

# CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

FREE

SPRING 2017  
N° 20







Designing  
Testing  
Climbing  
Working  
Playing  
Living

In  
CALIFORNIA

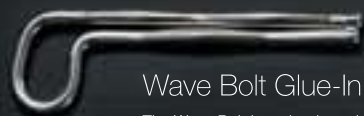


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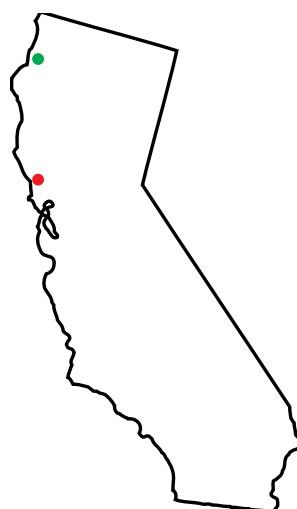
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Cove.  
IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG  
**THIS PAGE**  
Andrea Batt bouldering at Lost  
Rocks.  
IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING

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# CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

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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.



Steven Roth bouldering at Fisk Mill Cove.

JIM THORNBURG





EDITOR'S NOTE

THE CLOUDS OPENED AND RAIN BEGAN TO POUR DOWN

as I threw the last of my belongings into the back of the old Ford. I was headed for Yosemite, and as far as I knew, I was going to stay there for the rest of my life. I was a man after all, 18-years old, an age group widely known for selecting intelligent lifelong plans. In truth I'd been sold on the idea of moving to Yosemite Valley since the age of 16. Living less than two hours from the park, I'd climbed about 200 pitches in the big ditch. I thought I knew quite a bit about the place, although I'd never actually spent a night in Camp 4, or spoken to a ranger, or had an encounter with a Yosemite "local."

I pulled into Camp 4 around noon, its sites canopied with drooping tarps, still dank from the mid-summer thunderstorms. Dusty faces glazed from months of manufactured danger and bong rips peered out from \$900 North Face expedition tents. A few men dressed in white t-shirts sipped coffee and gazed over a neatly sorted rack of cams and nuts laid out on a picnic table. I guessed they had seen the black and white photo of Royal Robbins sorting pins in the Yosemite guidebook, like I had. Someone fell off Midnight Lightning and began complaining about the heat or the grease or skin or mantling, just like I had the last time I'd tried

bouldering. The scene in Camp 4 was, as it's been for decades and continues to be; a huge cliché of clones puffing their chests while mirroring an imagined Golden Age. I thought I'd fit right in.

My time in Camp 4 didn't last long. I did manage to climb a couple new pitches and make a few new friends, but those weeks in Yosemite taught me a valuable lesson about elitism and how severely divisive our sport can be. Here "locals" scoffed at sport climbers and boulderers as if they weren't of the same species, let alone participating in the same sport. I saw a community divided by selectiveness and snobbery, an effort to make one group feel superior to the other.

Perhaps we continue to see this self-righteousness in climbing because being a climber does not inherently make a person exceptional, unique or extraordinary, like many of us thought it would. In fact, as climbers we are far more similar than we are exclusive.

If you care about our public lands and our right to climb on them, it's never been more important for us to embrace this, and each other.

"It's all too easy to blame this, that, or the other thing for the disappearance of our fantasy Golden Age, which in fact never existed," says Jeff Achey. "Climbing is growing and changing, like it always has. Climbing is on the public radar now, and it's time to appreciate what's going on, even if that's a little less entertaining and a little harder on our egos."

In this issue's Access department Jeff Achey writes about our growing tribe and how as a community, climbers can continue to protect our wild spaces. For more see Achey's "Expanding the Tribe" on page 10. —DEAN FLEMING

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climbing guidebooks  
by Dean Fleming  
& Brad Young



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Kyle O'Meara, Pretty Eyes V3X, Columbia, CA © Dean Fleming







## EXPANDING THE TRIBE

**CLIMBERS HAVE CALLED THEMSELVES A TRIBE** for as long as I can remember. It sounds good — soulful and close to the earth. We are wild and free, a little lighter, faster, stronger than the masses. Around the campfire, with the day's adventures behind us, we share personal bonds few mortals know who are not part of the tribe.

And, in part, that's all true. But along with the friendly welcomes and invitations, and the common language of sharing beta, our feelings come with some unexamined baggage. We consider ourselves exceptional. We fear invasion. We are hostile toward agents of change.

Consider our history, how we've treated members of our own tribe. Pure rock climbers who lacked aspirations to climb high peaks used to be treated as outsiders among the true tribe of mountaineers. Sport climbers got a similar treatment when they appeared on the rock climbing scene. Today, it's gym climbers.

