (5.10b) and *Drifter* (5.12a). The setting sun reflected orange rays into the running water as the last bolts of the day were clipped, and the hike out and over the ridge began. As we exited the canyon, we were greeted by the dry, grassy hillsides and the memory of a helicopter flying over the open fields toward the city.

THE BETA

GETTING THERE: From Highway 101, exit at Las Virgines Road and head south. Turn right on Mulholland Highway and park in the turnoff about a half-mile before the state park, or continue on Las Virgines to the Malibu Creek State Park entrance. Day use fee within the park boundaries is \$12.00 per day.

WHERE TO STAY: The Park offers outrageously expensive (\$45.00 per-night!) camping within designated camping areas. There are RV, tent and large group campsites available. Pay showers can also be found on the premises.

GUIDEBOOK: *Southern California Sport Climbing* by Troy Mayr.



THE TICKLIST:

Tut (5.10b): This line is short and somewhat soft for 5.10b, yet its scenic backdrop (the Century Lake Spillway) makes it well worth the visit. Mostly jugs with one tricky move.

Johnny Can't Lead (5.11b): This 40 foot tall line packs some punch for its length. Ascending the center column that separates two caves, the climb is also fairly exposed and set in a beautiful location. The last two moves are tricky and hard to decipher when facing a serious pump.

Urban Struggle (5.12b): Starting on the right side of a small cave on the Ghetto Wall, a juggy-but-steep start leads to unbelievable pockets and pinches.

Ghetto Crossing (5.13a): This 8-bolt line strikes out the lip of an impressive cave formation. Tricky, sequential pocket pulling throughout the meat of the route.

Ghetto Blaster (5.13b): Everything from sloping pockets, juggy underclings, bad pinches and onsight-blowing mantles can be found on this spectacular climb. A must-do for anyone climbing the grade.

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Jack Hanley after a day climbing in Tuolumne Meadows.
IMAGE + ALTON RICHARDSON

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BOULDERING IN COLUMBIA'S LABYRINTHS

WORDS & IMAGES + DEAN FLEMING

PREVIOUS PAGE Trevor Carter on a moonlight send of *The Minotaur* (V5).

RIGHT PAGE Kyle O'Meara keeps tension on the second ascent of <i>Just In Case</i> (V5).	RIGHT The name say's it, Marisa Ware on <i>The Best V2 in Columbia</i> (V2).
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At the age of 10, Derrick Logan was a deep-voiced oddity. In fifth grade he transferred to Soulsbyville Elementary School, where my small group of friends instantly welcomed him. We loved Derrick. His 125-pound, six-foot-tall frame intimidated potential foes; he had a sweet bike, a paintball gun, stacks of Playboy magazines and a 19-year-old brother who could obtain various forms of contraband. That same brother, Travis, was also a fairly accomplished rock climber—a fact that instantly transformed him into a heroic, woman-seducing daredevil.

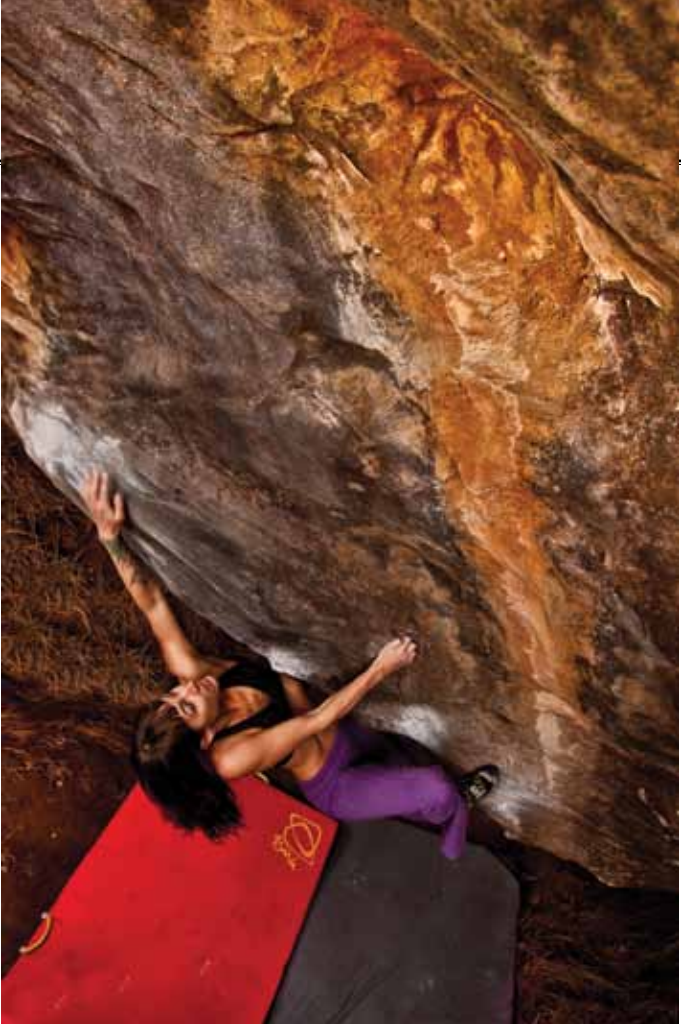
On the first day of seventh grade, the bell rang its second and final warning as we shuffled toward homeroom. In awkward pre-teen fashion, I accidentally stepped on Derrick's toes, and when he finally released his grip on the injured foot, he revealed an overly bright and tightly laced aqua-blue shoe. Apparently Derrick's dog Brock had urinated on his sneakers earlier that morning, and Travis reluctantly lent him a pair of faded La Sportiva Kaukulators. The silly light-blue high-tops with their neon-yellow laces sparked some lively conversation about Derrick's brother—it was in these shoes that he fearlessly conquered mountains and high school parties. I was surprised when Derrick agreed to let me borrow them.

