

CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

FALL 2018
Nº26

FREE



INSIDE

24/BEHIND THE LENS: ANTHONY LAPOMARDO
38/CLARK CANYON
54/LOST IN SPACE



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CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

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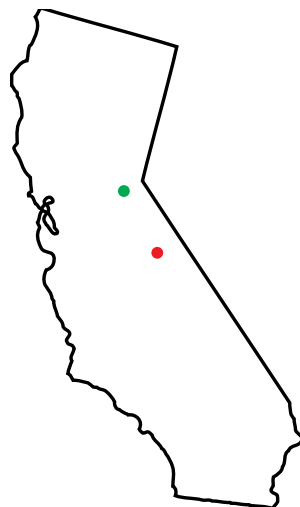
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FEATURES

38/CLARK CANYON
54/LOST IN SPACE



ON THE COVER

Dennis Baumsteiger climbing
Campground Arête (V3),
Sonora Pass.
IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING

THIS PAGE

Ander Rockstad enjoying
pre-dawn coffee on Heart
Ledges while climbing *Freerider*
(5.13a), Yosemite National Park.
IMAGE + ALTON RICHARDSON

“CLIPS LIKE BUTTER,
KNOTS PERFECTLY, UNTIES EASILY,
STANDS UP TO ABRASION—
SHALL I KEEP GOING?”



CATALYST 9.0

Same UIAA fall rating as many 10.0 mm ropes



CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

CALIFORNIACLIMBERMAGAZINE.COM

PUBLISHER
Dean Fleming
ART DIRECTOR
Alton Richardson

SENIOR CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Jerry Dodrill, Jim Thornburg
SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Fitz Cahall, James Lucas

CONTRIBUTORS
Anthony Lapomardo, Alton Richardson, Jim Thornburg,
Luke Mast, Rebecca Swanson, Brad Perry, Dean Fleming

CALIFORNIA CLIMBER
22502 Colorado River Dr.
Sonora, Ca 93570
Phone: (209) 768-0110
Email: climb108@yahoo.com

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Tammy Wilson climbing *Lack of Honor* (5.11d) at Clark Canyon.



JIM THORNBURG

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EDITOR'S NOTE

IN THE FALL OF 2016 some friends and I continued to develop a small cluster of granite rocks along the Middle Fork Stanislaus River near the Sonora Pass Highway. More of a swimming hole than an actual climbing area, my friends began referring to the zone as “Dean’s World.” I guess the zip line that I had rigged from a nearby bridge to send people, bags of gear and ice-chests full of snacks and beers to the base of the rocks suited my style of utter laziness and complete contempt for hiking heavy loads to “real” crags. The short blocks here also lent themselves to well-protected overhanging sport climbs and squat little cracks. It was a place where the fear of falling, dying, struggling, or even trying hard, pretty much didn’t exist. Or so I thought.

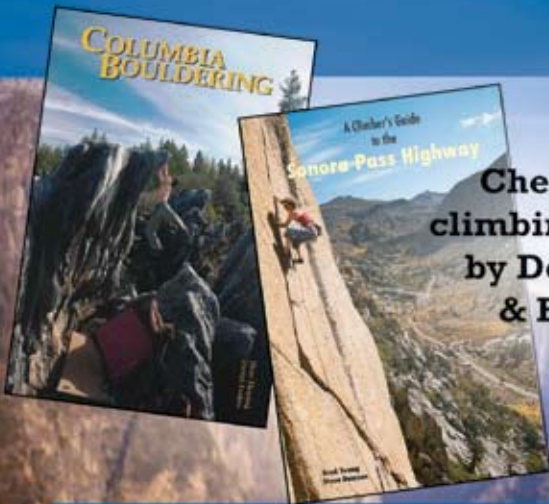
As dumpy as these little rocks are, I thought that their position directly over the Stanislaus River Canyon could make for a nice photo—especially one little hump of granite that sported some cool chicken head knobs next to a very uniform finger crack above a five foot roof. I had scrubbed, equipped and climbed the route in early September, so when my birthday came around in early October, I managed to use my “special day” to coax some friends into a quick photo-shoot.

Taking pictures of little rocks can be convenient; there’s usually an easy approach to the summits of the formations and simple rigging with shorter lengths of rope. Since I had spent the previous month rappelling and cleaning lines on this same block, I knew that I needed only a few slings and a 70-foot rope to reach the base by using a sizable pine tree on top as an anchor. I also knew that this 70-foot rope would actually land a few feet off the ground, which perfectly kept the rope from landing in a massive poison oak bush near the base of the climb. With my friends waiting patiently below, I rigged the rope and began to descend toward the roof, meanwhile making small mid-way anchor points to help draw me to the side of the route in order to get a good angle on the climb and the river below. “This should be a no-brainer,” I thought.

As I neared the lip of the roof I noticed a few wasps buzzing in and out of the splitter finger crack that accepted protection for the final bit of knob climbing to the anchor. I felt a sense of responsibility for this route and my friends who were about to climb it, so I decided to do a little poking around to see how many wasps were inside the crack to make sure it was safe for a lead ascent. When I stuffed a few small cams in

‘WITH EYES CLOSED, A HALF-RACK OF CAMS ON MY HARNESS AND FULL CAMERA GEAR STRAPPED TO MY SIDE, I PLUMMETED ABOUT THIRTY-FIVE FEET OF CLEAN AIR UNTIL I ZIPPED OFF THE END OF THE ROPE AND CRASHED FULL SPEED INTO A HUGE POISON OAK BUSH AT THE BASE OF THE CLIFF.’

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Paul Robinson> Black Flag> FA> V11> South Africa> @Fernando Jimenez

EDITOR’S NOTE

the crack the little devils buzzed away quickly. “No big deal,” I thought. Still, it seemed best to rappel all the way under the roof and make sure that section was clear of wasps as well.

Slowly lowering out slack through my Gri-Gri, I pushed my feet into the lip of the roof until my body cleared the edge and then swung under the ceiling. In the shadow of the roof I saw a few little wasps buzzing around a small flake that jutted from a dihedral – the crucial jug used to pull the lip of the roof system. I asked my friends to kindly move clear of the base of the route, and explained that I intended to “bang on this thing,” to see if it was loaded with wasps. I swung into the roof, grabbed the flake and gave her one quick tap with a 3” cam. This sent about 500 wasps screaming into the air. I screeched in terror as I also lost hold of the 3” cam and my grasp on the flake. I sent the #3 sailing into the air as I began spinning in circles on the end of the rope while simultaneously being attacked by an unimaginable number of angry wasps.

Sometimes it’s best to fight like a cornered wild animal, to thrash your way out of a situation with ferocity. Other times it’s best to resign one’s self to a sense of complete loss; like a calm faun that’s just been captured by a pack of wolves. I can’t really tell you what I was thinking as I spun in space with wasps to every imaginable direction. I only remember reaching down, grabbing

the handle of my Gri-Gri, and then pulling it wide open. With eyes closed, a half-rack of cams on my harness and full camera gear strapped to my side, I plummeted about thirty-five feet of clean air until I zipped off the end of the rope and crashed full speed into a huge poison oak bush at the base of the cliff. I opened my eyes to see through the hedges of poison oak that the wasps had decided to follow me into the bushes. From here I army-rolled down a steep embankment, crashed into the river below, and then swam to the opposite shore.

<~~~>

Sometimes climbing photography is hanging out with friends in pristine aspen meadows, snapping off a few shots before the sun goes down and everyone heads for beers at the hot springs. Other times you walk away wondering how you didn’t just die. Some of us aren’t that lucky. In the summer of 2010 our good friend and contributor Anthony Lapomardo nearly paid the ultimate price while attempting an early morning sunrise climbing photo when he pushed himself beyond his limits, his car speeding off Highway 80 and rolling numerous times into the Utah salt flats.

Lapomardo is quick to admit that he’s “fucked up more shots than I can count. Soft focus, slow shutter, harsh highlights, the list goes on.” But what climbing photographer, or any photographer, isn’t capable of honestly saying this? “It was an uphill battle,” added Lapomardo, “but it wasn’t all so bleak, there were plenty of moments of levity, and in spite of everything, I still cherish those late nights and early mornings. I especially cherish the moment I see one of my shots in print.”

