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DESTINATIONS
26/ROCK CREEK
38/SHUTEYE RIDGE
56/D.L. BLISS STATE PARK

FREE



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ClimbTech's Cable Draws

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ClimbTech's Wave Bolt

The Wave Bolt is a glue-in rock climbing anchor, offering tremendous strength and increased resistance to corrosion. It combines the strength of glue-ins with the convenience of pitons. When installed in overhung terrain, the wavebolt will not slide out of the hole – like other glue-in bolts do – prior to the glue hardening.



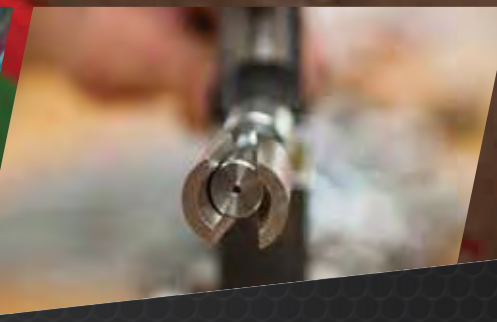
Power-Bolt™ Sleeve Anchor

The Power-Bolt™ is a heavy duty sleeve style anchor. Expansion is created by tightening a threaded bolt which draws a tapered cone expanding a sleeve against the walls of the hole. These are the standard in new routing, available at climbttechgear.com



ClimbTech's Hangers

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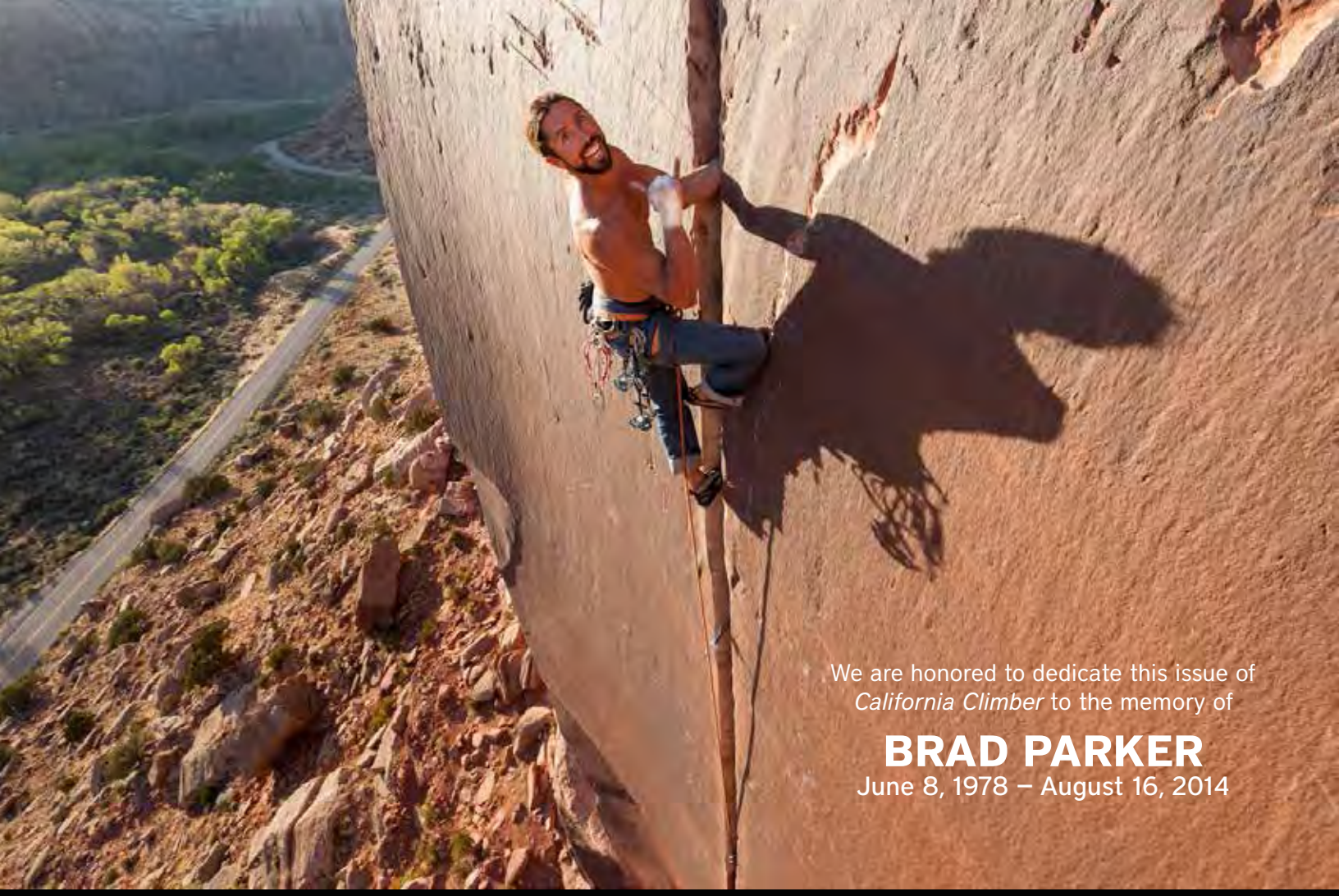
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ClimbTech



We are honored to dedicate this issue of
California Climber to the memory of
BRAD PARKER
June 8, 1978 – August 16, 2014

CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

NO. 10
FALL 2014

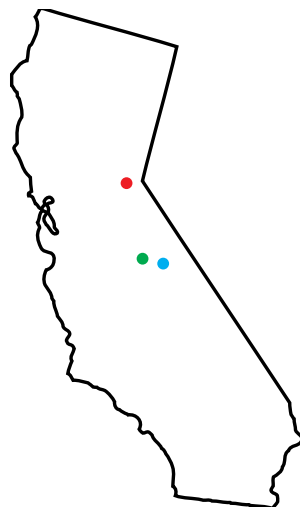
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ON THE COVER

Steven Roth belayed by Travis Lombardo on the crux third pitch of *Taipan Rising* (5.11a A0 or 5.13b/c) Taipan Wall, Shuteye Ridge.

IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG

THIS PAGE

Brad Parker having a blast on *Supercrack* (5.10) in Indian Creek, Utah.

IMAGE + JERRY DODRILL

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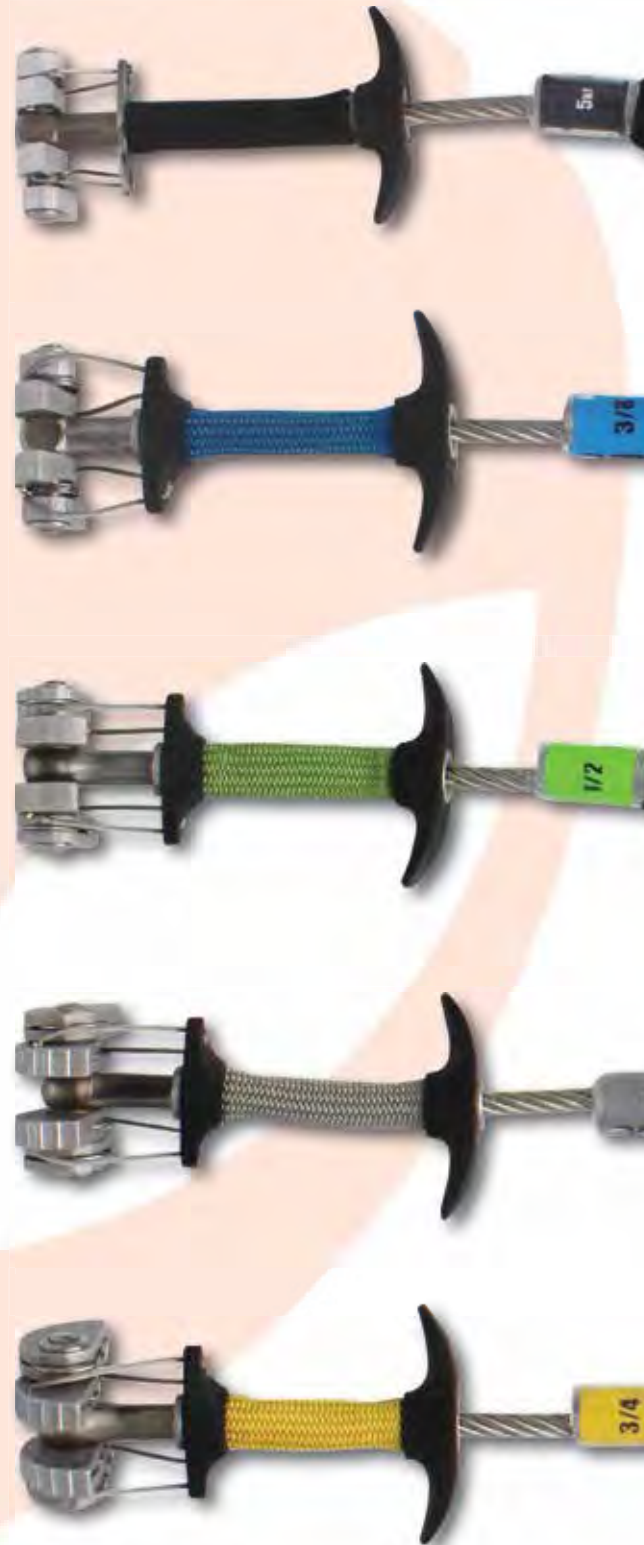
Ergonomic Rubber
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& Flexibility Steel
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Design