Forget that Chris Sharma and Alex Honnold are "gym climbers" — gyms are our biggest source of problems, according to many.

Camping near the Owen's River Gorge.  
IMAGE + Dean Fleming

Gym climbers are too urban, dress funny, and are clueless about the outdoors.

More likely, the real problem is boulderers. They're as urban as gym climbers and don't even own climbing ropes. What kind of climber doesn't clip chains? And what's with those mattresses? Back in the day, the tribe never carried those things.

Okay, and how about all those dogs? Back when climbers actually got off the ground more than 100 feet, no one brought dogs to the crag. Having a dog was a sign of conformity, like wearing a tie, washing your car, or spending Thanksgiving with your family instead of in the desert. No real climber should have a dog.


Actually, come to think of it, it's the Sprinter vans that are ruining climbing. Those things are cushier than my old apartment. They hog all the crag parking and make climbers soft. Sprinter climbers are soft. It's not a real road trip if you're traveling in one of those mobile hotels. Sprinter vans will destroy climbing.


And so on. Who doesn't talk and think like this sometimes? It's entertaining and makes us feel just a little bit better about ourselves.

But it's bullshit. It's all too easy to blame this, that, or the other thing for the disappearance of our fantasy Golden Age, which in fact never existed. Climbing is growing and changing, like it always has. Climbing is on the public radar right now, for sure, and it's time to appreciate what's going on, even if that's a little less entertaining and harder on our egos.

Mainstream media coverage has been gradually building. In 2014, we had the film Valley Uprising, which got passionate and mixed reviews among climbers and significant play among general audiences. Then there was the Dawn Wall. By the time coverage peaked, many climbers were in an altered state, and many were upset. Dark-horse champions were hurt by how many other worthy achievements disappeared in the Dawn Wall's glaring light. Purists were offended, once again, by the commercial exploitation of climbing. The story blew up so big that even President Obama sent his congratulations.

We are excited to welcome Kai Lightner into the Bluewater Climbing family. Kai is an inspiring and kind person on and off the rock. We are honored to be keeping him safe with the softest, catching, most durable climbing ropes in the world.

 @kailightner

 kailightner

ALWAYS BETWEEN YOU AND THE GROUND

**BlueWater Ropes**



But here’s what you might not know: At a time when Yosemite National Park was reviewing its Wilderness policies, a little Presidential love for climbers went a long way. In the not too distant past, our relationship with the Feds was far less friendly. Access Fund sued the federal government (twice!) over public land managers banning climbing on public lands. Back then, policy makers didn’t understand climbing, and climbers were fighting just to get a seat at the table in decisions about our public lands.

And today? We may still argue and discuss, but climbers are at the table—visible, respected, and at least somewhat understood.

Still psyched on Tommy and Kevin’s Dawn Wall feat, the White House allowed a group of pro climbers to take over its Instagram feed to promote the 100th anniversary of the National Parks. We’ve come a long way, in large part because of climbing’s growth and increasing public visibility.

Overcrowding? Sure, some frontcountry crags are busier, but if you want to have a wilderness experience, walk an hour from the road at any climbing area in the country and you’ll still find it, regardless of how many new climbers are showing up at the most popular crags. Don’t want to walk? Then stay on the front line and enjoy the show. Represent the tribe. Interact with whomever you meet at the crag. Most newbies in all sports are looking for guidance—it is the rare case who shows up with so much

attitude that she/he is a nuisance who can’t be placated. If you see someone disrespecting the resource or being unsafe, talk to them. Talk to them even if they seem polite and competent. See if you can genuinely respect whatever upbringing they came from.

And the reality is that we have more new places to climb than ever. Access to many older areas has become easier and more secure. Significant amounts of private land have been purchased and preserved for public use with climbing as a priority. Access Fund and its network of local climbing organizations have established channels to encourage hesitant landowners and land managers to take a climbing-positive view and to head off potential closures.