In this issue of California Climber we’re proud to offer our friend Anthony a venue to tell his story of both success and failure in the tough field of climbing photography. We’re also as psyched as he is to see some of his best shots come to life on the printed pages of this magazine. For more, check out this season’s Behind the Lens department on page 24. [-DEAN FLEMING](#)



EVENTS

EVENTS

SUNDAYS AT 9AM : Yosemite Climbing Association's Climber Coffee in Camp 4

OCTOBER 12th–14th: Access Fund's Adopt-a-Crag at Pinnacles National Park

OCTOBER 12th–14th: Friends of Joshua Tree, Climb Smart Event at Joshua Tree National Park

OCTOBER 14th: Bishop Area Climber's Coalition Tablelands Clean-Up

NOVEMBER 2nd–4th: American Alpine Club, Craggin Classic Series, Bishop Fall Highball

COMPETITIONS

OCTOBER 12th: Touchstone Climbing Series at Sacramento Pipeworks, Sacramento

OCTOBER 27th: Touchstone Climbing Series at Verdigo Boulders, Burbank

NOVEMBER 10th: Touchstone Climbing Series Battle of the Bay at Dogpatch Boulders, San Francisco

SEPTEMBER 9th: 2018 Bouldering Local - Planet Granite San Francisco - San Francisco, CA

SEPTEMBER 15th: 2018 Bouldering Local - Rock City - Anaheim, CA

SEPTEMBER 29th: 2018 Bouldering Local - Grotto - San Diego, CA

OCTOBER 6th: 2018 Bouldering Local - Rockreation - Los Angeles, CA

OCTOBER 13th: 2018 Bouldering Local - High Altitude Fitness - Incline Village, NV

OCTOBER 20th: 2018 Bouldering Local - Hangar 18 - Riverside, CA

OCTOBER 20th: 2018 Bouldering Local - Mesa Rim Reno - Reno, NV

OCTOBER 27th: 2018 Bouldering Local - Granite Arch Climbing Center - Rancho Cordova, CA

OCTOBER 27th: 2018 Bouldering Local - The Factory - Orange, CA

NOVEMBER 3rd: 2018 Bouldering Local - Pacific Edge Climbing Gym - Santa Cruz, CA

NOVEMBER 10th: 2018 Bouldering Local - Bridges Rock Gym - El Cerrito, CA

NOVEMBER 17th: 2018 Bouldering Local - Rocknasium - Davis, CA

NOVEMBER 17th: 2018 Bouldering Local - Sender One - Santa Ana, CA

DECEMBER 8th: 2018 Bouldering Regional - Sacramento Pipeworks - Sacramento, CA

DECEMBER 8th: 2018 Bouldering Regional - Sender One LAX - Los Angeles, CA

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Alex Schwilkart placing a Dragon Cam 8 on the Scott-Burke off-width, Freerider (5.12a), El Capitan. Photo: Frank Kretschmann

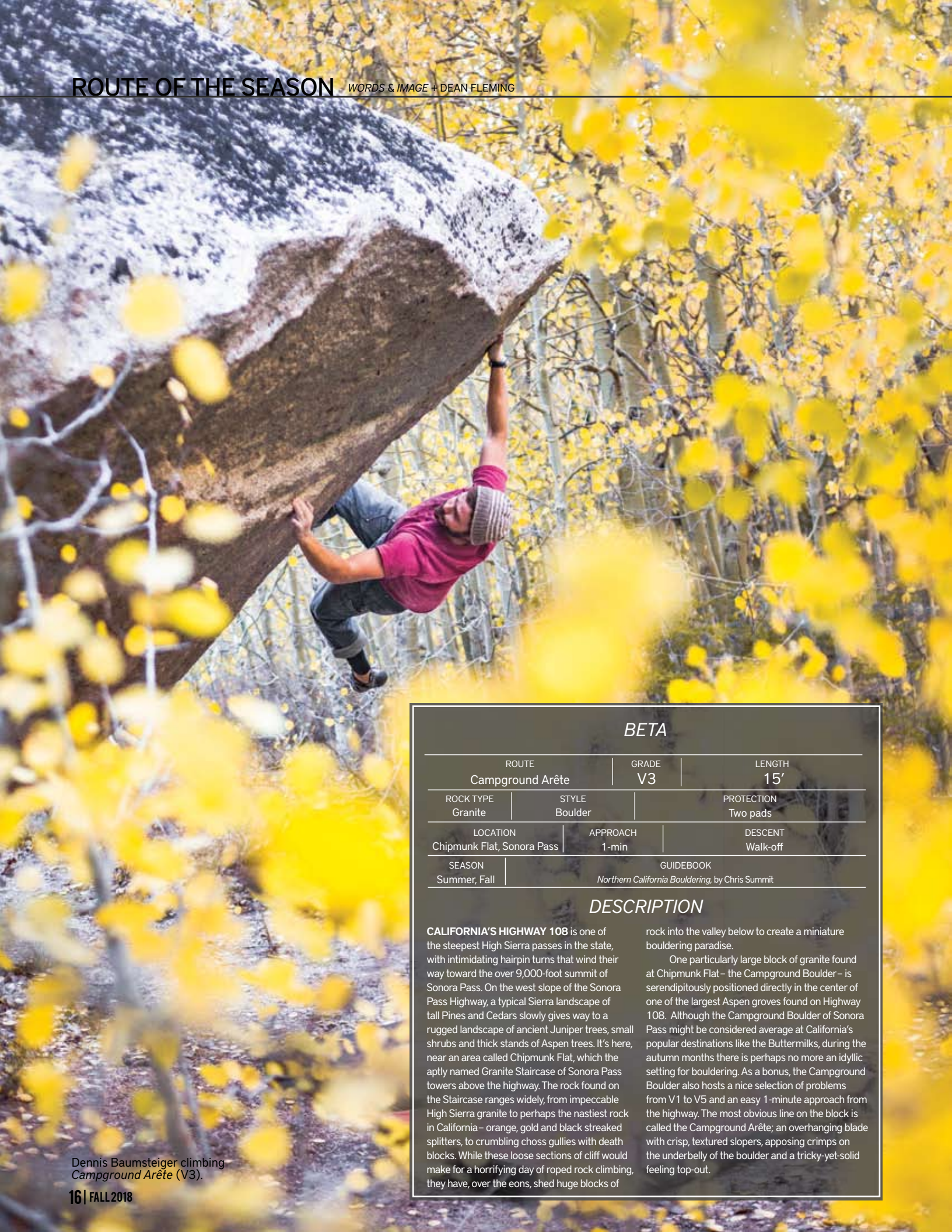


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Dennis Baumsteiger climbing
Campground Arête (V3).

BETA

ROUTE Campground Arête		GRADE V3	LENGTH 15'
ROCK TYPE Granite	STYLE Boulder	PROTECTION Two pads	
LOCATION Chipmunk Flat, Sonora Pass	APPROACH 1-min	DESCENT Walk-off	
SEASON Summer, Fall	GUIDEBOOK <i>Northern California Bouldering</i> , by Chris Summit		

DESCRIPTION

CALIFORNIA'S HIGHWAY 108 is one of the steepest High Sierra passes in the state, with intimidating hairpin turns that wind their way toward the over 9,000-foot summit of Sonora Pass. On the west slope of the Sonora Pass Highway, a typical Sierra landscape of tall Pines and Cedars slowly gives way to a rugged landscape of ancient Juniper trees, small shrubs and thick stands of Aspen trees. It's here, near an area called Chipmunk Flat, which the aptly named Granite Staircase of Sonora Pass towers above the highway. The rock found on the Staircase ranges widely, from impeccable High Sierra granite to perhaps the nastiest rock in California—orange, gold and black streaked splitters, to crumbling choss gullies with death blocks. While these loose sections of cliff would make for a horrifying day of roped rock climbing, they have, over the eons, shed huge blocks of

rock into the valley below to create a miniature bouldering paradise.

One particularly large block of granite found at Chipmunk Flat—the Campground Boulder—is serendipitously positioned directly in the center of one of the largest Aspen groves found on Highway 108. Although the Campground Boulder of Sonora Pass might be considered average at California's popular destinations like the Buttermilks, during the autumn months there is perhaps no more an idyllic setting for bouldering. As a bonus, the Campground Boulder also hosts a nice selection of problems from V1 to V5 and an easy 1-minute approach from the highway. The most obvious line on the block is called the Campground Arête; an overhanging blade with crisp, textured slopers, apposing crimps on the underbelly of the boulder and a tricky-yet-solid feeling top-out.







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“CLIFFORD”

Luke Mast and his 1995 Toyota Tacoma

CC: Where did you find Clifford and how much did he cost you?

LM: I got him in Colorado for \$6,000 with pretty low mileage. I was bored at work searching Craigslist, and when I saw Clifford I left work immediately. When I bought him I had never driven a manual transmission before, so it was pretty interesting trying to get through downtown Denver in rush hour traffic.

I’ve noticed that the interior kind of looks like Merlin the wizard’s spice rack. What’s with all the skulls?

I just like dead shit, I think it’s pretty. But I have way too many skulls and bones, so I usually end up leaving some at friends’ houses.

How long have you lived like this?

I’ve lived in the truck now for a total of three years. The good times have included a trip to Baja for New Years with lots of friends, where we drink a ton of Tacate, drove 70mph on the beach and our biggest worry was dealing with an extremely horny 1-year-old dog. The worst times really aren’t that bad though – usually just indecisiveness about choosing the next place to visit, or making dinner with just beans and rice in the truck. But I currently have 55 pounds of

Salmon and 25 bottles of home-made hard cider and wine from past Merlin experiments.

How’s the gas mileage? Wait, who cares about that, did you say you have 25 bottles of apple booze in your truck? How did that happen?

I just got obsessed with collecting apples and I ended up loading all the usable space in the truck with apples from local orchards or friends’ houses. I then accidentally made 80 gallons of apple booze. So yeah, it’s heavy, but it’s a party on four wheels.

How does Clifford do off road? Do your apple booze bottles break?

No broken bottles yet, and the truck kills it in sand and mud. I’ve never been stuck, and not for a lack of trying.