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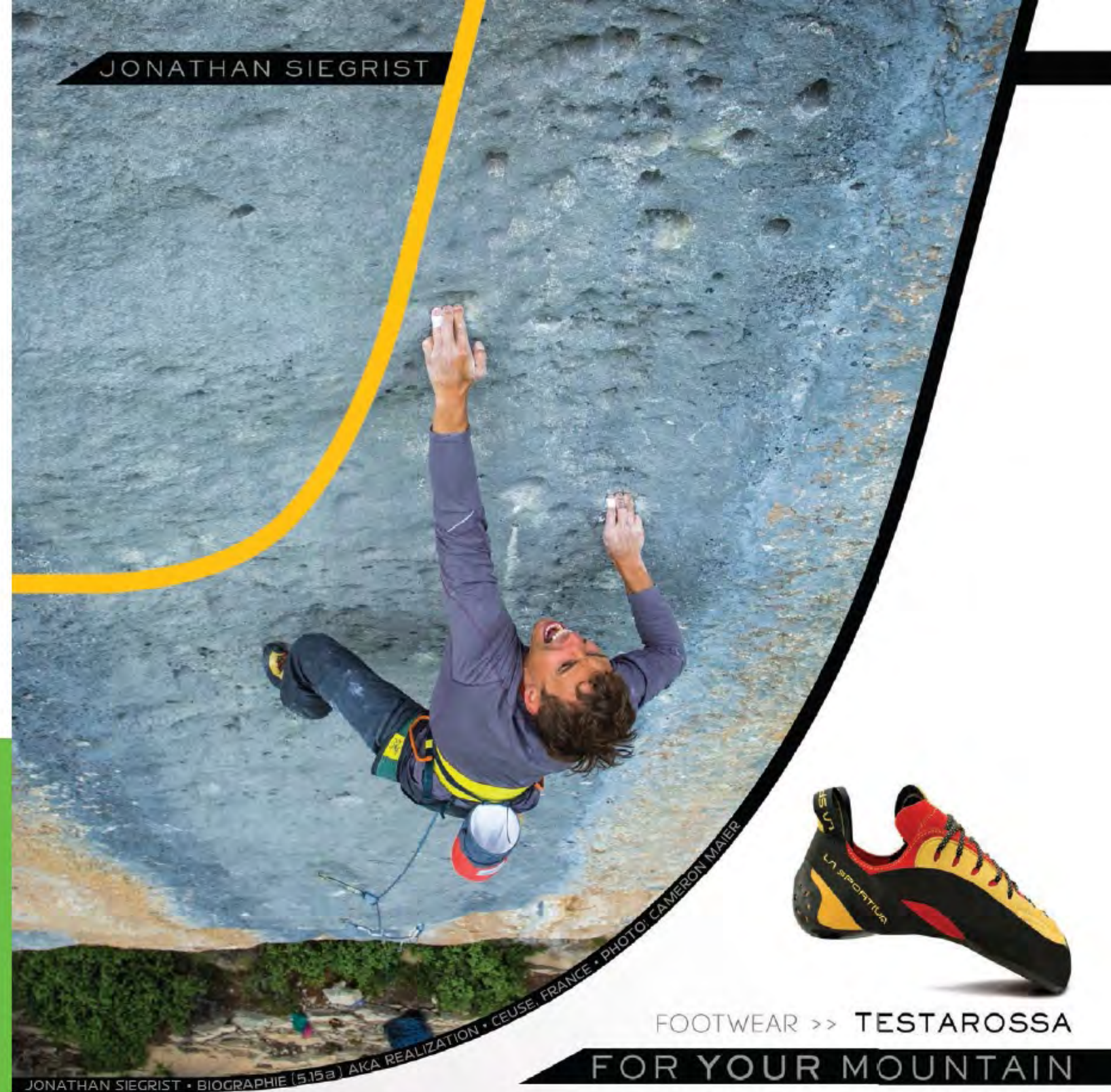
Rock climbing, bouldering, ice climbing, mountaineering, alpine climbing and any other outdoor activity are inherently dangerous. The owners, staff and management of California Climber do not recommend that anyone participate in these activities unless they are an expert or accompanied by an expert. 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.

Maia Wolff bouldering at DL Bliss State Park, Lake Tahoe.



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B-RAD

THERE'S A REASON we put Brad Parker on the cover of *California Climber's* very first issue. An accomplished climber, surfer and yoga teacher from Sebastopol, Brad was the epitome of the magazine's name. He spent a lot of time at local breaks, the climbing gym and crags, with frequent trips to the high country. He was a quick study—equally adept on massive waves and huge walls. His personal stoke pushed him to always stretch a little farther, and his easygoing demeanor led him to befriend every person he met. He was super-fit, tanned, tall and easy on the eyes. Let's face it: The guy was a frickin' stud. It's easy to hate on a guy like that, but somehow with Brad, you just couldn't. Instead, we went climbing, mountain biked until we bonked, drank local IPAs and cooked up some amazing meals.

This summer, Brad and I had been training to climb the Evolution Traverse. We were less than a week away from departure when I got a call. Brad was gone. He had fallen to his death while soloing Matthes Crest—just hours after making a lifelong commitment to his girlfriend on the tiny summit of Cathedral Peak.

In the inaugural issue of *California*

Climber, I wrote about an accident and rescue on Sonora Pass, saying: "One might think that such incidents would persuade a sane person to pursue less dangerous activities. But instead the shared adversity we experience in the mountains bonds us closer together; the history reinforces our friendships and shapes the rituals of our lives. Once you listen, the call of the mountains cannot be ignored."

In the aftermath of Brad's death, our community has come together in ways I never thought possible. We lost one of our shining stars, but because so many of us have traded belays, shared campfires and many late-night drives, the mutual grief we feel for our friend has unified us as a tribe who looks out for each other's well being—even after the harnesses come off and the ropes are put away.

This issue is dedicated to our friend "B-RAD" Parker. As you read through the pages, I hope you are inspired to be a true California Climber. Do something to foster community. Instigate an adventure with a friend you haven't seen in a while. Train a little harder, run a little farther, breath, and most importantly, B-RAD. —JERRY DODRILL




One of the many memorial services held for Brad Parker in Sonoma County.


JERRY DODRILL

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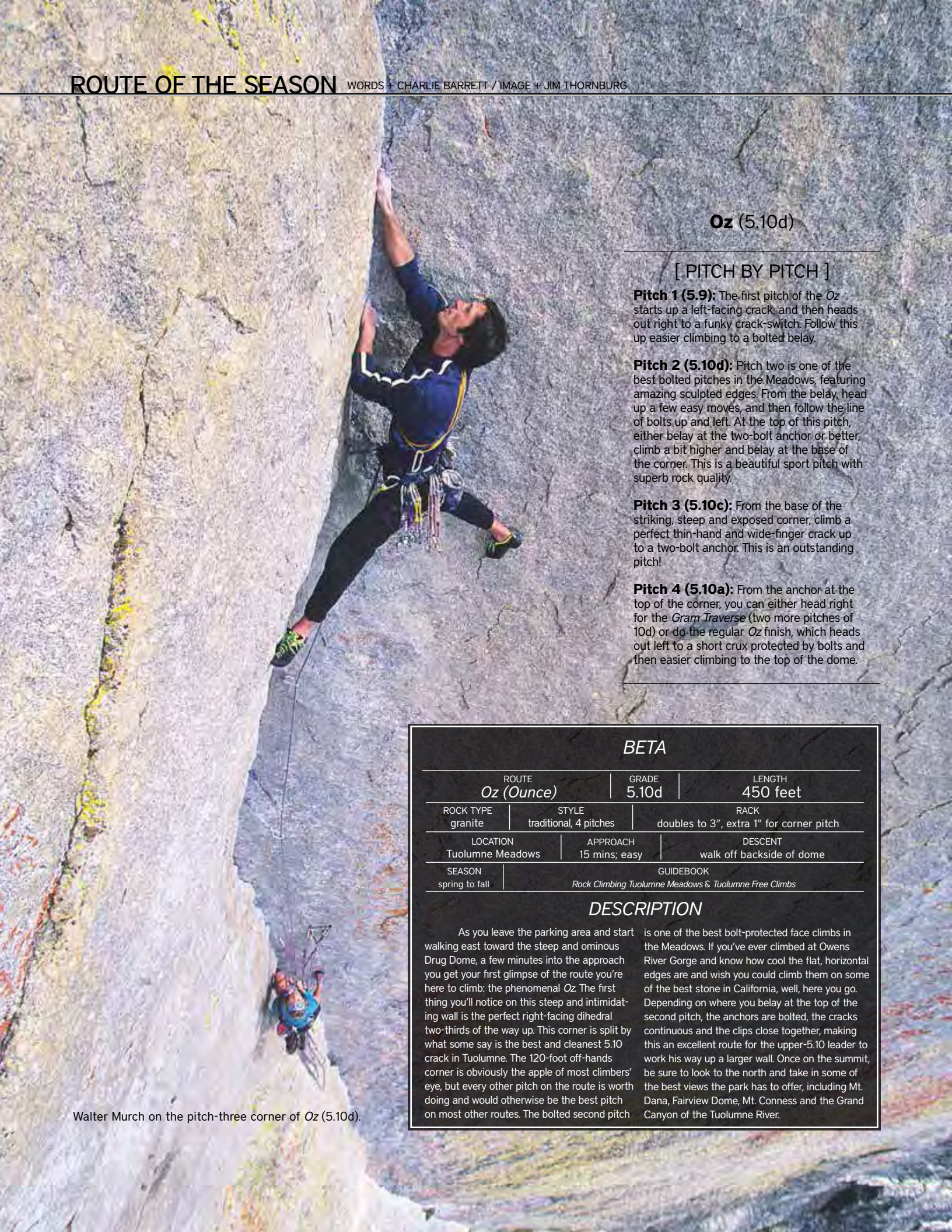


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Paul Robinson<Limitless> V10<Photo> Alexandra Kahn



Oz (5.10d)

[PITCH BY PITCH]

Pitch 1 (5.9): The first pitch of the Oz starts up a left-facing crack, and then heads out right to a funky crack-switch. Follow this up easier climbing to a bolted belay.

Pitch 2 (5.10d): Pitch two is one of the best bolted pitches in the Meadows, featuring amazing sculpted edges. From the belay, head up a few easy moves, and then follow the line of bolts up and left. At the top of this pitch, either belay at the two-bolt anchor or better, climb a bit higher and belay at the base of the corner. This is a beautiful sport pitch with superb rock quality.

Pitch 3 (5.10c): From the base of the striking, steep and exposed corner, climb a perfect thin-hand and wide-finger crack up to a two-bolt anchor. This is an outstanding pitch!

Pitch 4 (5.10a): From the anchor at the top of the corner, you can either head right for the *Gram Traverse* (two more pitches of 10d) or do the regular *Oz* finish, which heads out left to a short crux protected by bolts and then easier climbing to the top of the dome.

BETA

ROUTE		GRADE	LENGTH
Oz (<i>Ounce</i>)		5.10d	450 feet
ROCK TYPE	STYLE	RACK	
granite	traditional, 4 pitches	doubles to 3", extra 1" for corner pitch	
LOCATION		APPROACH	DESCENT
Tuolumne Meadows		15 mins; easy	walk off backside of dome
SEASON	GUIDEBOOK		
spring to fall	Rock Climbing Tuolumne Meadows & Tuolumne Free Climbs		

DESCRIPTION

As you leave the parking area and start walking east toward the steep and ominous Drug Dome, a few minutes into the approach you get your first glimpse of the route you're here to climb: the phenomenal Oz. The first thing you'll notice on this steep and intimidating wall is the perfect right-facing dihedral two-thirds of the way up. This corner is split by what some say is the best and cleanest 5.10 crack in Tuolumne. The 120-foot off-hands corner is obviously the apple of most climbers' eye, but every other pitch on the route is worth doing and would otherwise be the best pitch on most other routes. The bolted second pitch

is one of the best bolt-protected face climbs in the Meadows. If you've ever climbed at Owens River Gorge and know how cool the flat, horizontal edges are and wish you could climb them on some of the best stone in California, well, here you go. Depending on where you belay at the top of the second pitch, the anchors are bolted, the cracks continuous and the clips close together, making this an excellent route for the upper-5.10 leader to work his way up a larger wall. Once on the summit, be sure to look to the north and take in some of the best views the park has to offer, including Mt. Dana, Fairview Dome, Mt. Conness and the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne River.