Later that week, armed with a rack of chocks, a 40-foot length of rope and six carabiners swiped from Travis' closet, Derrick and I caught a ride to the nearby town of Columbia. As far as we knew, one could access a few dirty but climbable rocks from a nature trail at Columbia Junior College. It was 16 years later when I discovered that people had been highball bouldering and free soloing there almost 30 years before my first visit. I also learned later that the rocky corridors stretch for more than three miles and in many spots contain some of the highest quality crystalline limestone and marble in California. But at the time we knew little about rock climbing and even less about the telltale chalk marks and cleared landings, so we set off to rig a top rope on a sandy hunk of moss-covered choss.

Palms sweating and breathing heavy from fear, I gazed up at the anchor. "Are you sure it's safe?" I squeaked in a breaking pubescent voice. Derrick responded by jerking the rope tight and lazily ordering me to let go. I did, and before I knew it, I was safe among the jagged limestone talus after descending 25 feet of slabby moss. Unfortunately, Derrick weighed a solid 40 pounds more than me, so when he leaned back to lower, our three small nuts popped out, levering a basketball-sized flake off the wall. Derrick flew down, slammed into the talus, took a direct hit in the abdomen from the flake and was immediately pummeled by a mess of falling rope, nuts and carabiners.

Columbia's unique marble formations have recently gained a reputation for fun and interesting climbing, but it is the area's unforgiving nature that separates it from other bouldering areas. Talus landings in the tight corridors can turn a 10-foot boulder problem into a risky undertaking. There are boulders that have seen two ascents and three broken ankles. Yet Columbia's earliest climbers pushed standards up to V9 with astonishingly tall top-outs. The 1970s through the early 1990s saw folks like Dave Yerian, Phil Bone, John Yoblonski, Michael Campana, Preston Birdwell and Chris Falkenstein doing some of California's hardest technical moves high above those treacherous landings.

The lack of traffic is a direct effect of its dangerous and dirty nature, and despite virtually unlimited bouldering possibilities, California's eastern Sierra overshadowed Columbia in the early 1990s. The easy access, flat landings and clean boulders of places like the Buttermilks only highlighted Columbia's dangerous landings, poison oak and persistent moss. Everywhere but the most accessible areas were neglected for nearly 15 years. As a result, a large number of established boulder problems vanished into the foliage.



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In the spring of 2005, a wiry and motivated college student named Ben Pope came to Columbia Junior College. In his two-year stay, Pope brushed and chalked more than 100 problems. Some of his discoveries were certainly first ascents, while others were most likely resurrected from previous generations. Motivation spread, and soon local climbers Lance Kimball, Dan Forbes, Andrea Batt, Paul Behee and Anthony Allopenna began scrubbing. Within a year, Ben Polanco realized the potential, and fellow Bay Area-based climbers Ryan Moon, Kalen Rago, Brian Hedrick, Eric Sanchez, Jeremy Ho, Monica Aranda and Kyle O'Meara were psyched enough to visit during winter's ideal conditions. This generation's initial discoveries included an area now called Miner's Bane. The wall's namesake problem checks in at V7 combining a logical and powerful sit start into a tall, orange-and-black streaked headwall. Reminiscent of a miniature Thailand sport climb, the problem gracefully weaves through steep tufas and in-cut edges to finish with technical ring-locks in a flaring crack system. Another brilliant line called *Aries Curse* (V9) follows a natural weakness through the belly of a 25-foot roof. Huge, technical moves on solid holds lead to splitter finger-locking and laybacking on a massive, horizontal fracture.