You’re one of the few people that I’ve met that has lived out of a truck while still working a full time government job. You’ve since quit that racket, but how was it?

That was when I worked over in Grand Junction Colorado, and it was OK. I’d usually park on some completely barren dirt patch near my office, but I never had problems with rednecks, and I was able to save up enough money to install a hydrogen system in the truck.

How did that hydrogen system work out?

My gas mileage increased to 30mpg and I was saving tons of fuel by burning water.... Wait, you’re not actually writing that down are you? My truck’s motor actually exploded, almost immediately, so I had to replace an otherwise perfectly good motor. It sucked big time.

Damn, did you do the motor replacement yourself, or take it to a shop?

I did it myself, with the help of some friends. It was pretty chill, but it took a long time. Dealing with the wiring harness, and the intake manifold, which we dubbed “The Octopus” was the most challenging part.

Well, if your motor doesn’t explode again, where are you headed next?

I’m headed over to Lake Tahoe to climb with some friends, and then over to Utah for a few months to climb on sandstone. But I’ll be back in California again, just in time to bottle the cider that we made this fall. And maybe do some climbing...

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METOLIUS SESSION II CRASH PAD

{ \$149 }

A little over a year ago we received and tested the first version of the Metolius Session crash pad, and I'll have to admit, we don't usually treat these tester pads with the care they probably deserve. I can specifically remember stuffing the pad full of heavy bolting gear and then heaving it off a 60-foot tall bridge in an attempt to land it at the bottom of a cliff we were trying to develop. The pad slammed into a sharp rock, bounced about 15-feet into the air, and then landed smack-dab in the middle of a raging river. We fished the pad out of a log-jam a few hundred yards downstream, dried it out on the banks for a few hours, and then lobbed onto it from the top of some tall boulders we found at the base of the cliff. To say the Session crash pad took a licking and kept on ticking is a pretty good understatement – it's still on the top of the pile and the first pad I'll grab for a quick mission to the local boulders.

When we heard that Metolius had re-worked the Session pad to make it even better, we knew we had



to test this puppy out. With a redesigned flap closure system the Session II is easier to load and reverses to cover shoulder straps while bouldering. Two new drag handles make it easier to position while open and the burly 900d poly outer fabric continues to protect the pad from abrasion. Cross-clipper logo rug for cleaning shoes, padded shoulder straps, a waist belt, and suitcase-style carry handles round out the outside of the pad, while 4" sandwich foam designed for maximum impact absorption and angled hinges eliminate the gutter on the interior of the pad. As per-usual with all Metolius pads, the innovative speed-hook aluminum buckles are guaranteed for life. At a slim nine pounds and affordable price of \$149, the Session II is quite simply a better version of one of the best valued crash pads on the market today.

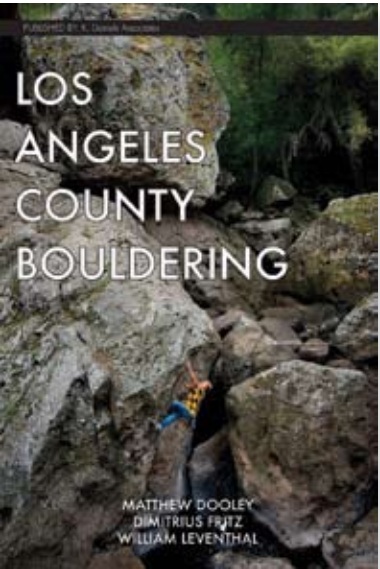
LOS ANGELES COUNTY BOULDERING

{ \$35 }

The Los Angeles climbing scene has helped cut the teeth of many climbing legends, including Royal Robbins, Yvon Chouinard, Bob Kamps, John Bachar, Lynn Hill, John Long, and countless others. With boulders strewn along creeks just minutes from the beach to alpine bouldering above 6,000ft, the diversity of rock around Los Angeles County is astonishing and offers something for every level of climber. With decades of power and technique under their belts, authors Matthew Dooley, Dimitrios Fritz and William Leventhal have created one of the best comprehensive guidebooks that Los Angeles County bouldering has ever seen. After an exciting forward by John Long, over 975 problems descriptions span 11 different areas in this book's 320 full color pages.

Los Angeles County Bouldering includes climbs at Temporal Boulders, Miniholland, Doomsday Boulders, Malibu Creek State Park, Tunnel Boulders, Martian's Landing, Stoney Point, Purple Stones, Cobblestones, Tick Rock, and Horse Flats. The detailed problem maps and photo-topos in this book have been drawn using the modern method first found in landmark guidebooks like

Bishop Bouldering, with grade oriented color-coded lines and numbers for reference, while the book's overview maps and driving/approach directions are clearly labeled, easy to reference and cleanly drawn. As if icing on the cake, top notch photography by local artists including Devlin Gandy, Mathew Dooley and Joshua Roth provide exciting motivation to brave the LA traffic to the mountains. Basically, if you live in Los Angeles and you like bouldering, this book is a steal at \$35. Well done gentlemen!



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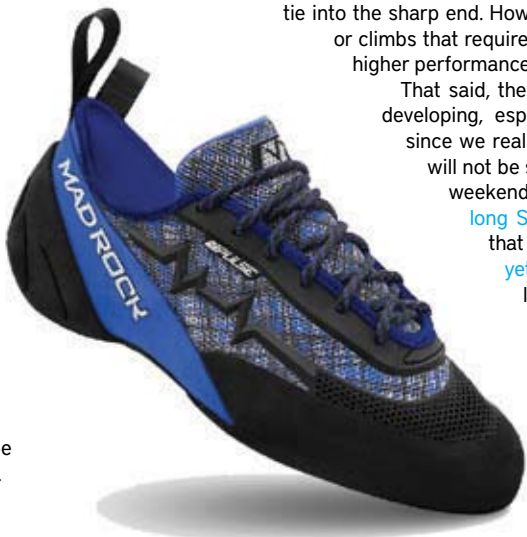
Metolius



MAD ROCK PULSE

{ \$89 }

Prolific Shuteye Ridge route developer Graham Doe referred to the Mad Rock Pulse shoe as “the perfect route equipping shoe,” adding “you can be in them for long stints comfortably, but when it’s time to send they perform awesome!” After hearing this, we knew we had to try a few pairs for ourselves. Since the Pulse comes in both a wide “Positive” and narrow “Negative” fit, we chose to order a set of each to see how the fits compared to both folks with wide and narrow feet. We found the fit to be [surprisingly stiff for a low-top shoe](#), yet when sized appropriately this stiffness allowed for quite a bit of comfort when standing in aiders or hanging from a harness to sequence moves and protection placements. We even found ourselves wearing the shoes when scrubbing moss and debris off of climbs before equipping them, as the shoes [fit quite comfortably](#) yet still allowed you to toe into small edges and cracks to stabilize for scrubbing. As Graham suggested; when it came time to send, we’d usually just wipe the dirt from the sole of the Pulse and



tie into the sharp end. However, for routes near our redpoint limit or climbs that required a more sensitive shoe, we’d opt for a higher performance model.

That said, the Pulse really is a great shoe for route developing, especially on techy vertical granite, but since we realize that most folks reading this review will not be scrubbing moss into their eyes on their weekend excursions, we’d suggest this shoe for [long Sierra routes or easy multipitch climbs](#) that require a lot of comfort in a [lightweight yet fairly high performance shoe](#). Both the low volume and high volume versions offer a highly breathable mesh upper, an easy-to-tighten speed lacing system, a molded tongue for added support and a 3D molded heel with an EVA foam insert. The Pulse is also [vegan friendly](#).

DMM ALPHA TRAD QUICKDRAW

{ \$31 }

After nearly six months of testing the Alpha Trad quickdraw from DMM, we’ve come to the conclusion that this may be [DMM’s most ergonomic and utilitarian quickdraw](#). The Alpha Trad is forged with a back design and shape that fits naturally in the hand and combines with its [large gate opening](#) to make the carabiner very easy to clip. Connected with a dynatec 11mm sling, the Alpha Trad quickdraw gives excellent handling weather sport, trad or winter climbing. Full sized carabiners are easy to handle when pumped or wearing gloves, while the 11mm dynatec is lightweight and robust. Grooves on the back bar increase grip for confident handling. A secondary forging process creates a recess in the carabiner’s nose that houses the gate notch. This creates a smooth inner profile that prevents snagging on gear, ropes and slings. It also means the nose of the carabiner is wider than the gate, guarding against accidental gate opening caused by rubbing on rock. DMM uses I-Beam construction techniques that allow carabiners to be [lighter without compromising strength](#). The Alpha Trad is a little bit pricey (although we did find some online deals around \$112 for a set of six) but if you’re looking for a super nice draw that can function very well in every aspect of rock climbing; this is definitely a product worth considering.



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Eric Odenthal bouldering in Castle Valley, UT. © Whit Richardson

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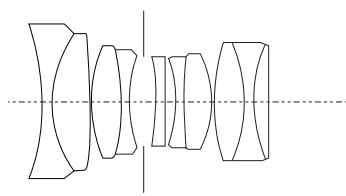


Colton Edson climbing
Moby Dick, Sonoma
Coast.