Walter Murch on the pitch-three corner of Oz (5.10d).



This year Bluewater Athlete Tommy Caldwell with partner Alex Honnold climbed the first ascent of the "Torre Traverse" in Patagonia, one of the most daring and difficult ridge climbs in the world. Tommy pushed our ropes to the limit with over 3 miles of climbing, 100 rappels, 13,000 feet of gain, and 7 iconic peaks.

ALWAYS
BETWEEN
YOU AND
THE
GROUND



The endless jagged alpine rock on this climb was the ultimate test of rope endurance, and our rope held up where others had failed. Thank you Bluewater! -Tommy Caldwell

BlueWater
Ropes



Bertha
Julie Ellison, Alton Richardson,
Lizzie and their 1999 Chevy
Express 2500 Cargo Van

CCMAG: Where did you find Bertha and how much did she cost?

Team Bertha: We got it from a friend of a friend, who also happens to be a climber and filmmaker. He had lived out of it for about a year and a half, but had never driven it more than about 400 miles at a time! We paid \$5,000 cash for it; it felt pretty baller to walk around with that much scratch at once. He threw in some extra tires and a roof rack, not to mention the fact that it already had some badass amenities. Kinda funny though, the car overheated and started smoking when we test drove it for the first time ever. We ended up sitting on the side of the road while gray smoke poured out of the engine, and the former owner had to come get us to take us back to our car. It almost didn't matter, though, because we were both so smitten with her already. He ended up paying to fix the cracked radiator and one other semi-major thing (about \$2,000 total), and still knocked the price down for us, so how could we say no?!

I heard you have a flat-screen TV in there. Fancy. What's your favorite in-flight movie?

Not trying to sound like a douchebag, but technically we have two... Let it be known that we did not put those in, but neither of us are complaining about having them! The large one is 17" and folds up flat against the ceiling in the middle, so you can see it when you're on the bed. The smaller one is 8" and comes out

of the front dashboard where the stereo system is, so you can see it from the driver and passenger seat. We may or may not watch movies going 80 mph down the interstate... We don't have one favorite in-flight movie, but Redbox is the shit for traveling.

What modifications have you done?

When we bought it, the setup was absolutely perfect for one person; that included the bed. The only thing we've done at this point is build out the bed so it can comfortably fit two people. We've added a few small fixed storage containers, but that's about it. We plan to move into it permanently in spring 2015, so we'll revamp the current storage and shelving systems to better fit two people and a dog living out of it. Plus, we need better crashpad storage options so they can go under the bed rather than on the roof!

How's the gas mileage?

Surprisingly great! We get about 20 or 21 highway (much less in town of course), but we've found our most efficient speed is about 80 mph. Which is great because we both have a lead foot.

How does it do off-road?

Considering the tires used to be balder than a baby's head and it doesn't have 4WD, we've gotten it stuck a time or two: in eight inches of mud at Shelf Road when we had to lay down branches and limbs to get some traction on a pretty steep grade while it slipped sideways off a deep embankment (that was scary), on I-70 (not literally off-road, but it might as well have been) in a horrible snowstorm and gridlock traffic going up a 6% grade for about five miles that took us more than four hours and every car on the road was slipping and sliding—just to name a few. Now we have really nice all-season tires that strangers compliment more than the van itself!

Sounds like Bertha was pretty set up when you bought her—did you find anything weird when you cleaned out the drawers?

Well, let's just say we found a little baggie of the white stuff (after we had been driving it around for a few months) that *wasn't* chalk... We realized later that our legitimate response would have been, "I swear that's not mine, officer. I don't know where that came from!"

In a race between Bertha and the van from A-Team, which one would win?

Bertha all the way. I mean really, it's no question in our minds. On one hand, Mr. T's haircut would make them more aerodynamic; on the other hand, all those gold chains probably add a significant amount of weight.

Would you let Mr. T drive Bertha?
Only if he asked nicely.

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#TOUCHSTONECLIMBING

METOLIUS ULTRALIGHT CHALK BAG

{ \$22.50 }

When we received a package of Metolius Ultralight Chalk Bags in winter 2013, a few testers asked the question: “Why does anyone need a lightweight chalk bag?” Fair enough. But after testing these bags for about six months, we realized that the folks at Metolius asked a better question when designing this product: “Why do you need a heavy chalk bag?”

The battle for weight reduction has been waged in grams and ounces with spring-loaded camming devices, passive protection, harnesses, ropes, carabiners, backpacks and technical clothing. During long backcountry excursions, it’s not uncommon to see climbers cut the pull tabs and extra straps from their packs, saw their toothbrushes in half and measure their coffee grinds scoop-by-scoop into daily rations. Climbers do this because they have discovered that any way you can cut the weight on a long approach is well worth the effort. Weighing nearly 70% lighter than standard chalk bags, the Metolius Ultralight bag can easily save you between 50 and 100 grams—a weight reduction that far surpasses an extra scoop of coffee grounds or a full-size toothbrush.

During testing we found the Ultralight Chalk Bag to perform exactly like a chalk bag should, with very few differences or nuances between this lightweight model and heavier bags. One small difference we encountered occurred while climbing in very strong winds, especially during updrafts that can sweep over alpine walls in the High Sierra. When climbing in exceptionally gusty conditions, even the heaviest chalk bags can be tipped upside down, causing some chalk to spill out of the bag. As you might expect because of its lighter weight, the Ultralight is a bit easier to flip over in strong winds. To alleviate this problem, our testers occasionally placed a rock about the size of a ping pong ball into the bottom of the chalk bag—a method that can easily stop any chalk bag from being blown upside down.

Aside from being slightly easier to spill in strong winds, the Ultralight Chalk Bag performed equally well or better than standard chalk bags. The thin micro-fleece lining on the interior of the bag retains a high level of comfort without compromising weight savings. The elastic brush holder on the side of the bag did its duty perfectly, and the sturdy

outer rim kept the bag taught, open and easy to access during hard redpoints and sketchy topouts. The slimmer waistband of the Ultralight bag was pleasantly low-profile, easy to secure and even easier to adjust. In review, the entire group of testers agreed that the Ultralight Chalk Bag is another simplified yet fully functional innovation from Metolius in the competitive market of lightweight climbing equipment. If you plan on marching 10 miles into the backcountry this season, or just a few hundred feet to the sport cliff, once you go lightweight, you’ll never go back.



MAD ROCK TRIGGER WIRE

{ \$9.95 }



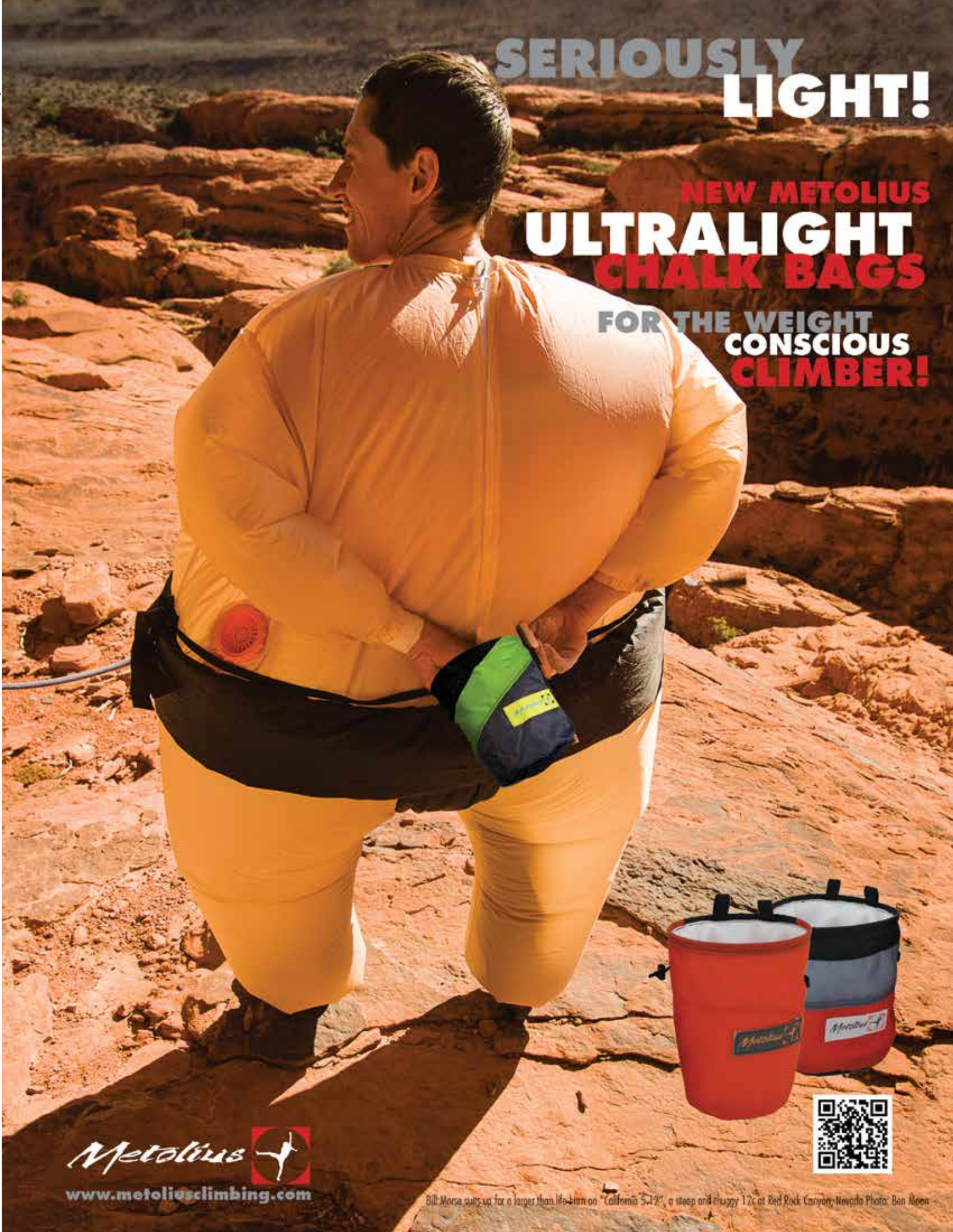
Over the last 10 years, innovations in carabiners have been mostly centered on weight reduction and size. It is truly rare to see a completely renovated design to such a standardized piece of rock climbing equipment, but with the Trigger Wire carabiner, the California-based Mad Rock has pulled it off with style. In addition to its very sleek and lightweight body design, the Trigger Wire has a built-in hinge and

pin that are designed to hold the gate in the open position until a rope or bolt hanger release the mechanism and close the gate. After a few months of testing, the Trigger Wire revealed itself to be an exceptionally useful piece of gear in a variety of climbing applications.