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Even though his injuries were relatively minor, Derrick's horrendous fall made it difficult to give Columbia a second chance. Yet 15 years later, I realized that with a little devotion I could have a world-class climbing area in my backyard. These days I do more climbing than scrubbing, but I still can't decide which is better: finding a new route, climbing it successfully, or showing the small group of locals my latest discovery. Today, Columbia has its own guidebook, an online forum and a Facebook page. Still, many of the newest generation's problems remain undocumented. But perhaps it's better this way; because as the moss grows back and the chalk washes away, the next group of climbers will have the opportunity to experience this amazing place as though they were the first. As they thrash through the dense thickets in search of new routes Columbia will gladly provide them with a sense of adventure and the thrill of a first ascent.





THE LOWER ARB

Compared to other Columbia areas, the Lower Arboretum tends to hold steeper, more powerful problems, yet many different styles of climbing can be found here. The boulders are easily accessible and very condensed. Because of the Lower Arboretum's easy access, this area is the most historically significant section in Columbia. Some climbing legends have visited this area, yet some relatively unknown climbers have made huge advances in modern bouldering standards on the Lower Arboretum's scruffy walls.

In 1978 Castle Rock local Michael Campana established *The Low Traverse* on the Lower Arboretum's Meadow Boulder and *All in Due Time*, a 30 foot traverse of The Triple Cracks Wall. Both are considered solid V9 by today's standards. Considering that *Midnight Lightning* (V8) was first climbed in 1978, one could argue that Michael's routes were among the hardest sections of climbing done in the world at that time. A tradition of hard climbing continues to thrive in the Lower Arboretum, where the hardest routes in Columbia still stand. Problems like *Fake Out* (V11), the 30 foot monster *Mind Over Matter* (V10) and *Third Rail* (V11) are just a few of the testpieces recently added to the Lower Arboretum.



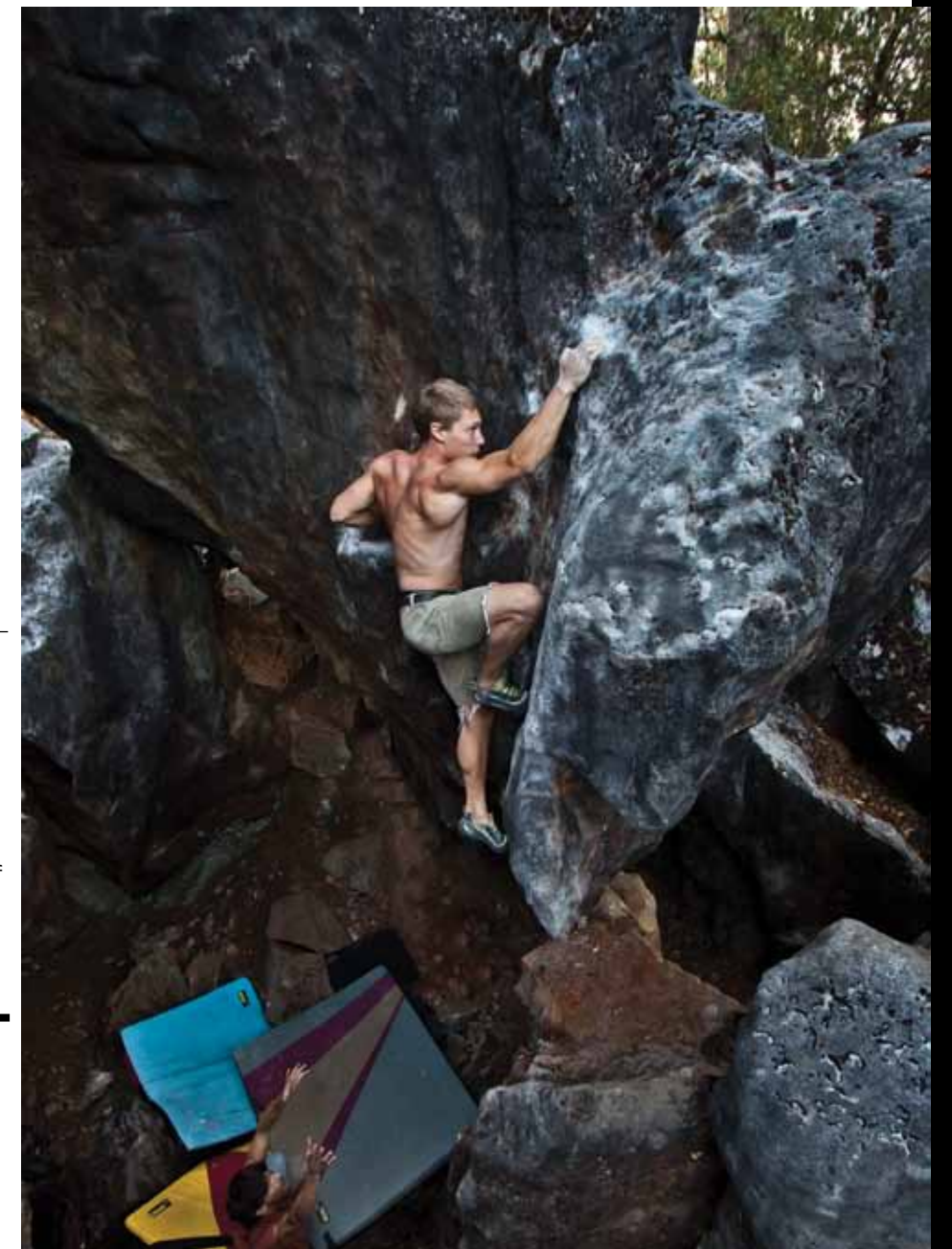
TOP LEFT Jeremy Ho sets up for the throw on the Lower Arboretum's *The Third Rail* (V11).