BEHIND THE LENS

WORDS & IMAGES + ANTHONY LAPOMARDO

A STEADY RHYTHMIC BEEP CARRIED ON ABOVE MY HEAD. MY EYES SLOWLY DIPPED FROM PITCH BLACK TO FUZZY COLORS. AS I PANNED MY HEAD AROUND THE ROOM I REALIZED THAT I WAS IN A HOSPITABLE BED. I NEVER LIKED HOSPITALS. I ASSUME NO ONE DOES, BUT THEY HAVE ALWAYS SCARED ME, WITH THEIR GRIM, STERILE SPACES THAT SEEM TO INVITE MORE VISION OF DEATH THAN HEALING. LOOKING DOWN I SAW THAT I WAS RESTRAINED TO THE BED. MY LEFT ARM WAS WRAPPED IN A FULL CAST. I FELT HEAVY BANDAGING ON MY HEAD. BENEATH THE BLANKETS THE MAJORITY OF MY UPPER BODY WAS DISCOLORED WITH SWIRLED GREEN AND PURPLE BRUISES. I WOULD LATER FIND THAT I HAD BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL FOR THE PREVIOUS THREE DAYS, COMATOSE, ONE DAY AWAY FROM A DECLARED VEGETATIVE STATE. IT MIGHT HAVE ENDED WITH A PULLED PLUG. “WHERE WAS I?” AND “HOW DID I GET HERE?” INSTINCTUALLY RAN THROUGH MY BRAIN BEFORE A LARGE DOSE OF MORPHINE PUSHED ME BACK INTO THE BLACK.



The last thing I remembered was leaving the Outdoor Retailer Trade Show in Salt Lake City; a notoriously grueling four-day event where industry professionals ruthlessly attempt to sell their products or services to anyone who will listen. I too was amongst the fray, pitching ideas, showcasing my portfolio and meeting with friends and family that have for the past five years been forced to join at this awkward event. I also remember making a huge mistake: leaving the trade show late in the evening in an attempt to make a late night run to shoot an early morning sunrise the next day.

Looking back, I can't recall if it was going to be a great shot or just another blip in my portfolio, but in my mind the push was worth it, just for the chance to see if I could make another half-baked idea come to life. I had plenty of sleep the night before, but I must have been exhausted from the show. The last thing I remember was feeling the tires rolling roughly on the gutter of the road as my left arm grabbed the wheel and violently tried to correct the cars trajectory, then black. From the police reports the car rolled 4 times and cratered into open dessert. First response crews had to torch and carve the driver side open to cut my unconscious body free from the seat which had pinned me against the steering wheel. From there I was airlifted to Reno emergency hospital and my parents were ripped awake by one of the possibly worst phone calls one can receive at 3am. They were told that their son had been in a major accident outside of Battle Mountain, he was in critical condition and they needed to get to Reno as fast as they could. At least that's what I was told. I honestly have no memory after my hand braced the wheel.

When I awoke the nurse on call gave me the prognosis; one dislocated shoulder, a fractured wrist, a broken left arm in six places, brain swelling, internal bleeding and a couple bruised ribs. Ten months of recovery. Strangely enough, everything in the car, including me, survived. All of my photo gear made it out with nothing but light scratches and glass shards to be plucked out from the crevices.

I could have stopped taking rock climbing pictures that day. Everyone would have understood. But instead of driving me inward to recover quietly, it made me want to shoot even more. Too study and learn during my downtime. Besides, I couldn't climb, so I figured the best I could do was work to haphazardly use my cast as a brace to awkwardly balance my camera. At first the results were mediocre, but as time passed it evolved into a mental battle of stubborn will against the need to always have a tripod on hand. I wouldn't say I got a "second lease on life," but the accident did change how I looked at things and what I wanted to see behind the lens.

<~~~>

And so I continued down the path of the full-time professional climbing photographer, with its endless hours spent scouting and rigging, or spinning stories to advertisers and editors to fund or green light projects. I lost money, had promises broken, and endured endless gas station stops to gear up on cheap coffee and sugary snacks while searching for internet connections to submit before deadlines. It was a flurry of late nights, droopy

eyelids, retinas burned by bright screens, searching for a single frame that would hopefully make the past 24 hours of suffering worth it. It was waiting out storms under ledges, changing tires at 1am, corrupted hard drives and bank accounts barely floating above the red.

I have cajoled, bribed, begged and convinced friends and athletes to assist me in my photography. They have generally suffered with me while we create an image together, lamenting during the process until they see the final capture. Through the years I have endured a lot of in the name of photography. Looking back, I believe that I have driven across California over 100 times only to be shut out by a random weather pattern that will not allow for the shot I was planning. Or I fucked it up. And believe me, I have fucked up more shots than I have nailed. Soft focus, slow shutter, harsh highlights, the list goes on. Some days it works, but others you find yourself desperately trying to rescue a shot in post-production with a strategic crop or a trick for softening motion blur while you unapologetically curse your camera as if it was solely responsible for what you are dealing with.

It was an uphill battle, but it wasn't all so bleak, there were plenty of moments of levity, and in spite of everything, I still cherish those late nights and early mornings. I especially cherish the moment you see one of your shots in print. The childish excitement is still hard to describe. There is a strange level of accomplishment when a perfect stranger enjoys one of your pictures.

<~~~>

Today, I look back at that car crash on I-80 as a reminder about how far to push myself. I use it as a barometer to understand when something might be worth the while. But even today, after years shooting, I will still sometimes ignore my better judgment. On occasion I'll work a full eight hour day and then spend an endless lonely night, driving through a blizzard in a two wheel drive vehicle without chains, the tires barley gripping the snuff as the rear end fish tails from side to side, the wiper blades barely keeping up with the snow flurries, the black McDonalds coffee warming my hand through cheap Styrofoam as I quickly pull from the torn tab on the lip just to keep my eyes from drifting off. Moments like these are common now; solo weekend-warrior style missions running all night to catch first light and grab that single shot that looked good on paper, sounded even better on the phone when you pitched it to an athlete, but ultimately may never see the light of day in print. But I still revel in the chance to capture them.

In the pages that follow you'll find a selection of my favorite images, compiled over the past decade of climbing and shooting in California. Each image holds a story and a moment I will remember, and it is these moments, not the photo itself that I have learned I miss the most from my time on the road. Whether it be hanging in your harness off the deck shooting the shit while you review a shot or pouring that first cup of coffee at 4am while you wait for the blue hour to begin. These moments, though brief, usually make a larger impact than the images they birthed.



Steven Roth climbing *Gnocchi* (V7) at the Buttermilks



RAGE AGAINST THE DYING OF THE LIGHT (V7)
YOSEMITE VALLEY

For years I dreamt of finding a boulder problem that overlooks the Valley floor. One day I asked one of my closest friends Joel Ruscher if he knew of anything and per usual he said, “no, but we should look.” So instead of bouldering we lined up the angle I wanted and began to hike deep into the talus above several established areas. What we found is the boulder problem pictured, but we would not clean it and climb it for a full year later. When I convinced Joel to join me to go check the line out again, what we found was still a completely untouched boulder and we cleaned it (as best we could with the tools on hand) and Joel worked out the beta for over two hours to grab the first ascent just as the light dropped into the tree line, which also helped give the boulder problem its namesake. One of the biggest joys for me was that this climb and this photo was something I had found two years ago with a good friend and still was able to share the completion of that vision with that same friend.

Joel Ruscher climbing *Rage Against the Dying of the Light* (V7), Yosemite Valley.

FLIGHT OF THE BUMBLE BEE (V8 X) BUTTERMILK COUNTRY

When most people see a storm, they turn the other way. But, a mentor of mine once said, always go towards the storm and you will be rewarded. I don't know if this was some flimsy philosophy that he haphazardly shared, but these words currently had me white knuckle gripping the steering wheel of my two-wheel drive car as it fish tailed violently through the back roads of Lake Tahoe towards Bishop. I was cold, I was tired and I could barley see through the sleet on my window. I promised a good friend I would shoot him on a line he had just sent and I was hoping that the snow would be a great backdrop for the photo I had been hoping to capture. I pulled into the cheap hotel we had agreed to split at 2am, my fenders hanging heavy with snow and we both had a good laugh at how horrendous my car looked. After sleeping just a few short hours we made our way out the Milks before anyone else had gotten up and we were rewarded with a layer of fresh powder. We were able to knock out the shot I had been dreaming about before the sun quickly dissolved the sleet below us.

Isamer Bilog climbing *Flight of the Bumblebee* (V8 X).





CROWN JEWEL (V10) SOUTH LAKE TAHOE

Social media is a funny thing, you can reach out to a perfect stranger and collaboration can be created in a matter of minutes. I had wanted to shoot this line since I had seen *Time in the Pines* featuring Kyle O'Meara years prior, but the season had never lined up. Several pilgrimages to reach this climb were shut down by snow, and with the weather window closing before I had to jump on a plane, I reached out to local Sacramento strong man Joe Diaz via Facebook. Within the week I was able to meet at the bottom of Icebox Road for another attempt on the line with an impending cold front and only 4 pads. Diaz is mostly known for comp climbing, but I had seen him recently on-sight hard lines in his torn up Converse. I did not know if he could actually pull it off. As we drove up my stomach was in knots, but to our surprise even with the temps at 40 degrees the road was clear except for a few downed trees. After a quick hike in and a small warm up, he began to battle the line. Again, my success is always tied directly into the success of the climber, so I felt every failure Joe felt and every fall from off the deck drove my knees to ache as well. After two hours of ground-up attempts he viciously latched the jug with a single spotter and took it to the top. We all screamed at the top of our lungs and our voices echoed through the cold wind. I don't think it was screams of joy, but relief that we all were walking away unscathed and had all accomplished our goals for the day, which included for Joe, not dying.