**REGARDLESS OF HOW WE FEEL ABOUT IT, IT’S INEVITABLE THAT OUR COMMUNITY WILL GROW. IT WILL INCREASE IN DIVERSITY. IT WILL REQUIRE MORE COMMUNICATION TO PRESERVE THE BEST OF THE OLD AND MERGE IT WITH THE BEST OF THE NEW.**



Eastern Sierra sunset:  
IMAGE + Dean Fleming

Another great benefit that has come out of the growth of climbing: Towns and cities all over the country are getting involved in developing new climbing areas. Word is out about the economic benefits of climbing, and communities want in. I asked Zach Lesch-Huie, head of Access Fund’s national affiliate network, for some highlights, and he had plenty. Climbing areas create centers of interest far from population centers or other attractions. This has brought money into many local communities—more than you’d think. A recent study found that climbing tourism brings \$3.6 million annually to communities surrounding the popular Red River Gorge, Kentucky. The economy of Fayetteville, West Virginia is greatly boosted by climbers visiting the New River Gorge, and the nearby town of Oak Hill is in the process of establishing a 300-acre municipal bouldering park to get a piece of that action. Thacher State Park in New York is paying for the hardware and time needed

to develop the park’s climbing. In Ohio, the Clark County Parks Department is pitching in to help buy Springfield Gorge and create a climbing park. The North Dakota Department of Tourism is giving climbers a matching grant for climbing development at Square Butte. And the list goes on. Climbers are always sniffing out new areas to climb, but now communities are getting involved in increasing climbing opportunities. A decade ago, this was unthinkable.

Money isn’t the only objective for creating climbing parks. State and national objectives, such as fighting chronic obesity and increasing the diversity of the people using public lands, also factor in. It’s about time that the climbing tribe became more diverse. One of the best things about climbing is that it introduces us to people from all over the country, all over the world, and helps us appreciate each other through a common bond. What better way to build bridges across our nation’s troublesome divides than by sharing a rope? Climbing gyms in urban areas all over the country are introducing climbing to a more diverse population. As outdoor crags begin to attract more new climbers, our political base deepens.

And as the number of climbers grows, the simple math of it sees climbers infiltrating the ranks in all sorts of beneficial places. Access Fund Policy Director Erik Murdock, based in Washington, DC, has met climbers in many such places — administrators at federal land management agencies, staffers on the Senate Natural Resources

Committee, and even members of Congress. More and more, climbers are not some fringe group struggling to make their activity understood by policy makers. They are in the offices making policy. As the number of climbers goes up, so does the chance that someone making decisions about recreation management or environmental protection is part of the tribe. At a time when the future of our public lands and vast outdoor landscapes is threatened, we need more climbers in the ranks, more people deeply connected to our climbing areas, more people willing to fight for their protection.



**It’s the perfect pig carrier, gear hauler and been known to lift cases of beer up a monster wall.**

Introducing the Ronin Lift, the world’s first personal battery powered ascender that was developed for true adventure. Whether your passion is climbing, caving, snowboarding or inventing your own epic use, we know it will expand your options and take your adventure to new heights. Plus it will make life more fun wherever you take it.





We're at a good place for a change. Now that 5.15+ is the standard, we can all relax in the knowledge that even if we climb 5.13 or whatever, we are totally unexceptional. There's no more justification for elitism at the crag. If we really want to be different, if we want our tribal identity to stand for something, then let's focus on being more magnanimous than the herd. Why fear invasion when it only makes us stronger? There's plenty of self-righteousness and us-or-them thinking among the masses. Climbing changes people. It teaches them a higher level of discipline and respect. Let's show that off.

There's only one certainty about the future of climbing: change. Regardless of how we feel about it, it's inevitable that our community will grow. It will increase in diversity. It will require more communication to preserve the best of the old and merge it with the best of the new. The greatest cost? With a bigger tribe, the feeling of exceptionalism will not come so automatically. We each will have to earn it with our actions, just like every other human. The greatest benefit? As our community grows, so does our influence, our core values, and our ability to protect the experiences we hold so dear.



Camping on Sonora Pass.  
IMAGE + Dean Fleming

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# THE DRAGON BARES ITS TEETH

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  - Reduced 'walking'
- Extendable 8mm Dyneema sling saves on quickdraws
- Ergonomic thumb press gives positive handling
- Rated to 14kN from size 1 upwards





EVENTS

ACCESS:

- APRIL 1: Adopt-A-Crag - Cave Valley (Auburn Quarry)
- APRIL 1: Adopt-A-Crag - Mission Trails with ACSD San Diego
- APRIL 5 & 6: Joshua Tree Trail Crew Days with the Access Fund
- APRIL 8 & 9: Joshua Tree Climber Coffee
- APRIL 12- 14: Adopt-A-Crag - Stoney Point with AAC
- APRIL 18 - 20: Bay Area Climbers Coalition gyms with AAC at Indian Rock
- MAY 13: Adopt-A-Crag - Deer Creek Park (Rocklin Boulders)
- MAY 27-28: Yosemite Climbing Stewardship Training
- JUNE 3: Adopt-A-Crag - Lovers Leap with CRAGS
- JUNE 10: Adopt-A-Crag - Black Wall with Truckee Donner Land Trust