BOTTOM FAR LEFT Dezzi Stares warms up on *The Gold Wall* (V4).

LEFT Ryan Moon on *Ultimate Trogdor* (V8).

RIGHT Ryan Moon on the First Ascent of *The Gentlemen's Club* (V8).

NEXT PAGE SPREAD Jeremy Ho on *Eric's Super Fun Adventure Problem* (V7).







THE UPPER ARB

Climbing in the Upper Arboretum is defined by tall, beautiful and technically demanding prow, overhangs and splitter cracks. In the late 70s and early 80s climbers ventured into the Upper Arboretum and climbed an astonishing number of quality lines; however, significant development has occurred between 2005 and present day. If you enjoy climbs in the V2 to V4 range, the Upper Arboretum can keep you busy for at least a weekend. Beyond a plethora of quality moderates, three stand-out problems make the short hike from the Lower Arboretum well worth while.

Although it is one of the only true crack climbs in the area, *The All American Finger Crack* (V2) is easily the best climb of its style in Columbia. If super technical vertical faces intrigue you, the perfectly sculpted holds and intricate footwork on *Cellar Door* (V6) should not be missed. Just next to Cellar Door stands the striking compression prow *Grandma Death* (V10). This climb involves precise slapping up the sharp prow of a 20 foot tall arête. In true Columbia style, the route ends with strenuous, committing laybacks and knee wedging in a dirty off-width.

LEFT Lance Kimball on *Two Scoops Arete* (V5).

BOTTOM Julia MacKenzie on *Dan's Exit* (V3).

RIGHT Andrea Batt warms up on *The Autobahn* (V0).





LEFT The topout on this Easter egg has thwarted every first ascent attempt. Alton Richardson gives *The Font Project* a try.

TOP Ben Pope on *Grandma Death* (V10). *RIGHT* Julia MacKenzie locks down *The All American Finger Crack* (V2).