When the Trigger Wire is fixed to the rope-end of a quickdraw, the trigger mechanism can be used to ease the strain of clipping the rope during hard redpoints. Unlike traditional carabiner designs, the rope can be simply “dropped” into the basket of the Trigger Wire carabiner, at which point the mechanism is triggered, closing the gate automatically. Although the trigger mechanism is extremely smooth to release, when locked into the open position, it is surprisingly resilient to bumps and other movement. This design makes it easy to rack the Trigger Wires in the open position on a harness or gear sling, and it makes clipping easy during hard onsights or multi-pitch climbs.

The ease of clipping the rope is a fantastic feature of this carabiner, but all of the testers involved in this review agreed that the Trigger Wire really shines when it’s used to clip out-of-reach fixed protection points. If you’re under 6-feet-tall and you’ve ever tried to reach a bolt placed by Layton Kor, Walt Shipley or Warren Harding, you know what we’re talking about. If you need a few extra inches to reach a fixed pin, a copperhead, a faded piece of tat or an out-of-reach hanger on a bolt ladder, simply flip a Trigger Wire quickdraw around and you’ll be able to reach those placements with ease. For sport climbing (especially at places like Smith Rock), this feature of the Trigger Wire also makes it incredibly easy to fashion a stick-clip.

One point of hesitation with the Trigger Wire came when one tester envisioned a scenario where the rope might be dropped into the basket of the biner without activating the gate-closure mechanism. We spent a few weeks making serious attempts to create this scenario without any success. Thankfully, Mad Rock designed the mechanism in a way that makes it impossible to clip without the gate closing instantly behind the rope. Overall, all of the testers found the Trigger Wire to be an exceedingly safe, inexpensive and incredibly utilitarian piece of climbing equipment, and it’s a must-have item for route developers, serious adventure climbers and big wall aficionados.



TRANGO DIAMOND 9.4

{ \$194.95 }

Last summer I stood at the edge of a granite platform in the Sierra backcountry while my friend rappelled 30 meters to the base of a smooth alpine wall. With three backpacks (one on his back and two hanging below his legs attached to his haul loop), the extra weight caused him to move down at an abnormally sporadic rate. As he bounced up and down on the rope, I noticed the bright-green cord sawing back and forth across sharp feldspar crystals at the edge of the ledge. It wasn't a life-or-death situation, but I was certain that two core shots would be found near the middle mark on both sides of our six-month-old Trango Diamond rope. When my friend shouted "off rapel," I snatched the rope and inspected the wear points. To my pleasant surprise, there were hardly any signs of significant wear, fraying or even fuzzy fibers on the recently abraded portions of the rope.

Although the Trango Diamond 9.4mm checks in at a slightly heavier weight than some competitors' ropes with identical diameters, when it comes to durability, the Diamond easily tips the scales. After nearly a year of testing the Diamond on everything from steep sport climbs to alpine walls to heavy-use projects like scrubbing new routes and bolting, the Diamond held up to an incredible amount of abuse.

Although 9.4mm is a few tenths of a millimeter larger than the thinnest single-rope-certified cords available this year, the Diamond surprised all participating testers when it was packed tightly into Trango's new Antidote Rope Bag. In some cases, a 70-meter cord stuffed into a rope bag seems to fill up the whole interior of a 45-liter pack; however, we were able to wrap the Diamond up into a very compact package that



left room for a rack of cams and a six-pack of canned beer in that same size climbing pack.

Right off the spool, the Diamond feels a bit stiffer than some other ropes, but it quickly softened with only a few weeks of normal use. Belaying and rappelling with the Diamond and nearly every imaginable type of device is a smooth endeavor. In some cases, like pulling the rope through the chains or flaking it before leading a pitch, the stiffness of the rope seemed to create even better handling properties than softer ropes on the market. Because of its remarkable handling and incredible durability, the Diamond makes an excellent rope for all-around climbers and for those who tend to beat the hell out of their cords on the regular. The thick and burly sheath on the rope can withstand heavy abrasion, making it perfect for working projects and even top roping, but the relatively light weight and compact packability make it equally suited for backcountry climbing and hard redpoints. If you're looking for a versatile all-around rope that can handle some seriously abusive terrain, we'd highly recommend taking a look at the new Trango Diamond.

CLIMBTECH WAVE BOLT

{ \$6.25 }



Route developers across the globe have been battling with permanent anchor installation for nearly a century. In the earliest years, climbers cut hangers from scraps of old license plates and used thin hardware store bolts designed to hang signs on concrete walls at street corners and storefronts. Thankfully, a lot has changed. In recent years, the design and production of permanent anchors have been taken on by climbing-equipment manufacturers. These companies run hundreds of tests to design bolts specifically for climbing applications—a process that has yielded some incredibly innovative and long-lasting fixed anchor systems.

For climbing protection and anchors, one-piece stainless steel and titanium glue-in bolts have become well-known as the most durable bolts in existence. Yet they have also gained a reputation for being a bit harder to install than wedge anchors. With the release of their new Wave Bolt, ClimbTech has managed to address a few of the key

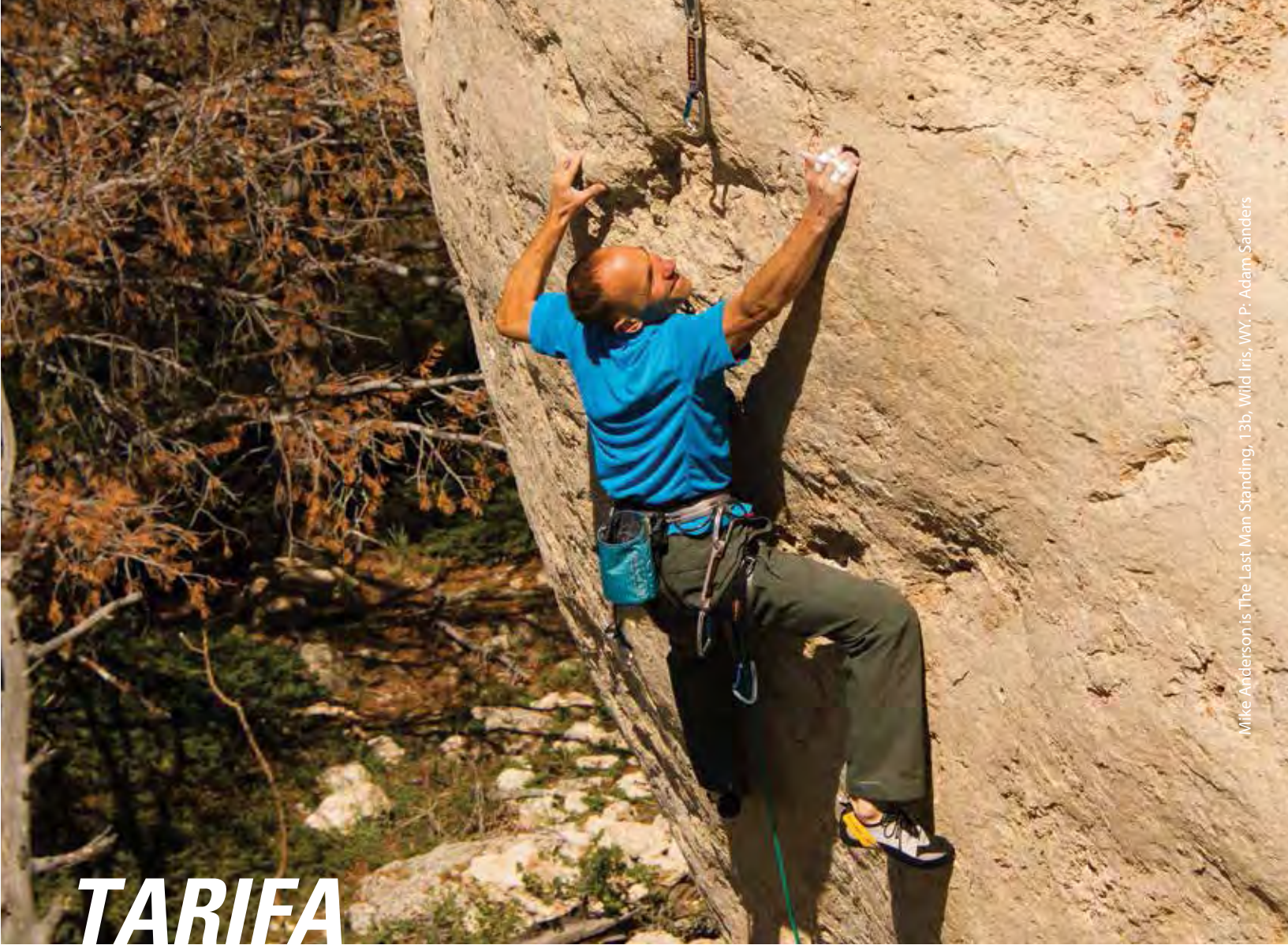
problems typically associated with the process of placing glue-in bolts. ClimbTech has also crafted the Wave Bolt to withstand incredible loads, achieving shear and pull-out strengths well above the CE and UIAA specifications for climbing (3,372 lbs. pull-out, 5,620 lbs. shear).

Last winter Senior Contributing Photographer Jerry Dodrill placed a handful of ClimbTech Wave Bolts while establishing new routes at the Wine Country crag of Mt. Saint Helena. "Installing any type of glue-in bolt requires a bit of preparation," said Dodrill. "And there are a few extra items you'll want to purchase to properly install this type of bolt." Before rappelling down your project and drilling holes, Dodrill suggests taking a quick trip to the hardware store to grab extra mixing tips for the glue canisters, a durable bottle brush for scrubbing out the hole and a rag to wipe excess glue from the mouth of the hole.

Placing any type of bolt takes a great deal of experience, and although glue-in bolts seem simpler in design, they actually require a bit more attention and work to properly install. "You have to drill a really large hole—to the hilt of a standard 1/2" drill bit, which will suck up more battery life if you're using a power drill," said Dodrill. "Additionally, it is very important to clean the inside of the hole thoroughly with a wire brush and blow tube to ensure the glue bonds securely to the rock."

To counter a problem arising from carbon deposits weathering bolts from manufacturing, ClimbTech has added a cleaning process that removes carbon-steel particulates embedded in the stainless steel after machining. During installation, if you hit the Wave Bolt with a carbon-steel hammer, it could embed potentially hazardous carbon-steel particulates into the head of the bolt. ClimbTech recommends using their stainless steel Wave Bolt Installation Tool, a product that protects the bolt from the carbon steel used to forge most hammers. The company also suggests an alternative method of covering the bolt or head of the hammer with a durable piece of denim or canvas to protect the stainless steel when hammering.

"We tried covering the bolt with a bandana, and the hammer just ripped it to pieces," said Dodrill. "We also tried using a rubber mallet to hammer in the bolt, but it was not nearly forceful enough—we ended up breaking the handle of the mallet after only a few hits. I think the Installation Tool from ClimbTech is probably the best way, especially if you'll be placing a lot of Wave Bolts. Overall, I loved the finished product," added Dodrill. "Because the bolts compress as they enter the hole, they feel really secure and work especially well on overhanging rock. The bolts clip nicely, and the slim profile looks really elegant and helps to camouflage the placements."