Joe Diaz climbing *Crown Jewel* (V10)



TERMINUS (V12), BUTTERMILK COUNTRY

They say the next big thing is just around the corner, well, the un-climbed arête that would later become *Terminus* (V12) was just that. Steven Roth and I had found this stunning arête high above the Pollen Grains, although we were not the first as a shiny new bolt sat atop it (also placed to work the face beside it called Gnocchi), but the arête had been untouched, as far as we knew. We were optimistically pessimistic when we found it but we went to work anyways. We went into town and borrowed 6 pads from local Tim Steel, which we strapped to the roof of my Mazda. After we arrived in the parking lot, we then took the car straps and lashed 4 pads apiece to our bodies along with photogear and supplies and began to “waddle” uphill to the peak of the Pollen Grains. The hike took us an hour and then we had to string the pads together to pull them over a steep wall that hid the monstrous knife blade. We spent the entire day alone, Steven working the moves and I snapping photos of the line from various angles - it was almost impossible to capture how grand this line was. After our first day, no luck, we came back up, again alone for day two. I think Steven and I both transferred our nervous energy to each other, we both wanted to see this thing go and grab an iconic image, but the send never came. After three weeks back and forth from the bay area to Bishop, the end of the climb still lay unlocked and on our last day Steven broke a key foot for him and we called it. That night as we carried all the pads down, I fell several times downhill with 4 pads strapped to my body, and we returned them to Tim at 9pm. As we drove home, we hit a massive blizzard, the car slid into a steep snow patch and we arrived home at 4am. I had to be awake for work at 6am, but I think this image was worth it all.

Steven Roth attempting *Terminus* (V12).

HEADS UP!

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PREVIOUS

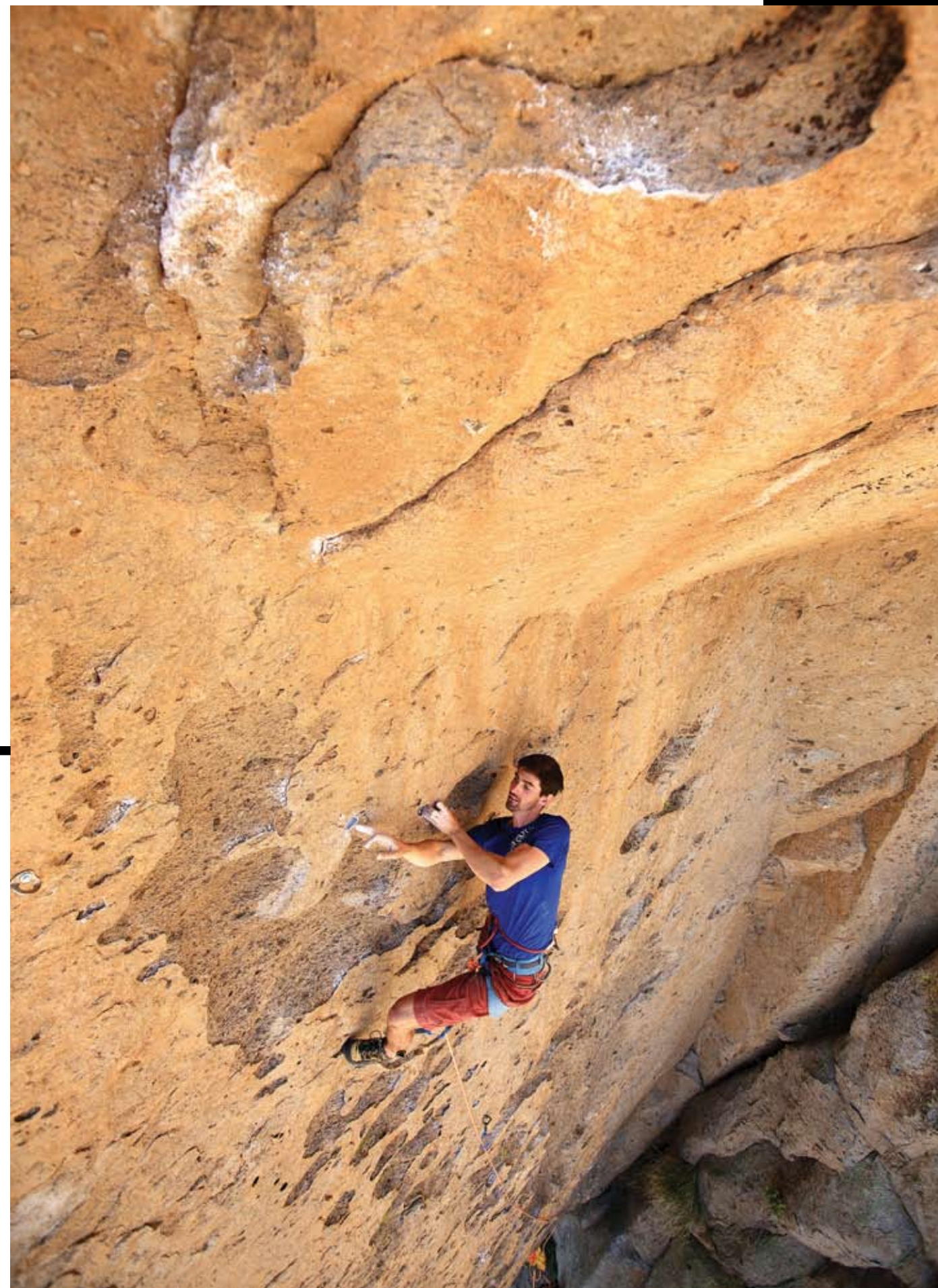
Tammy Wilson climbing an un-named 5.8 at Clark Canyon.

RIGHT

Kyle Queener moving through the crux of *Dirty Dancing* (5.12b), one of the finest routes at the Holey Wars Cliff.

HIDDEN BENEATH TALL JEFFERY PINES AND ROLLING HILLS IN THE MIDST OF LONG VALLEY IS A SMALL AREA OF LAND THAT IS THE EPITOME OF THE NORTHERN EASTERN SIERRA; A PEACEFUL ESCAPE FROM THE CIVILIZED WORLD, A PLACE KNOWN AS CLARK CANYON. IF YOU'VE EVER CLIMBED ON THE UNIQUE POCKETS OF THE VOLCANIC TABLELANDS NEAR BISHOP AND WONDERED HOW FUN IT WOULD BE TO SPORT CLIMB ON THE SAME ROCK, CLARK CANYON IS THE PLACE WHERE THESE TWO WORLDS COLLIDE. WITH BEAUTIFUL VIEWS OVERLOOKING THE SNOW-CAPPED SIERRA, A SERENE SETTING, AND FRIENDLY ROUTES, CLARK CANYON OFFERS A GREAT ESCAPE FROM THE GRANITE SLABS AND CRACKS THAT ARE SO ABUNDANT IN THE AREA. QUICK LOWER-OFF COLD SHUTS AND MUSSY HOOKS ATOP WELL-BOLTED FACES MAKES THIS PLACE AN EASILY ENJOYED SPORT CLIMBING AREA. THE ATTRACTION OF THIS PLACE IS THE GREAT VARIETY OF BOLTED LINES AT ALL GRADES FROM 5.6 TO 5.13 ON EVERY TERRAIN FROM SLAB TO OVERHANGING. LIKE MOST CLIMBING AREAS IN CALIFORNIA, TRADITIONALLY PROTECTED AND BOLT PROTECTED ROUTES SIT WITHIN FEET OF EACH OTHER WITHOUT MUCH FUSS. SLIGHTLY BROKEN UP INTO FOUR DIFFERENT AREAS AND SPREAD OUT IN A SMALL, OPEN CANYON WITH A FAIRLY SHORT APPROACH, CLARK CANYON IS PERHAPS THE EASTSIDE'S MOST FUN SPORT CLIMBING AREA.

Somewhere around the late 1970's Jim Stimson and Bill Taylor were driving around the scenic pumice roads of the Big Springs Area, northwest of Bald Mountain seeking out some new volcanic cliffs to climb on, as luck would have it they stumbled upon the Swiss Cheese Boulder (a house sized boulder at the mouth of Clark's) by hiking down the canyon from above. With the discovery of one of the most concentrated areas of volcanic rock around the Mammoth area and an eagerness for a good workout, this place saw quick development by many people. Originally a top-roping and bouldering area, the short, yet classic sport routes we climb today like Well Hung, Ruffles and most other lines in the potato patch were originally top-roped then soloed and never bolted for lead. Sport bolts didn't start to appear until the mid 1980s, when people saw the potential in the fun sport climbing to be had here. By the late 1990s this place was so popular it even sported its own guidebook "Rock Climbs of Clark Canyon" by Grant Hiskes. The history here, like all the other areas on the Eastside, is a who's who list of the diehard Yosemite climbers. Because of its close proximity to Tuolumne Meadows, Clark's became a much-appreciated sport climbing retreat from the unpredictable weather and the technical nature of the Tuolumne high country. With its gymnastic style and safe routes, Clark Canyon has now become the dry, Eastern Sierra sport climbing paradise we enjoy today.