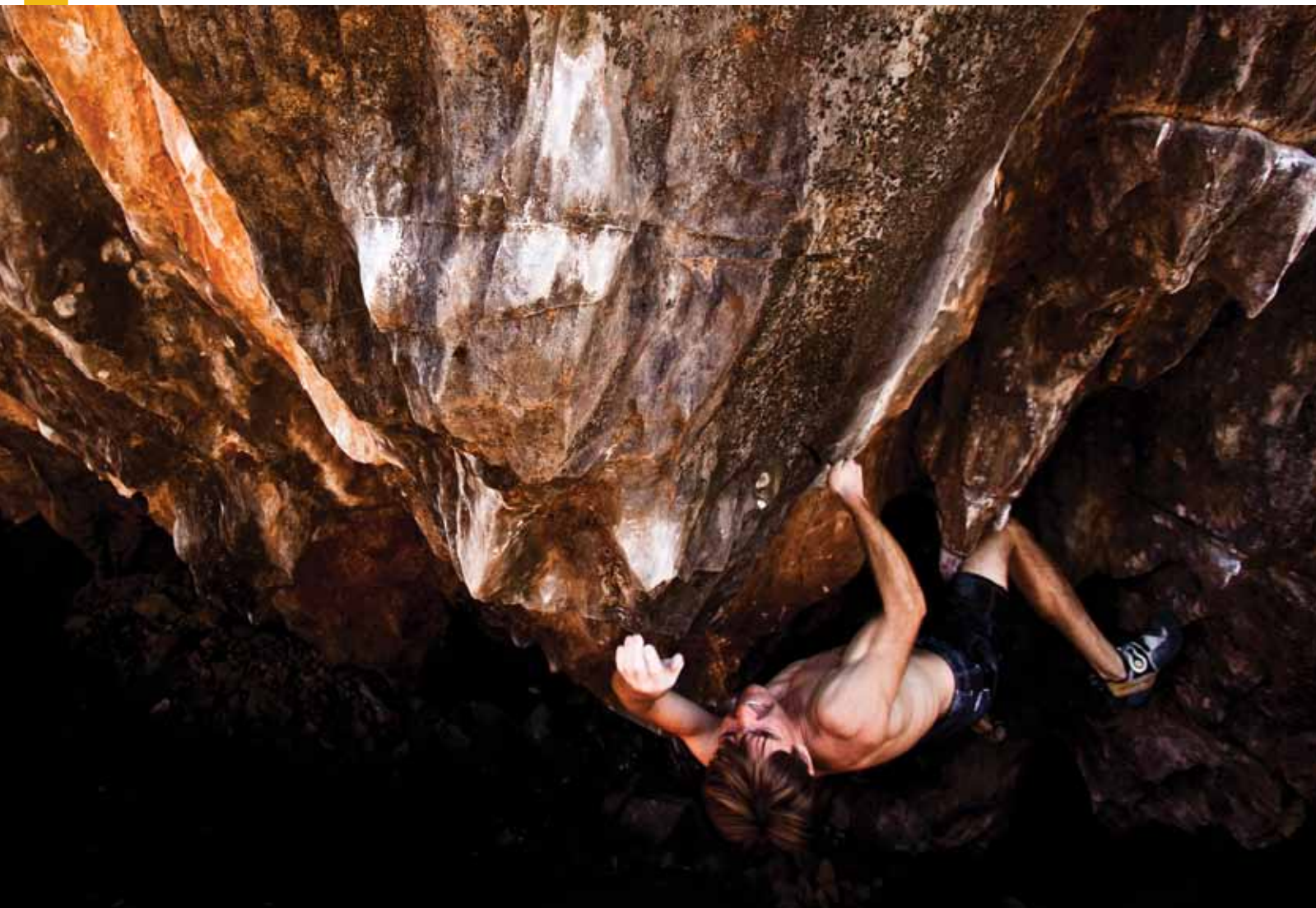
THE LABYRINTH

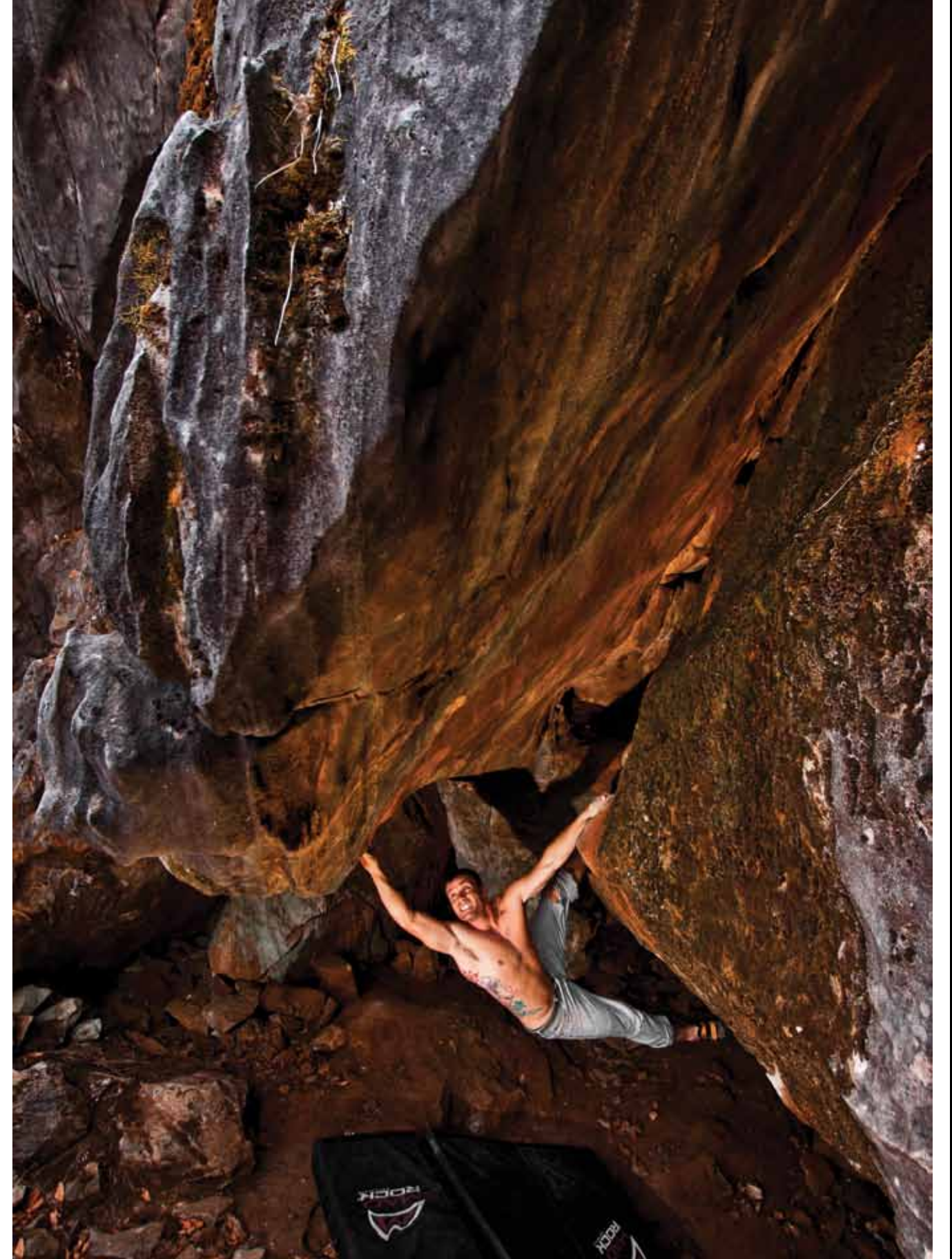
The Labyrinth is the most expansive and unique bouldering area in Columbia - it is also a runner-up for the weirdest place to climb rocks in the United States. This sector hosts highly featured, super-clean, compact limestone and marble; it is also is littered with bizarre rock formations, lined with twisting corridors and scattered with jumbled mining relics. Most of the rock in the main area is so good, on a cold winter day impossible slopers feel like jugs.