Mike Anderson is The Last Man Standing, 13b, Wild Iris, WY. P. Adam Sanders



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CLIMBER
Charlie Barrett
ROUTE
Creature from the Black Lagoon (5.10c),
Tuolumne Meadows
PHOTOGRAPHER
Dean Fleming



CLIMBER Harrison Eberlin
ROUTE *Guardian Angel* (V9)
PHOTOGRAPHER Jim Thornburg



CLIMBER Austin Schuler
ROUTE *The Shark's Fin* (V1), Huda Point
PHOTOGRAPHER Dean Fleming

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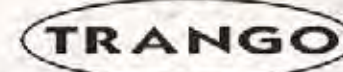
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ROCK CREEK

WORDS + JEDIAH PORTER / IMAGES + KEN ETZEL



IN THE CALIFORNIA CLIMBING COMMUNITY,

nothing seems to surpass the lore of Yosemite. However, little oases of granite can be found outside the womb and barely tethered to the intimidation, dogma, crowds, and red tape of the world's premier big-route destination. The climbing in Rock Creek Canyon in the Eastern Sierra is perhaps the archetypal non-Yosemite granite playground. Here, you'll find bright, sharp-cut stone overlain with history and convenience. The boulders are a reasonable size with clean landings, while the roped routes are accessible and safe.

We've taken a turn from tradition where this particular displaced pocket of Yosemite's classic geology meets the Eastside's younger climbing community. Bolts can be found on blank sections and alongside cracks alike. Valley idealist Doug Robinson himself participated in the bolting when he established the wide start to *Wages of Skin*. In the 1990s, a Mammoth-based crew took this idea and ran, equipping the main wall—or Gong Show's center section—with sport-bolted lines ranging from 5.10 to 5.12. Today, with a modicum of gear and a 70-meter rope, one can enjoy interesting movement on impeccable rock.

Down in the shady forest next to the creek are a handful of excellent blocks. Like those emerging from the oaks of Yosemite, the Rock Creek boulders defy logic and elicit wonder at their monolithic presence so far from the talus and cliffs from which they fell. While the selection is small, the quality is off the charts. Slopers, crimps, arêtes and compression dominate the climbing here. When it's too hot for the Buttermilks, the Rock Creek boulders are probably just right. Like its big brother Yosemite, bouldering in Rock Creek is considered difficult for the grade. It often feels like there are miles between holds with nothing but smears for feet. However, with due diligence and time, sequences and body positions help climbers find their way.

Located near the small town of Tom's Place on Highway 395 between Bishop and Mammoth, you'll find great reprieve from the summer heat that shuts down Owens River Gorge and the Buttermilks. The season usually extends from snowmelt to first snowfall; it's possible to chase the sun or shade on any given day. Another bonus of the area is the amazing fall color display from the aspens that line the base of the cliff and surround the boulders. While this place is small in comparison to Yosemite and other international destinations, the scenery and quality of stone certainly make Rock Creek an experience not to be missed.

PREVIOUS SPREAD Brian Russell makes the final lunge on *Campground Arête* (V10).

THIS PAGE Jill Waters on the technical and thin *Fluke* (V8).

RIGHT The author warms up on the classic *Side-show* (5.10).

NEXT PAGE Josh Huckaby finishes the excellent *Pull Down Like De Jesus* (V4).







PREVIOUS PAGE LEFT Trish McGuire on the meandering ultra-classic *Wages of Skin* (5.10+).

PREVIOUS PAGE TOP Bernd Zeugswetter floats through *Radioactive Man* (5.11d).

PREVIOUS PAGE BOTTOM Nick Waters makes the move around the corner on the funky *Blood Brothers* (V7).

THIS PAGE Josh Huckaby latches yet another sloper on *Choice of Weapons* (V4) on the Campground Boulder.

- 5-STAR ROUTES
- Main Attraction (5.8)

Wages of Skin (5.10+)

Anything Goes (5.12a)

Pull Down Like De Jesus (V4)

Boy Named Sue (V7)

Campground Arête (V10)

THE BETA

GETTING THERE:
From the town of Mammoth Lakes, drive south on Highway 395 for 18.5 miles until you reach the west-bound turn for Rock Creek Road. Take Rock Creek Road until you reach Big Meadow Campground on the north side of the road. Most of the boulders can be easily found in and around the campground, in the adjacent talus field and in the aspen groves just west of the campground on the north side of Rock Creek. The Gong Show Wall as well as all the other walls are easily visible from Rock Creek Road.

WHERE TO STAY:
Camping is conveniently located just footsteps from the boulders and cliffs at Big Meadow Campground. But for a low-cost option, free camping is available along the many dirt roads that wind through the Sherwin Plateau. These roads are easily reached by driving back to 395 on Rock Creek Road, and then heading south on 395 for just a few hundred feet until obvious Forest Service roads can be seen on the east side of the highway.

GUIDEBOOK:
Bishop Bouldering, by Wills Young and *Mammoth Area Rock Climbs*, 3rd Edition, by Marty Lewis





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MAD ROCK
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SHUTEYE RIDGE

WORDS & IMAGES
JIM THORNBURG





YOSEMITE IS GREAT, BUT IF YOU'D RATHER SWIM IN A CREEK WITH NO NAME OR WALK THROUGH A FOREST SO QUIET YOU CAN HEAR THE ANCIENT BREEZE—SHUTEYE IS A BETTER CHOICE.

I'm climbing one of the best 5.11 pitches I've ever climbed, on the remote Electric Eagle formation at Shuteye Ridge. The rock is golden. Not golden in color like the patina in the Buttermilks or a water streak in Tuolumne, but *golden*—as in, it looks and feels like actual gold. The pitch, established a few years ago by Matt Schutz and Grahm Doe, is the fourth on *Taipan Rising*, a 700-foot-tall wall of gleaming perfection: well-protected, dizzyingly exposed and perfectly sustained on vertical crimps and ripples. There is no chalk on the route, and cobwebs cover the bigger holds.

The entire area, for that matter, is empty, engulfed in silence. At 7,500 feet, the air is thin and cool. Ten miles east, toward the Sierra Crest, peaks swell even higher to 14,000 feet. Gazing westward, healthy forests sprawl downward, blue ridge after ridge, to the smoggy Central Valley 60 miles away. In between is mostly wilderness, all but forgotten in the shadow of Yosemite to the north.

Despite its seclusion, the area has never been a secret. Royal Robbins, the most accomplished and respected climber of his era, was the first to explore (and rave about) this wonderland of domes. Way back in 1975, he made the following endorsement: "Shuteye deserves being a destination in

PREVIOUS SPREAD Steven Roth on the 5.8 fifth pitch of *Taipan Rising*.

ABOVE Travis Lombardo on the fourth pitch (5.11a) of *Taipan Rising*.

RIGHT Alex Witte and Christine Zalecki on pitch two of *El Grande* (5.10b), Chiquito Dome.

itself. Many domes, both small and great, have a combination of surface features and rock quality that make them some of the world's best for climbing."

His is a sentiment repeated over and over by Shuteye pioneers for the past 40 years. So why, I wonder, are we the only ones here? I also wonder what it's like in Yosemite this fine summer weekend. Perhaps that's part of the answer.

I imagine hundreds—or even thousands—of sweaty climbers herded into the Valley, slapping mosquitoes, slathering on sunscreen and queueing up 10-deep for one of the greasy crack climbs or beater campsites for which the ditch is famous.

Yosemite is great, but if you'd rather swim in a creek with no name or walk through a forest so quiet you can hear the ancient breeze wafting through the swaying boughs of redwood and pine, Shuteye is a better choice. The rocky spine of domes is eight miles long and incredibly complex. Different domes are accessed via a myriad of obscure Forest Service roads, few of which are two-wheel-drive friendly. The domes are then accessed with hikes both long and short—and often tricky.

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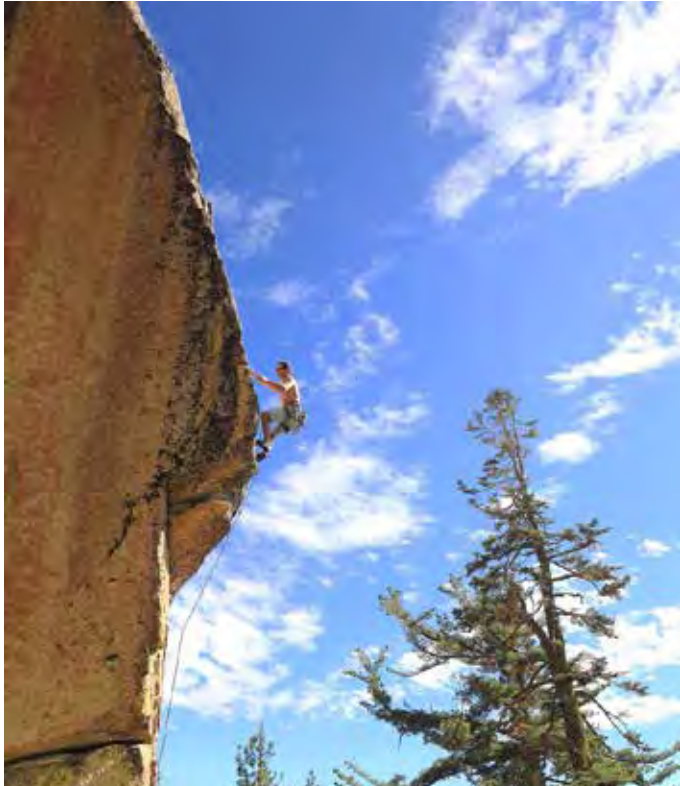


Matt Schultz on the first ascent of the fourth pitch (5.11a) of *Taipan Rising*, Electric Eagle Dome.



Grahm Doe lives in *Dreamtime* (5.13b), Dreamscape Wall.





MOSTLY, YOU’LL HAUL FINGER-BUCKETS ON PLATED “CROCODILE SKIN” THAT RIVALS THE BEST OF THE BUTTERMILKS—EXCEPT IT GOES ON FOR HUNDREDS OF FEET INSTEAD OF TWENTY.