Tammy Wilson
climbing *Lack of
Honor* (5.11d).



On August 4th, 2016 a wildfire started near Clark Canyon that continued to burn the surrounding areas, decimating much of the flora that thrived at the base and summits of the formations of Clark Canyon. Surprisingly, the routes at Clark Canyon seemed to survive the fire virtually un-scathed. Although the landscape surrounding the cliffs at Clark Canyon is not quite as serene as it once was, the blackened trees still provide an eerie feeling and some shade in summer months. The climbing at Clark Canyon is broken into four main areas: Area 13, Main Island, Potato Patch and the Parking Lot Area. Each of these four areas hosts a variety of climbing styles described below.

AREA 13

Those looking for 5.6 to 5.10 leads and top-ropes should be sure to check out the classic lines at Area 13 – a great place for the novice climber looking for well protected cracks and bolted lines on great rock.

MAIN ISLAND

If you're looking to get a little air under your feet and seeking something a bit harder than Area 13, the Main Island is a great cliff hosting the longest and hardest lines at Clark Canyon. The alcove, a small section of the main island, stays a bit warmer in cold weather and has some of the best pockets in the area. The stoned wheat thin cliff, checking in at around 200 feet tall is the tallest cliff for miles around. The plumb lines of the area are *Pull My Finger* (5.10a), a two or three pitch line full of great climbing that leads to a climactic roof finish with an outstanding view at your back and *Driller Instinct* (5.10d), a full ropes length of classic Clark Canyon rock. On the most northern end of the cliff is *Maltese Falcon* (5.12a) one of a few of the grade and one of the best around, sustained climbing lead to a high crux.

ABOVE

Tammy Wilson climbing an unnamed 5.8.

RIGHT

Kim Pfabe climbing *Wild Will's Arête* (5.8) at Area 13.

Just around the corner is *Shadow* (5.12d) one of the hardest lines in the canyon, technical face climbing to a sharp arête and then a powerful and fun crux boulder problem.

POTATO PATCH

For those looking to climb steeper faces and get a lot of pitches in at the 5.10 to 5.11 range, the potato patch is the place to go. The prize of the potato patch is the striking *King Spud* (5.11b/c), a five-bolt, overhanging tower of perfect holds, perhaps the best route in the canyon. *Ruffles* (5.10a) is another popular route, a bit cruxy to get off the ground but well worth a trip up the stellar pockets. *Well Hung* (5.10c) is a steep jug haul on great rock.

THE PARKING LOT AREA

The Parking Lot area is the smallest but closest to the road, and hosts one of the hardest routes in the canyon along with some of the best boulder problems.





THIS PAGE

Kim Pfabe climbing
Funny Bone (5.10b)
at The Alcove.

RIGHT

Tammy Wilson
climbing the incredibly
popular *Ruffles*
(5.10a), at the Potato
Patch area.





Tammy Wilson
climbing the incredibly
popular *Ruffles*
(5.10a), at the Potato
Patch area.

Kim Pfabe climbing
King Spud (5.11b) at
the Potato Patch.



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THE BETA

GETTING THERE

From Mammoth and the south: From the Highway 203/395 junction drive north on Highway 395 for 7.3 miles to Owens River rd. Go east on Owens River rd. for 2.1 miles to a left hand turn into Big Springs Campground. From Lee Vining and the north: From the Highway 120W/395 junction drive south on Highway 395 for 17.8 miles to Owens River rd. Go east on Owens River rd. for 2.1 miles to a left hand turn into Big Springs Campground. From Big Springs Campground: Drive north on dirt road 2S04 for 2.2 miles to a right hand turn onto dirt road 2S06, follow this for 0.9 miles to a four-way intersection stay straight on 2S06 for another 0.8 miles to a left turn staying on 2S06. Follow this north (worst section of road) for 0.4 miles to a right turn onto 1S47. Follow this for 1.3 miles to a right turn at a four-way junction go 0.6 miles to the parking at the end of the road. The trail leads north from the parking lot.

WHERE TO STAY

There is a beautiful campsite about two miles before the parking lot of the climbing that has bear boxes and is free but does not have bathrooms or water. Big Springs campground just off Owens River road is also free and has bathrooms but no potable water, this site can get full of hunters in the fall. The nearest hotels and amenities are twenty-minute drive away in the town of Mammoth Lakes.

GUIDEBOOK

Mammoth Area Rock Climbs by Marty Lewis and John Moynior and Mammoth Bouldering by Charlie Barrett.

THE TICK LIST

ROUTES

Shadow (5.12d)
Maltese Falcon (5.12a)
El Toro (5.11d)
King Spud (5.11b/c)
Driller Instinct (5.10d)
Well Hung (5.10c)
Pull my finger (5.10a)
Ruffles (5.10a)
More Rad Than Trad (5.10a)
Ugly, Fat and Mean come to Mammoth, be a Queen (5.7)
Wild Wills Arete (5.7)

BOULDERS

Summit Fever (V8)
Wilbur's Problem (V6)
Swiss Cheese Traverse (V5)

Tammy Wilson
climbing *Funny Bone*
(5.10b) at the Alcove.

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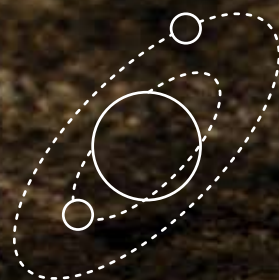
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L o S T

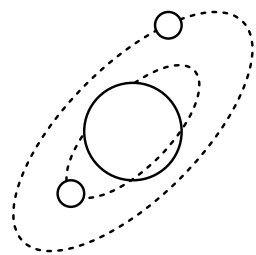
I N



WORDS & IMAGES + DEAN FLEMING

s P A C E

Zach Fletcher climbing
The Gerbler (V8).



Edmond Babians
climbing *Enders
Game* (V6).

IN JULY OF 2012 LOCAL LAKE TAHOE AREA BOULDERER AND ROUTE DEVELOPER BRAD PERRY WAS SCANNING FRAMES ON GOOGLE EARTH WHEN HE NOTICED WHAT APPEARED TO BE A TALUS FIELD ABOVE THE 90-FOOT WALL – A POPULAR TOP-ROPING CLIFF ALONG THE EAGLE LAKE TRAIL IN TAHOE’S DESOLATION WILDERNESS. “I WAS JUST BROWSING AROUND 90-FOOT WALL AND I FOUND SOME TALUS THAT LOOKED GOOD,” SAID PERRY. “SO I CALLED DAVID OUTCALT AND ASKED HIM IF HE WANTED TO GO TRY TO FIND SOME ROCKS.”

“The first time that we found the boulders we came in from above the talus field,” said Perry. “We went to 90-Foot Wall, skirted around it, and then started progressing across the shelf above the cliff to start traversing into the talus field. The first boulder we actually found was the Sunset Boulder, the orange wall way up above everything, and then we dropped down and found Gerbler. The last thing that we found was Space Cowboy. We were totally bushwhacking in Manzanita that was neck high.”

As a long-distance runner and RC racer, Perry is no stranger to long approaches, and because of his extensive exploration in the Tahoe region, he’s found a solid number of great boulders. Never-the-less, as most route developers know, it’s very unique to find a whole zone of quality boulders with a reasonable approach.