The Labyrinth provides such an odd arrangement of climbable features that certain holds in this portion of Columbia have acquired nicknames like "the sharkskin hold," or "the double ham-hock." If you venture into the Labyrinth, you might find brilliant orange and gold rock with Thailand-mimicking tuffas; you might also stumble across a bum camp or two. In truth, there is only one thing I can guarantee about the Labyrinth experience: You will get lost.

BOTTOM Cody Sims entering the "double ham-hock" section on *Complex by Design* (V8).

RIGHT Julia MacKenzie working towards the off balance sloper topout on *The Razor* (V2).





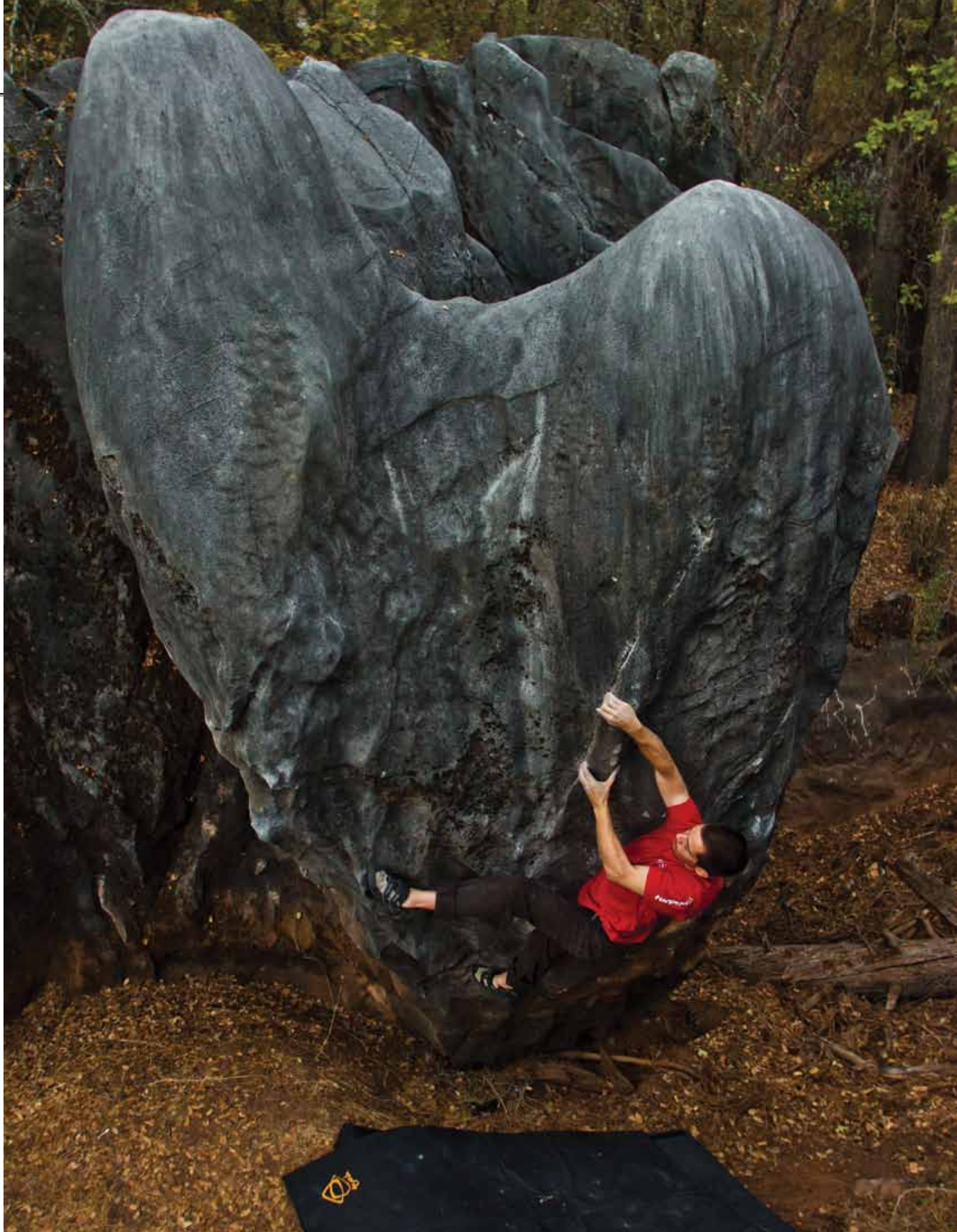
LEFT Cody Sims bearing down on *The Behemoth* (V6), one of the newest (and proudest) lines in the Labyrinth.