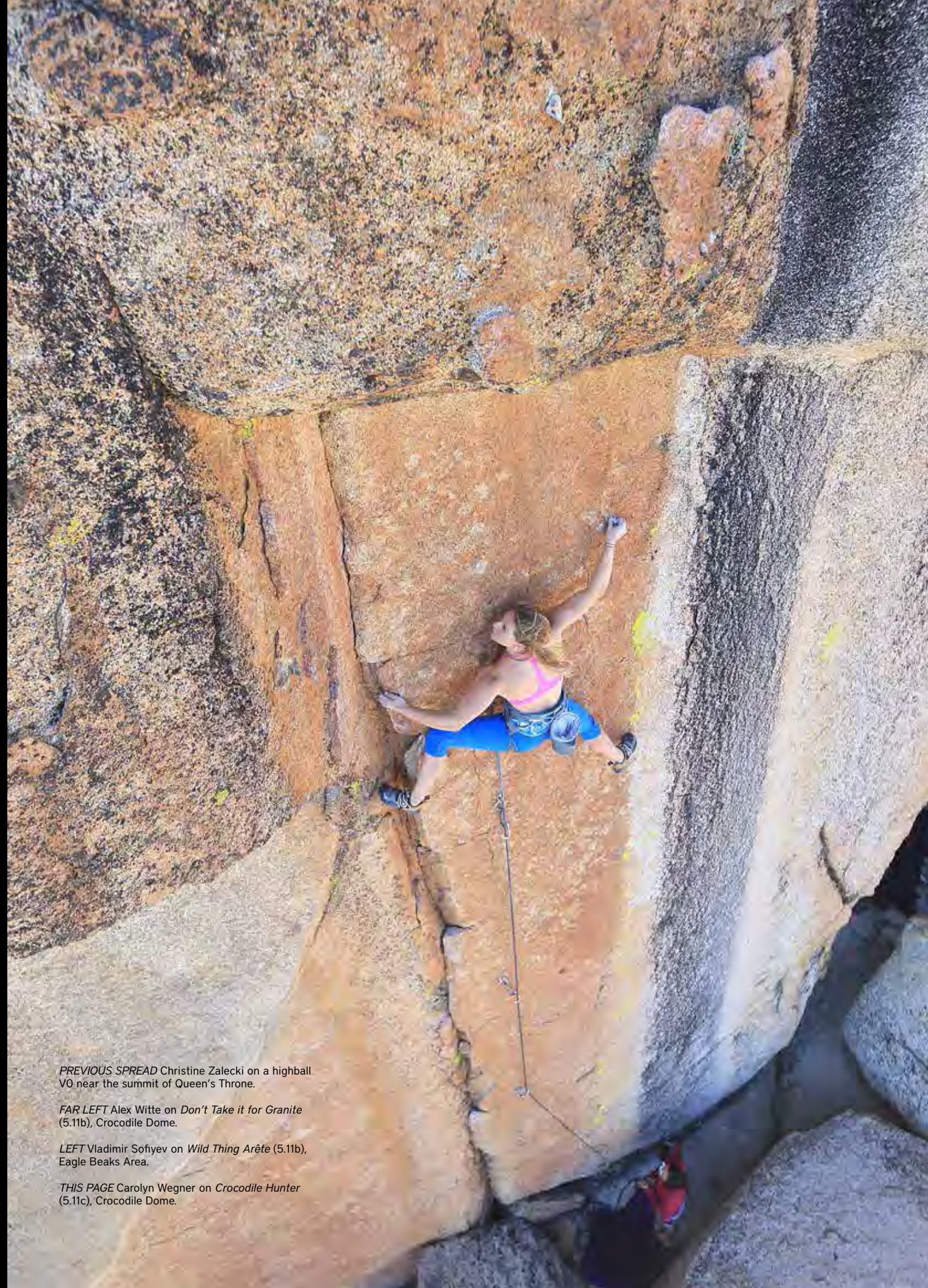
Exploration of the ridge has come in fits and spurts since Royal Robbins established a handful of routes back in the 1970s. In the ‘80s, a who’s who of southern Sierra climbers made contributions: Delk, Vernon, Laeger, Kodas, Higgins and Vandiver to name a few. They put up routes in classic California slab style: ground-up with a minimum of fixed protection. I can’t say I’m interested in repeating their climbs. I’m oldish now and being bold isn’t part of what makes climbing special to me anymore. But I still want to try hard and climb nectar stone, so I’m grateful for the recent and steeper sport climbing additions by the likes of Dan McDevitt, Sean Jones, Louie Anderson and Graham Doe.

In the past 10 years, this crew has realized a portion of the potential offered by the dreamscape of kaleidoscopic orange and white domes. “Shuteye is amazing for many reasons,” says Doe. “But my favorite thing about climbing here is the variety; there are overhanging faces

that climb more like limestone than granite, and if you get bored of steep sport routes, you can go climb a 1,000-foot dome all on gear, and the rock is almost always perfect.” Indeed, the cliffs are featured generously with wind-smoothed protrusions that climb beautifully. Vertical water chutes form mini half-pipes that can be laybacked or stemmed, depending on their width. Tufa-like ribs can be pinched. You’ll even find sinker pockets for one or two fingers just like in the south of France. But mostly, you’ll haul finger-buckets on plated “crocodile skin” that rivals the best of the Buttermilks—except it goes on for hundreds of feet instead of 20.

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The following day our plan is to climb at Crocodile Rock, a low dome full of steep 5.11 face climbs. On the uphill approach, we can see the runnels and tufas streaking the walls—the climbing looks unbelievable! But a bit farther up the trail, we fall prey to a common Shuteye phenomenon: The distraction of Buttermilk-quality boulders that line the approach trail proves too tempting. Granite eggs 10 to 30 feet high abound along the ridge, sheened in the same burnished gold rock as the cliffs, rife with plates and scoops. We shoe up to try “just one problem,” but three hours later, we’re still at it as one perfect boulder leads to the next. The boulders really are just like the ones in the Buttermilks—minus the hordes of climbers. Many problems have been done over the years, but few have names and fewer have ratings. It’s a classic old-school situation that will no doubt result in a spate of new “first ascents” in the years to come. With such great bouldering, it’s inevitable that a bouldering guidebook will come, but in the meantime, we can all explore the boulders for fun, rather than names and numbers.



PREVIOUS SPREAD Christine Zalecki on a highball V0 near the summit of Queen’s Throne.

FAR LEFT Alex Witte on *Don’t Take it for Granite* (5.11b), Crocodile Dome.

LEFT Vladimir Sofhyev on *Wild Thing Arête* (5.11b), Eagle Beaks Area.

THIS PAGE Carolyn Wegner on *Crocodile Hunter* (5.11c), Crocodile Dome.

THIS PAGE Travis Lombardo on pitch two (5.11c) of *Trail of Tears*, Electric Eagle Dome.

RIGHT Jose Ignacio Villegas on *From Behind* (V4), Queen's Throne Area.

As for the routes, Grahm's new guidebook by Wolverine Publishing has finally come. It's a fantastic work, packed with inspirational photos and four-star routes. The new book is sure to attract more climbers, but before you old-dads say, "There goes the neighborhood," remember that there have been two previous guidebooks, a half-dozen magazine articles, and even some gobsmacking photos of Chris Sharma climbing there. But so far the rough roads and Yosemite's shadow have prevailed over the hype, ensuring that there are more cobwebs than people up on the rocks. I hope that changes—not a lot, but at least a little—for no other reason than it would be nice to have less cobwebs and a few more partners to climb there with. So hit up your buddy with the Tacoma—Shuteye is waiting, just a few miles away from Yosemite.





PREVIOUS PAGE LEFT Travis Lombardo on the second pitch (5.11c) of *Trail of Tears*, Electric Eagle Dome.

PREVIOUS PAGE RIGHT Steven Roth working out the moves on a new 5.12 project on Electric Eagle Dome.

THIS PAGE Tom Addison on *Prolly Bomber* (5.10a), Lost Eagle Dome.

5-STAR ROUTES

Afternoon Nap (5.7)

El Grande (5.10b)

Shangri La (5.11a)

Taipan Rising (5.11a A0 or 13c)

Dreamtime (5.13b)

THE BETA

GETTING THERE:

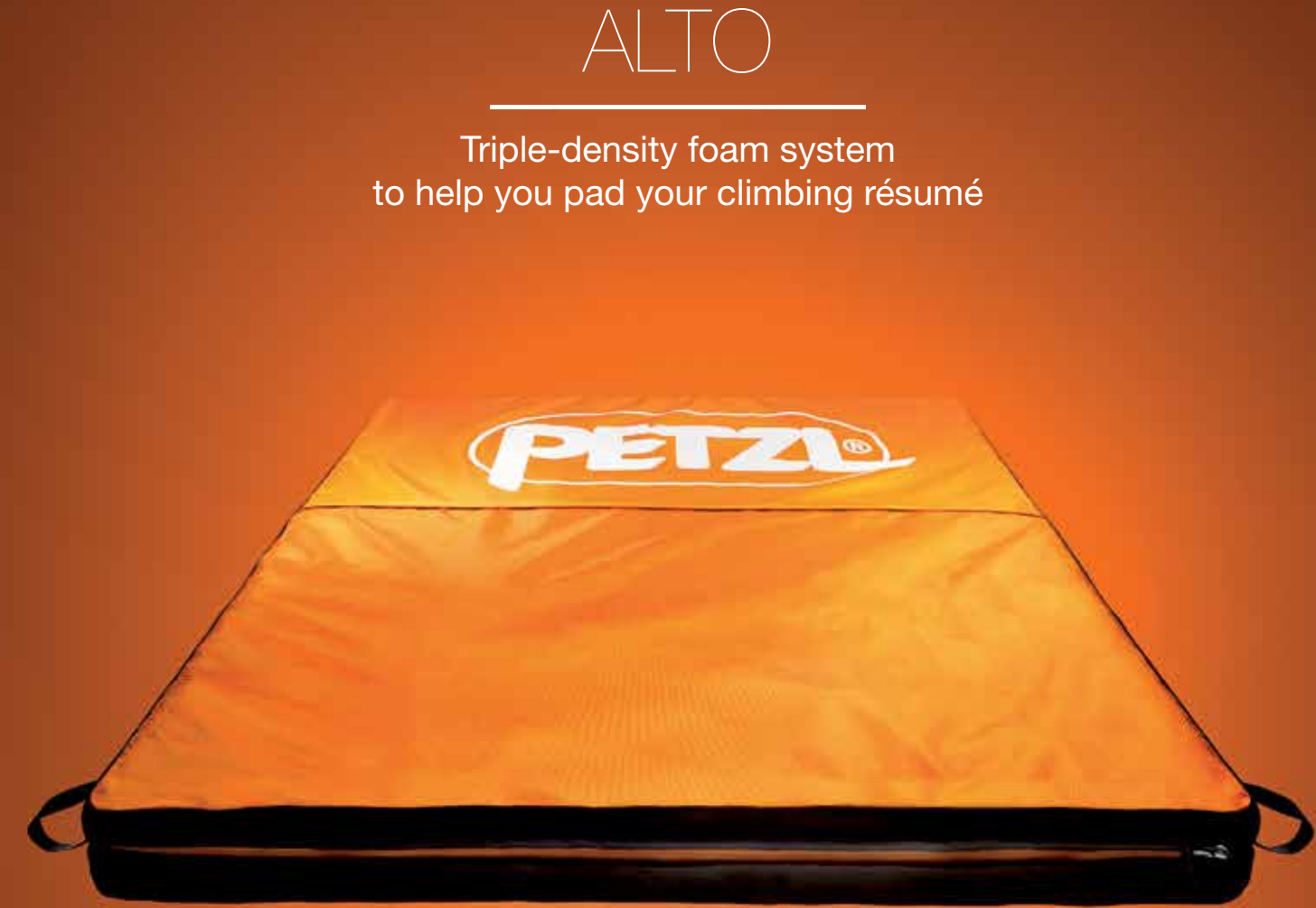
Shuteye Ridge is located in the southern Yosemite area just east of the town of Oakhurst in the Central California foothills. Shuteye as a whole is a separated and complex climbing area with facets that are approached via a multitude of different Forest Service roads that provide access to unique approach trails to a number of different crags. These Forest Service roads often require 4WD vehicles with high clearance. Because basic driving directions to this area would most likely be misleading, we strongly recommend you pick up a guidebook or go with a friend who has visited the location.