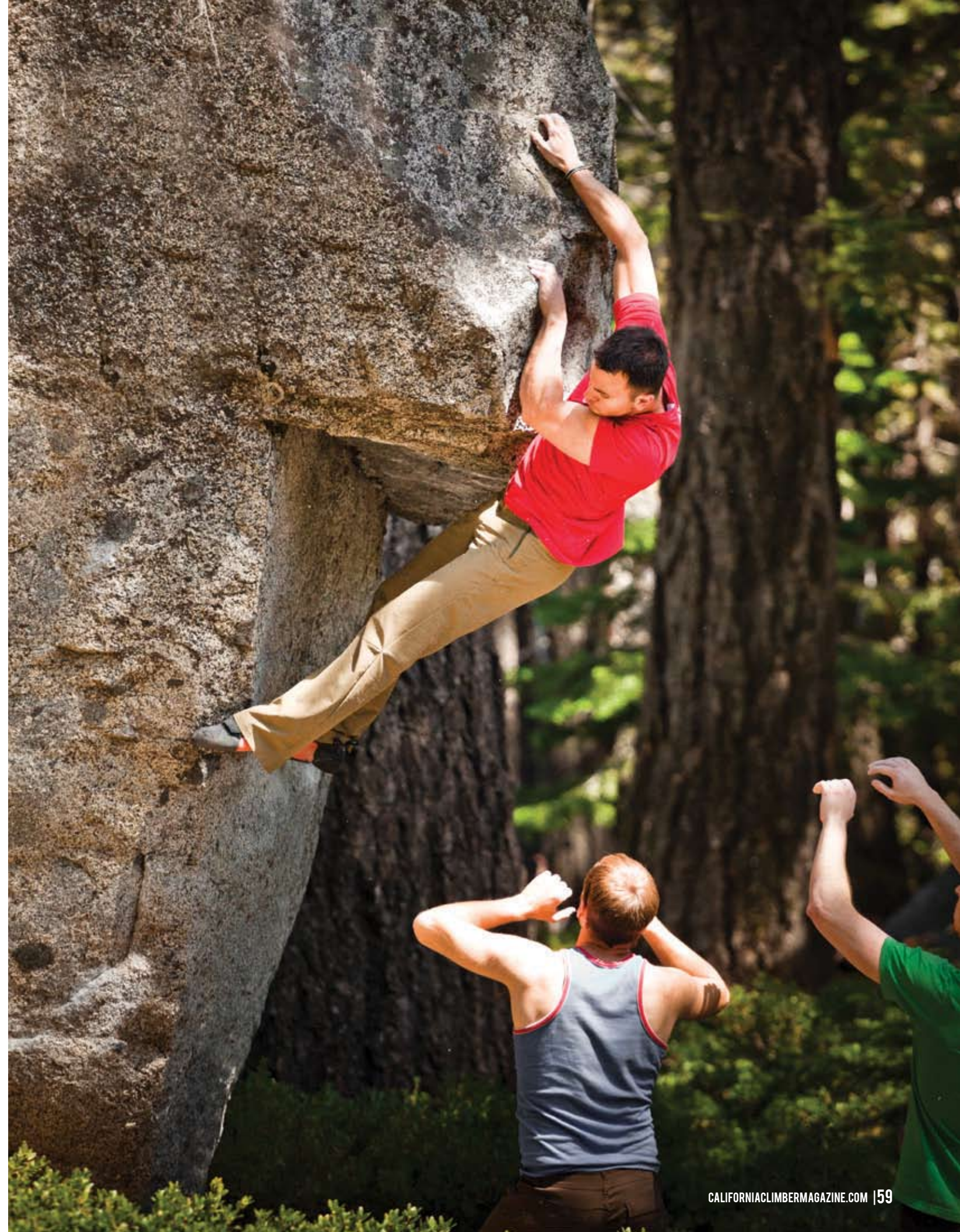
“We usually find just one or two boulders,” added Perry. “It’s super rare to find a large concentration of boulders in one area. So we came down out of that, and basically the next day we came back and started figuring out a way to access the boulders from the opposite direction – in reverse of the way we found it. We figured out a good way to come in from the Eagle lake

Outcalt began to establish climbs at Lost in Space, word spread about the quality of the rock and the concentration of the bouldering at this new zone. In a place like Lake Tahoe, where there exists a large number of dedicated and motivated route developers, this can turn into a feeding frenzy for first ascents. In the weeks to come other local climbers and route developers including Noah Kaufman, Joel Zerr, Tom Herbert, Dave Hatchett, Kyle O’Meara, Jesse Bonin, Jon Thompson, Roman Yalowitz and others established problems at Lost in Space.

“A lot of people just all of the sudden descended on the place in its infancy,” said Perry. “The area was basically just thrown into the West Shore guidebook. It was way too good, so it spread like wildfire. I actually wanted to keep it a little more hush for a while, but it was just too good and it blew up. So we did some of the warm-ups around the Space Cowboy boulder, then Noah Kaufman and Dave Hatchett did a ton of stuff. David Outcalt ended up doing the Gerbler. Everyone was just really excited, but in my opinion it was pretty rushed into the guidebook. It just progressed super quickly; but that’s what happens when the cat’s out of the bag.”

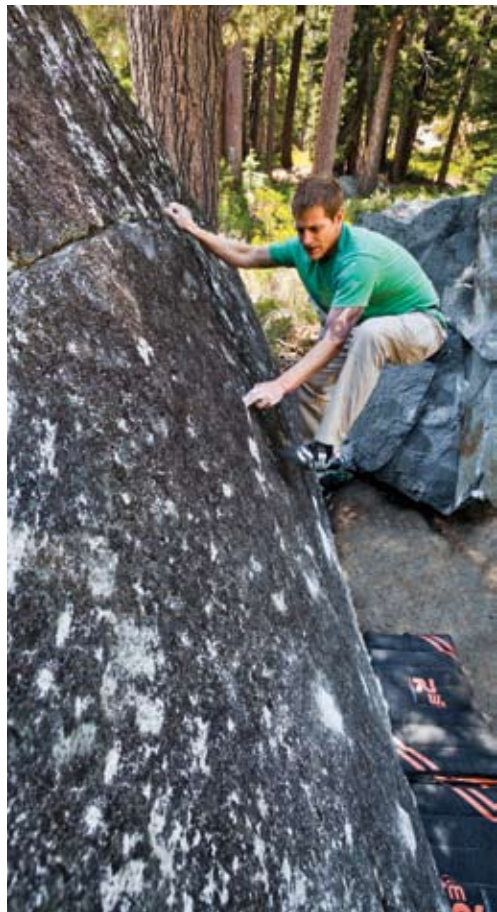
Trail and cross the river. But later, in early spring, we found that it was totally impossible to cross the river. So we ended up finding a little fisherman’s trail that crosses the river higher up the trail.”

As Perry and



Joel Ruscher climbing
Troubled Waters (V5).





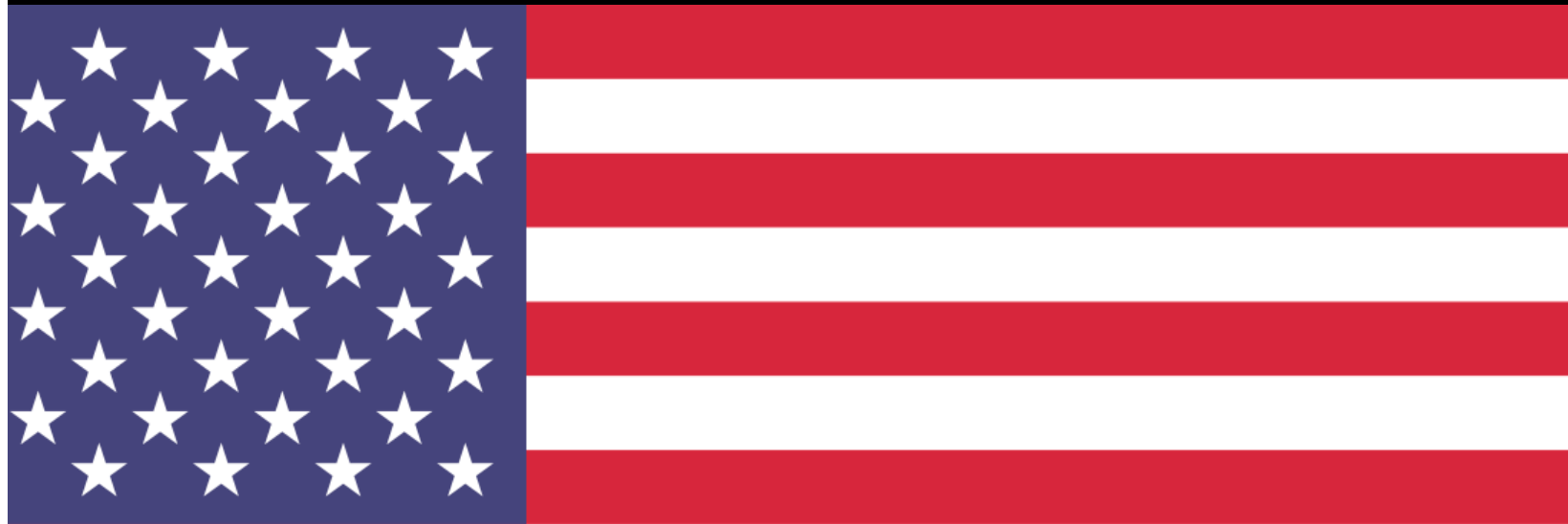
“Of all the boulders I’ve found in the Tahoe area, Lost in Space is one of my only really good finds,” added Perry. “Of all the thousands of boulders I’ve found, that one zone definitely takes the cake. Even now I’ve never really found anything that good. I think really it’s unique for Tahoe because of the rock quality. When you go around other areas in Tahoe it can be really grainy and sometimes. This has a more talus field feeling and so it’s a lot cleaner. Actually a lot of the boulders fell down in the 1980s, so they are actually really fresh. There actually used to be routes on the cliff above where the talus came from. There’s really not much moss on any of the blocks, and so not much cleaning. Lost in Space is typical of Desolation Wilderness, but it’s not

really typical of all of Tahoe Climbing. In Tahoe you have three basic types of rock - you have that really deteriorating and weathered rock along the lake, then you have all your major polished granite from the glacial erratic, but here and there you have places where big cliff faces have created large talus fields and so it’s fresher and less weathered.”

“It’s pretty interesting with Jimmy [Web] coming in,” added Perry. “He’s opening up a lot of problems in the Tahoe area, including a lot of the boulders above the Lost in Space area. So this zone is still growing at a pretty rapid pace. It seems like almost all of the little projects are steadily getting ticked off, and new boulders are still being found. A lot of the older stuff around the lake is really user friendly, but a lot of the new stuff is in the talus, some of it 500 feet above the basin.”