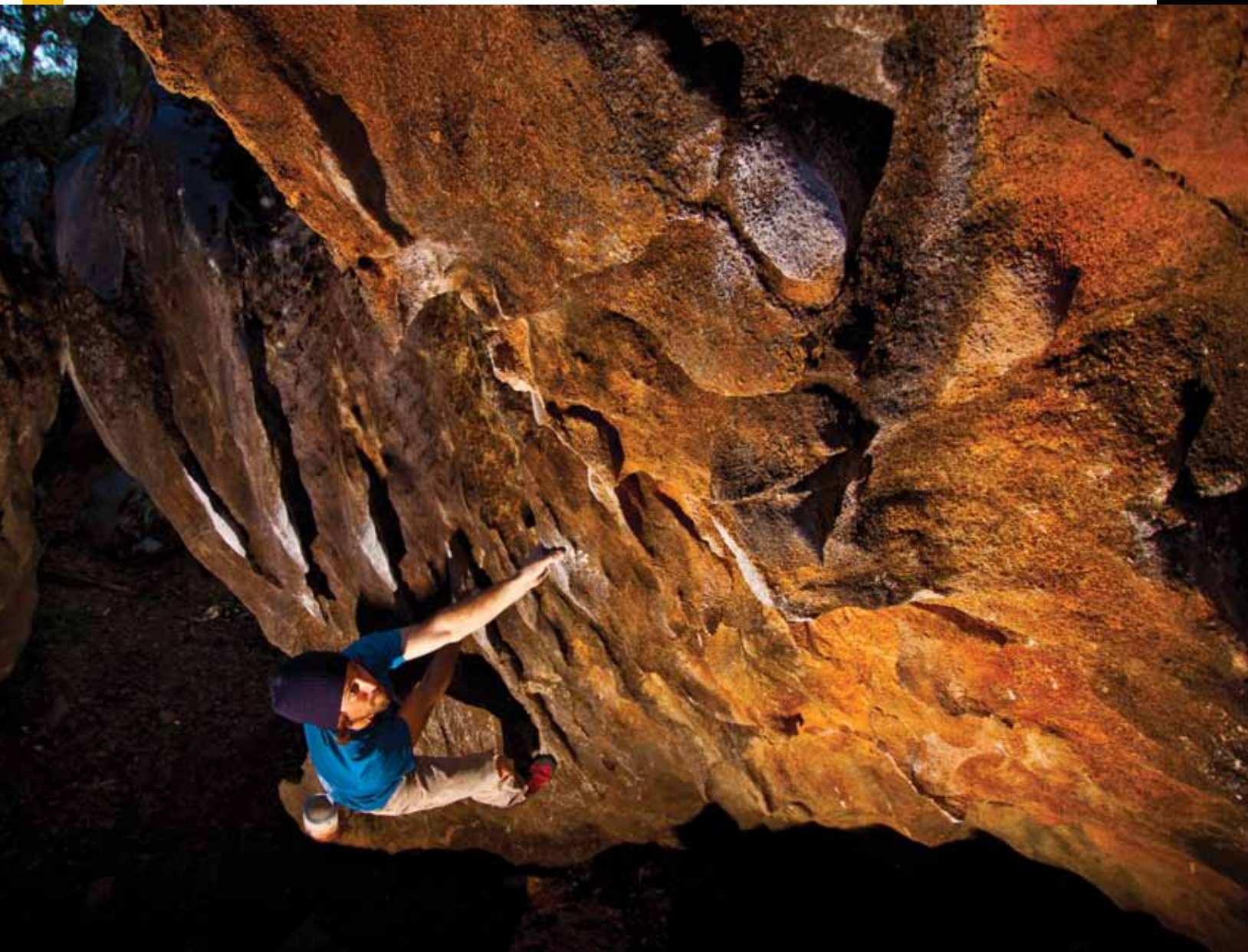
ABOVE Trevor Carter bridging the gap on the 30ft long *Grave of the Underpants* (V6).