WHERE TO STAY:

Depending on the crag you wish to visit, various excellent (and free) campsites can be found along the dirt roads. Campsites are often established near the trailheads that lead to the climbing areas along Shuteye Ridge. There are no water sources in this area. Note: This summer, extreme drought conditions assisted in spreading two separate wildfires that decimated the Bass Lake Ranger District of the Sierra National Forest, and nearly destroyed the town of Oakhurst. Fire restrictions have completely banned campfires in this portion of the Sierra National Forest. Please adhere to these restrictions and use extreme caution while visiting this region.

GUIDEBOOK:

A Rock Climber's Guide to California's Shuteye Ridge, by Graham Doe



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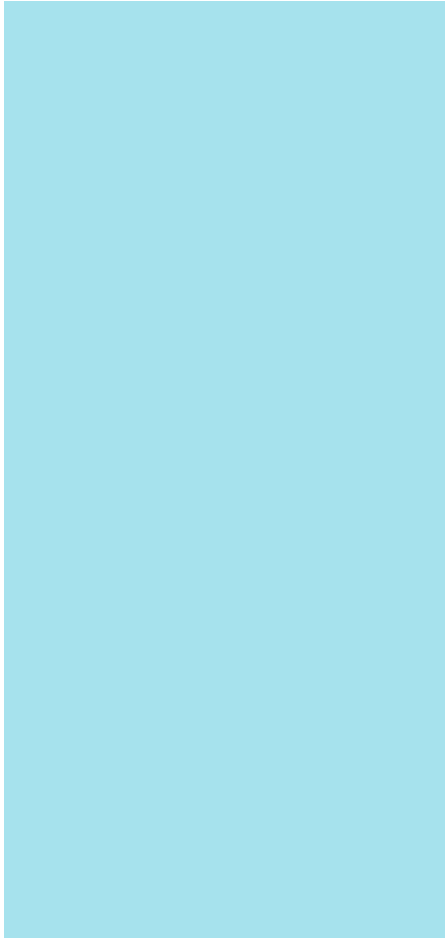
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PURE *BLISS*

BOULDERING IN
LAKE TAHOE'S
D.L. BLISS STATE
PARK

WORDS + IMAGES DEAN FLEMING





In the fall of 2011, Joel Zerr and Kyle O’Meara teamed up to work out the moves of a difficult project in a creekbed at D.L. Bliss State Park on the West Shore of Lake Tahoe. Archetypical of the Tahoe Basin’s harder problems, the sloping holds on this gritty, egg-shaped block required ideal friction, strenuous core tension and intricate sequences. With the use of an imaginative kneebar, Zerr managed the first ascent of the line now called *Vaporized* (V11), a problem that was quickly repeated by O’Meara and has since become widely recognized as an area testpiece. Problems like *Vaporized* have kept Bliss on the radar for many up-and-coming Lake Tahoe boulderers, but climbing at the three roadside areas within D.L. Bliss State Park began long before folks like Zerr and O’Meara plucked this futuristic line, and new development continues with each passing season.

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California’s Highway 89 winds along a shoreline of fragrant pine forest that is broken only occasionally by aspen groves, drainages and washes of granite, until it eventually leads to a dramatic glacier-formed ridgeline high above the West Shore of Lake Tahoe. Hairpin turns lead to a nearly knife-edge crest that drops steeply on either side. With Emerald Bay to the north and Fallen Leaf Lake to the south, this narrow section of highway sets the stage for thousands of drive-by smartphone pictures each summer season.

Tourists often stop their rental cars in the center of Highway 89 to gawk at the

PREVIOUS SPREAD Eddie Babaians on *Bliss Arête* (V4), Middle Bliss.

RIGHT PAGE TOP LEFT Thea Wolff climbing at Middle Bliss.

RIGHT PAGE FAR RIGHT Hanna Copper enjoying North Bliss.

RIGHT PAGE BOTTOM LEFT Obe Carrion high-stepping at North Bliss.

views. To those who live in the Tahoe Basin and commute between South Shore and Truckee, this section of road can be a pain in the ass, but even the most jaded local will agree that it ranks among the most beautiful stretches of highway on Earth. The sight of turquoise-blue water, islands, waterfalls and the seemingly endless Lake Tahoe shoreline have made Highway 89 famous, but for generations of rock climbers, this road has also provided unparalleled access to some of California’s best granite bouldering.

Just a few miles beyond Emerald Bay, Highway 89 passes by D.L. Bliss State Park. Here, campgrounds mark the start of hiking trails that lead through decomposing granite hillsides toward steep ravines. These trails eventually end at one of the nicest stretches of shoreline Lake Tahoe has to offer. Along the way, incredible wind-carved granite boulders dot the hillsides in every direction. Golden patina edges, black diorite knobs and textured slopers cover the majority of the blocks. Perched on a rolling hillside, many of the boulders are easily spotted from Highway 89, and almost all of them are offset by the dramatic backdrop of Lake Tahoe’s West Shore.

+++

Located just footsteps from Highway 89, it’s not surprising that many local and visiting climbers have stopped the car to check out this area’s uniquely shaped boulders. The first waves of climbers to visit D.L. Bliss State Park make up just a small portion of the region’s many mysterious and nearly unrecorded bouldering exploits. Between the late 1970s and late 1990s, folks like Kurt Smith, Dimitri Barton, Dan Osman, and Dave and Mike Hatchett were among the regular visitors. The outstanding classics at Bliss had their names and grades passed down through the generations, but some of the more obscure problems and their first ascent records were subsequently lost to time.

By the early 2000s, bouldering at Bliss had been popularized by magazine articles, ads and a few guidebooks, but development didn’t stop in the hidden corners of the park’s ravines and farthest reaches. Folks like Jon Thompson, Dave Griffith, Jimmy Haden, Charlie Barrett, J. Sell, Joel Zerr, Kyle O’Meara, Dave Hatchett and Noah Kaufman helped keep the torch lit with exploration well into the 2000s.

“It was exhilarating to find new lines of a modern standard at Bliss,” said eight-year Tahoe resident Noah Kaufman. “The notion that there were new lines to open and new mega-classics to establish was ever-present and exciting. We were giddy knowing that we were establishing classics in a world-class zone for future generations to enjoy and test themselves against. It was a very positive scene for many years. Our tribe of about 10 rotating serious boulderers was always attacking new projects and then hiking on rest days. It suddenly became a game for us: Who can find the classics that were either too hard or too tall for previous Bliss developers to be concerned with?”

Kaufman’s 2010 ascent of the V9 highball arête *Pure Bliss* easily ranks among the most impressive first ascents of the last decade at D.L. Bliss State Park. “Although I did the actual first ascent of *Pure Bliss*, it was a team effort,” said Kaufman. “It required lots of pads and psych. Because it has a ridiculously complex and abstruse sequence within it, the line took multiple days of work. *Pure Bliss* was named by the discovery team [Jon Thompson, Jimmy Haden and Dave Griffith], and that is part of our etiquette. We try to involve everyone in the first ascent process. The first ascensionist will often ask the line’s discoverer what they propose for a name. In this case, Jon Thompson thought up the perfect name, and *Pure Bliss* was born.”

“Bliss is not tapped out, but it does get tougher and tougher to find new lines, and we scoured the area pretty damn hard,” added Kaufman. “I challenge all climbers to go out and discover, to see and open new lines. Repeating climbs can be gratifying, but if Tahoe has taught me anything, it’s that developing new problems is a way to be a deeper part of our tribe’s culture and history. Someday we will all be dust. Even within that truth remains an objective fact that a mysteriously perfect natural sculpture was discovered, cleaned and climbed by you. That phenomenon somehow transcends time.”

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The bouldering at D.L. Bliss State Park is comprised of three major areas that are all easily accessed from Highway 89. North Bliss, Middle Bliss and South Bliss all offer a unique variety of bouldering options and climbing styles that perfectly suit everyone from the strongest boulderers to absolute novices. Although some of the newer lines are tall and require a plethora of pads and spotters for protection, most of the problems at all three Bliss areas offer excellent rock quality, friendly holds and safe landings in equal measure.



THE SIGHT OF TURQUOISE-BLUE WATER, ISLANDS, WATERFALLS AND THE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS LAKE TAHOE SHORELINE HAVE MADE HIGHWAY 89 FAMOUS, BUT FOR GENERATIONS OF ROCK CLIMBERS, THIS ROAD HAS ALSO PROVIDED UNPARALLELED ACCESS TO SOME OF CALIFORNIA’S BEST GRANITE BOULDERING.

Obe Carrion enjoys the solitude at North Bliss.





LEFT Hanna Copper traversing on the Ladder Boulder.

BELOW Hanna Copper on *Grim Reaper* (V3).



5-STAR ROUTES

Grim Reaper (V3)

Bliss Arête (V4)

Battle Cry (V5)

Pure Bliss (V9)

Vaporized (V11)

THE BETA

GETTING THERE:

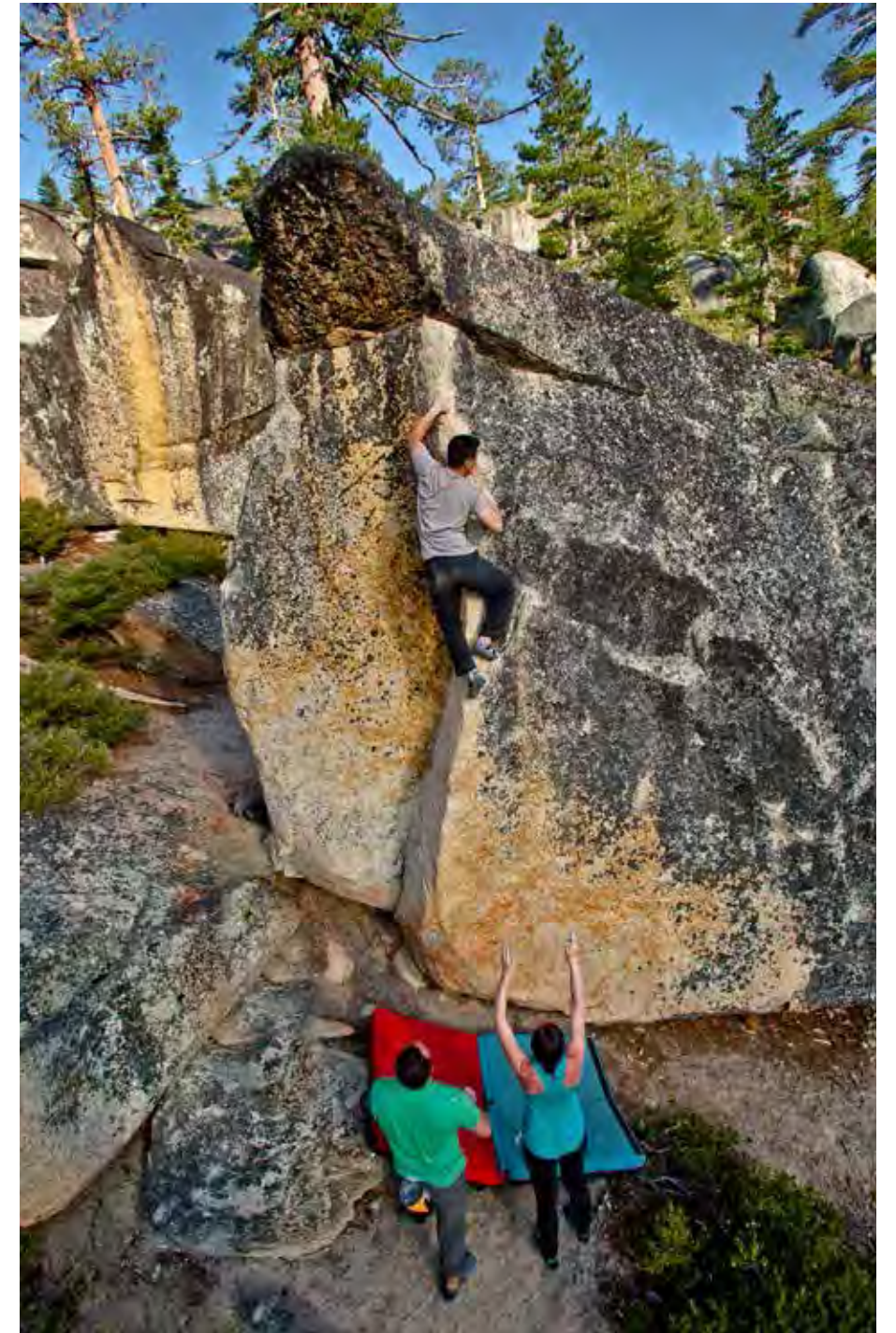
D.L. Bliss State Park is located one mile north of Emerald Bay on Highway 89 along the West Shore of Lake Tahoe. All of the boulders in this vicinity are on the east side of Highway 89 and are spread out between five areas: North Bliss, Bliss Entrance, Bliss Campground, Middle Bliss and South Bliss.

WHERE TO STAY:

Camping can be found at D.L. Bliss State Park. Water and facilities are on site. For the nearest groceries, head a few miles north to the town of Tahoma.

GUIDEBOOK:

Bouldering Lake Tahoe, Northwest Shore Edition, by Dave Hatchett



Kenny Suh tops out at Middle Bliss.

IF TAHOE HAS TAUGHT ME ANYTHING, IT'S THAT DEVELOPING NEW PROBLEMS IS A WAY TO BE A DEEPER PART OF OUR TRIBE'S CULTURE AND HISTORY.



SATURN’S LAST ORBIT

For five years, I lived the dream. I traveled. I climbed. I slept in the back of my station wagon, sandwiched between the wheel well and four boxes of climbing gear. The ceiling light dangled from the wires for a few years. I called it my chandelier. I ignored the dilapidated state, dreaming of something better. I mean, have you ever had sex in the back of a Saturn station wagon? Yeah, me neither.

In April, I drove my Saturn into the Valley. My car rattled with character. The driver-side doors only opened from the outside. A Berkeley hood rat keyed the lock a few years ago, making the vehicle accessible with a pair of scissors. The back smelled of the more than 1,000 nights I slept inside it.

As I passed Reed’s Pinnacle, the motor cut. I tried to roll-start my car. No luck. I tried again. Still no luck. I coasted downhill for five miles before pulling to the side of the road. I towed the car to Yosemite Search and Rescue, where Werner and I pulled the spark plugs, kicked the tires and vainly used defibrillators on the rig. The Yosemite garage mechanics charged me all my money—\$400—and then an-

nounced the vehicle’s death. I ignored my abysmal financial state and went climbing. My life was falling apart, but I dreamed of sending. I was almost there.

Blood poured from my elbow. Twenty-three pitches of slab and offwidth fatigued my muscles. The nine hours of climbing left me staring at the boulder problem on the *Freerider*. Three bolts and 11 moves sat between me and free climbing El Capitan in a day. I grabbed the holds. I wrapped my thumb around my finger. I pinched the granite loaf. Over 30 days on the route, the June sun beat me. I squeezed harder on the granite. I pulled harder. I still fell. I tried again. And again. And again. The first trickles of red stained the rock from where the granite split my finger tip. I was too run down. I would not see my dream through.

I wanted to untie and jump. At the very least, I wanted to sink into the ground. I had no car, no money and no home. The only thing that fucked me all spring was El Cap.

Most of the climbers call the company Last Chance. Two old-school wall climbers hire a bunch of climbers and vagrants to perform the graveyard work that no one in the park will do. Desperate for cash, I worked a night shift cleaning out trash cans with two derelicts, a convict and a pornographer. At 2 a.m., we emptied the trash cans of burger wrappers, ice cream sandwiches and dead squirrels with tampons in their mouths. Then we scraped three inches of ketchup slime from the cans. I told my boss about graduating from UCSC with a degree in economics and business management. “Good,” he said, “You can be in charge of everything that’s not important.”

After three weeks of this amazing job, I had enough money for a time bomb with wheels. I decided to get something that screamed masculinity, something that would double my condom budget, something to declare my manhood. I bought a minivan.

Mason Earle, a climbing friend from Yosemite, helped me build a bed in the back. I bought three inches of foam and lined the bottom of the bed. I loaded down my rig with thousands of feet of rope, climbing shoes, a crashpad, a rack and a few clothes. I made my new home as comfortable as possible.

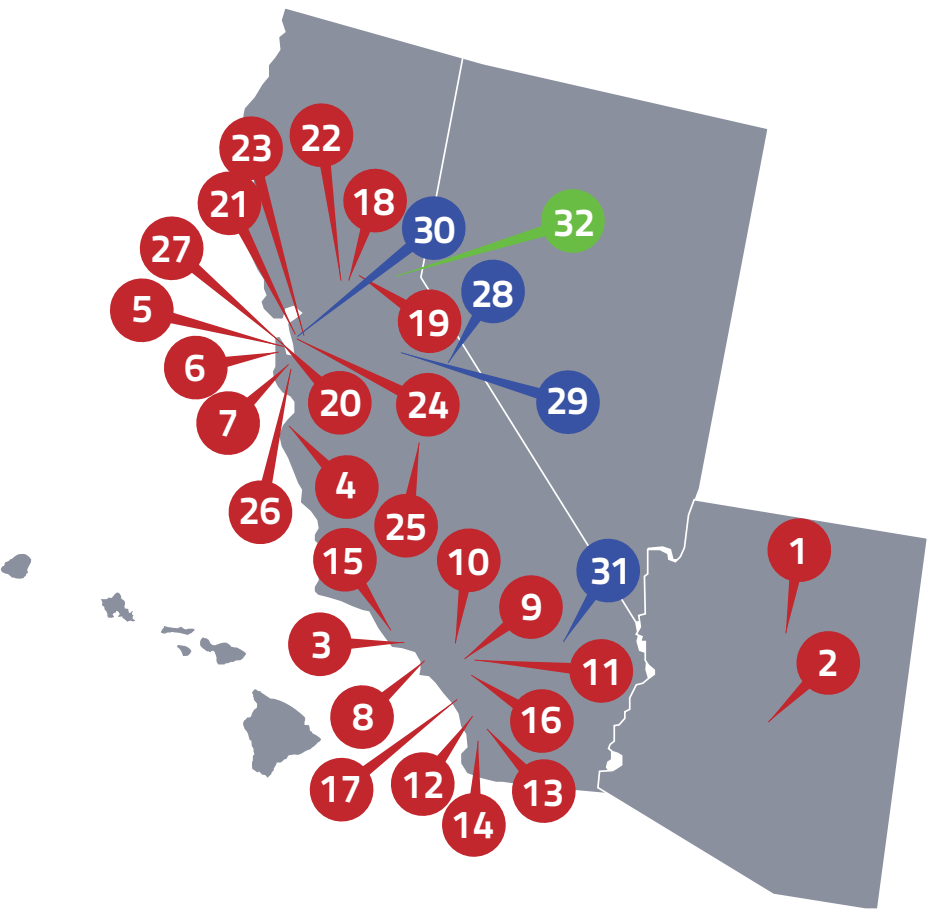
I drove to Canada. I had no money when I arrived, but I parked my car below The Chief. I started climbing. A few weeks of Squamish granite and I would return to El Capitan. My life held a bit more balance, my car less dilapidated. I held fast to my dreams. They would come true.

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Major Events

- **28. Craggin’ Classic Fall Highball, Bishop, CA**—Nov. 8-9
- **29. 2013 International Climbers’ Meet**
Yosemite National Park—Oct. 7-12
- **30. Pro Peek Event: San Francisco**—Oct. 29
- **31. Joshua Tree Spring Cling**—March 2014
- **32. Alpine Skills International** with its AMGA/

Guide Services

IFMGA trained/certified guides offers all-terrain backcountry ski mountaineering, avalanche education and climbing program Truckee, CA. alpineskills.com. (530) 582-9170 (June–November) and (530) 582-9170 (December–May).

Gym Discounts

- Discounts vary. Call, check americanalpineclub.org/ discounts, or head to your local gym with your AAC member card for the latest details.
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|--|---|
| → 1. Flagstaff Climbing Center
Flagstaff, AZ
(928) 556-9909 | (805) 557-1300 |
| → 2. Phoenix Rock Gym Tempe, AZ
(480) 921-8322 | → 4. Sanctuary Rock Gym Sand City, CA
(831) 899-2595 |
| → 3 Boulderdash Indoor Rock Climbing
Thousand Oaks, CA | → 5. Planet Granite San Francisco
San Francisco, CA
(415) 692-3434 |
| | → 6. Planet Granite Belmont Belmont, CA |

- (650) 591-3030
- **7. Planet Granite Sunnyvale** Sunnyvale, CA (408) 991-9090
- **8. Hanger 18 South Bay L.A.** Hawthorne, CA (310) 973-3388
- **9. Hanger 18 Riverside** Riverside, CA (951) 359-5040
- **10. Hanger 18 Upland** Upland, CA (909) 931-5991
- **11. Threshold Climbing Gym**
- Riverside, CA (951) 742-8479
- **12. Solid Rock San Marcos** San Marcos, CA (760) 480-1429
- **13. Solid Rock Old Town** San Diego, CA (619) 299-1124
- **14. Solid Rock Poway** Poway, CA (858) 748-9011
- **15. Vertical Heaven Indoor Rock Climbing Gym** Ventura, CA (805) 339-9022