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**PREVIOUS
PAGE TOP**

Obe Carrion balances
up a tricky slab
problem in the main
area.

**PREVIOUS
PAGE LEFT**

Joel Ruscher warms
up in the main zone.

**PREVIOUS
PAGE BOTTOM
RIGHT**

Obe Carrion hiking
out of Lost in Space.

THIS PAGE

Joel Ruscher climbing
Moon Dog (V8).

THE BETA

GETTING THERE

The hike to Lost in Space begins at the parking lot for the Eagle Lake Trail at West Shore Tahoe's popular Emerald Bay. From here, march past hundreds of tourists on the Eagle Lake Trail, until a large granite slab on the right side of the trail becomes obvious. This slab touches the Eagle Lake Trail. Follow this slab to the Northwest until you reach a small stream (or raging river in spring). Cross the stream and hike into the bushes until you reach the first of many boulders. Reference the latest guide from Dave Hatchett for more detailed directions.

WHERE TO STAY

Convenient, beautiful but very expensive camping can be found at both the Bayview Campground and Eagle Point Campground just south of Emerald Bay.

GUIDEBOOK

Lake Tahoe Bouldering North & West Shore by Dave Hatchett.

THE TICK LIST

5 STAR BOULDERS

Troubled Waters (V5)
Ender's Game (V6)
The Gerbler (V8)
Moon Dog (V8)
Space Cowboy (V9)

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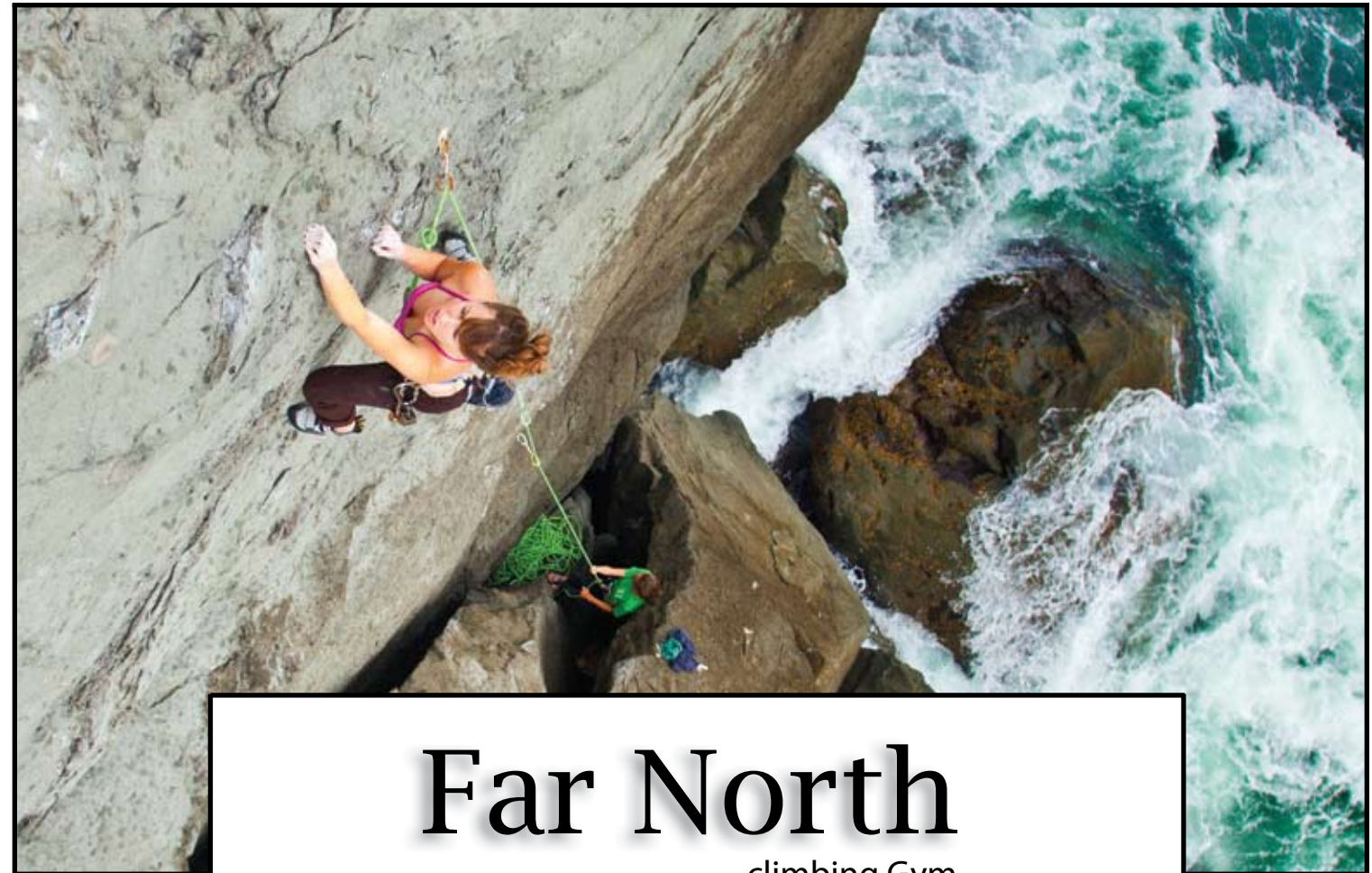
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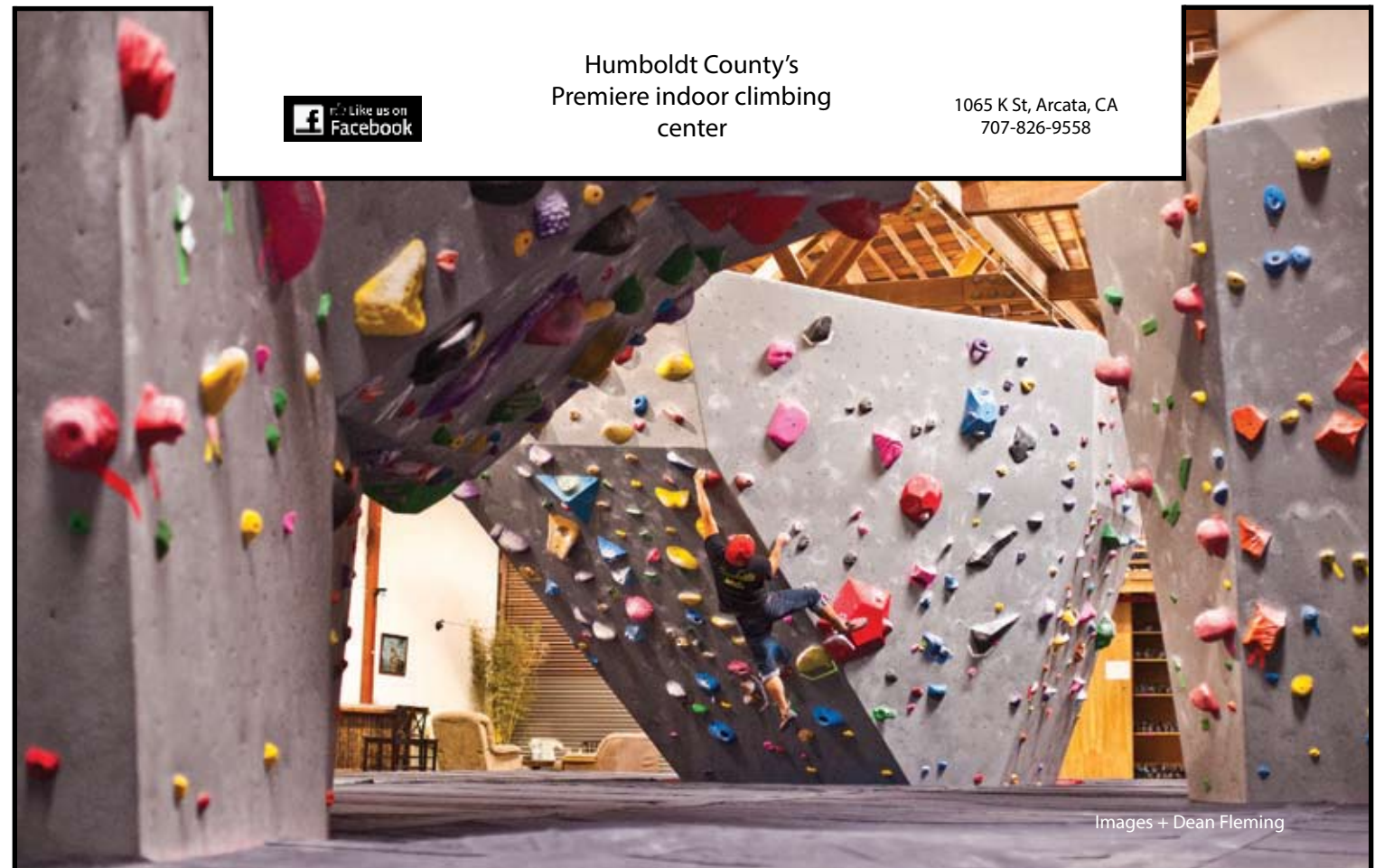
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