COLUMBIA STATE PARK

At a glance, Columbia State Park resembles a tourist trap; but don't let the newly-paved parking lots fool you – hard-drinking gold miners still roam the park's dusty streets on winter weekdays. Stumble into the Saint Charles Saloon on a cold night and you'll see everything from antler handle buck knives to pitchers of Pabst paid for with gold dust. An added bonus, just footsteps beyond the park's odd interior resides some of Columbia's most outstanding boulder problems. Flat, grassy landings augment the State Park's beautifully textured boulders. The easy access, wonderful moderates and Main Street amenities like cold sodas and beer make the State Park the perfect introductory local for Columbia bouldering. On your way back from the boulders, don't forget to stop by the Candy Kitchen and pick up a bottle of their homemade sarsaparilla.

BOTTOM Trevor Carter compressing odd features on *Silver Arete* (V2). **RIGHT** Andrea Batt stops to take a lap on *The Trail Face* (V1). **BOTTOM RIGHT** A traditional blacksmith in Columbia's historic State Park.





PREVIOUS PAGE
Keenan Pope
fights the barn
door on Horse
Trail Face (V4).

ABOVE
Patrick Brown
takes a ride on the
Horse Trail Prow
(V3).

THE BETA

GETTING THERE: From the Bay Area, take the 580 east to Highway 120. In Oakdale, turn left (east) onto Highway 108. In Sonora, head north on Highway 49. After 5 miles, turn right onto Parrotts Ferry Road. After 1 mile turn right onto Sawmill Flat Road. After 1 mile turn left onto Columbia College Drive. Park in student lot and pay the \$1.00 fee when school is in session. The Lower Arboretum is accessed from the nature trail which starts at the Toyon Building – The Upper Arboretum trail is near the Auto Shop. For the State Park and Labyrinth areas, stay on Parrotts Ferry Road for just over 2 miles and park at Columbia State Park.

WHERE TO STAY: Camping is available at the Marble Quarry RV Park located off Parrotts Ferry Road about 2 miles from Columbia College Drive.

GUIDEBOOK: Pick up *Columbia Bouldering* by Dean Fleming and Daniel Forbes at Sierra Nevada Adventure Company in downtown Sonora.

THE TICKLIST:

The Autobahn (V0): Upper Arboretum Area: This rising traverse is created by one of the most spectacular climbable rock formations in Columbia; a 40 foot long splitter crack with a juggy handlebar base.

The Best V2 in Columbia (V2): Lower Arboretum Area: The name says it - this climb starts with dynamic moves on perfect in-cut holds, works through a technical section under a roof and then finally pulls a lip with a dramatic yet solid mantel.

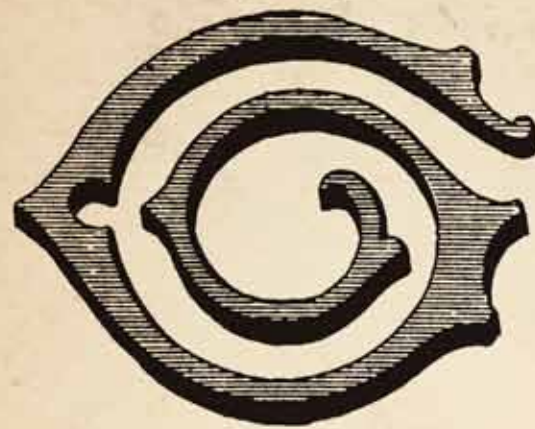
Horst Trail Prow (V3): State Park Area: A must-do for the grade, this climb traverses right through four nearly identical tufa features before tackling a steep bulge on unique, solid holds. The crux - an insecure mantel at 20 feet - keeps it interesting.

Minor's Bane (V7): Steep tufas, in-cut underclings, odd body tension and an insecure topout put this climb high on any Labyrinth visitor's bucket list.

Mind Over Matter (V10): Labeled The Green Monster Project in the Columbia Bouldering Guidebook, this insane 35 foot tall fin of perfect rock has been attempted since the late 1970s. Finally, after more recent attempts by Ethan Pringle, Daniel Woods and Charlie Barrett, Oakland-based climber and dedicated Columbia enthusiast Ben Polanco finally sent this super project in the winter of 2012. Since that time, this climb has seen three broken or sprained ankles with only two successful ascents. If you've got the courage (and the pads) hop on this monster and see what happens.

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Thanks to our Belgian friends for leaving us this pitch -
we had a freaking good time!
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