COMPETITIONS:

- MARCH 25: Planet Granite Friction Series - Planet Granite San Francisco
- APRIL 1: USA Climbing Sport & Speed Comp - Sender One, Santa Ana
- APRIL 7: Touchstone Climbing Series - Great Western Power Company, Oakland
- APRIL 22: USA Climbing Sport & Speed Comp - Pacific Edge, Santa Cruz
- APRIL 29: USA Climbing Sport & Speed Comp - Diablo Rock Gym, Concord
- APRIL 29: USA Climbing Sport & Speed Comp - Rockreation, Costa Mesa
- MAY 12: Touchstone Climbing Series - Mission Cliffs, San Francisco
- MAY 13: USA Climbing Sport & Speed Regional - Sender One, Santa Ana







Loeni Dickerhoff surfing the *Shark's Fin Arete*, (5.7).

# SHARK'S FIN ARETE

5.7

Alabama Hills, Lone Pine

BETA

ROUTE		GRADE	LENGTH
<i>Shark's Fin Arete</i>		5.7	60'
ROCK TYPE	STYLE	RACK	
Monzogranite	Sport, single pitch	QD's	
LOCATION		APPROACH	DESCENT
Alabama Hills, Lone Pine		Crack of a beer	Rap off, bolted anchor
SEASON	GUIDEBOOK		
Winter & Spring	<i>Bishop Area Rock Climbs</i> by Marty Lewis & Peter Croft		

DESCRIPTION

There's nothing quite like that first pitch of the season. The feeling of being thrown off the couch and onto the cliff, scraping for holds with shaky legs, sweaty palms and chalk in your eyes. After a long wet winter spent hibernating in your local climbing gym or dashing out to the boulders during short weather windows, sometimes you need a nice little confidence booster to kick off the spring season. If you're searching for this type of climb, look no farther than the Alabama Hills; a quiet little crag where the only thing shorter than the routes are the approaches and hundreds of well-protected jug-hauls abound.

Driving into the Alabama Hills from the dusty Eastern

Sierra town of Lone Pine, it's hard to miss the odd-shaped spire known as the Shark's Fin. The Shark's Fin hosts a fine selection of well-protected sport climbs that range from 5.7 to 5.11, the majority of which fall between 5.8 and 5.10. On the far northeastern corner of this block is the aptly named *Shark's Fin Arete* (5.7). This pitch starts out a little sporty and chossy yet quickly eases to well-protected jugs on a spectacular rib. At the summit it's easy to clip the chains and lower, but we'd recommend you take a few extra minutes to stand atop this neat little pillar and take in the striking views of the massive Sierra Crest to the west. Lower off, pull the rope, crack a Pabst and repeat.



We believe that a great user experience is the best path to a safe experience. The challenge is not creating a device that can grab a rope – it's creating a device that will actually get used correctly.

Most people will choose the easiest path, so we made it the safest path.

VERGO | SEPTEMBER 2016







## “MOONBUGGY ”

Kerri Carmachel, Chris Mortimer  
and their 1987 Toyota Van 4x4

*CC: Where did you find Moonbuggy and how much did she cost you?*

K&C: Kerri found it on Craigslist in Santa Barbara from a guy who worked at the marina. We drove through the night from Tahoe after work and paid around \$6000 which was waaaaay too much, but a long love/hate relationship was born.

*What modifications have you done?*

Almost everything except the engine and transmission has been reworked, modified, tweaked or at some point duct taped together. The previous owner had coated nearly every interior surface with spray foam and painted it black. It looked like a creepy black fungus was growing inside; not very welcoming when you want to live in there. We removed as much as possible and gutted the insides, ripping out ghetto jump seats from the back and old racing seats from the front, all carpeting and upholstery, the dashboard, steering wheel, home stereo speakers.... Over the next year we slowly rebuilt it from dozens of junk yard vans - one piece at a time, since most parts for these vans were long ago discontinued. We had to transplant some pieces from 80's Land Cruisers and 4Runners. It took a lot of time and patience, and we still have a ways to go, but we're getting to a (mostly) happy place with it.

*How does she do off-road?*

Incredible for having such small tires. We

recently lifted it a couple inches and put beefier all terrains on, so it developed an ego problem. One time it was overconfident and ended up stuck in deep mud and had to be pulled out by a Jeep. Straightened the ego issue out right there....

*Do you guys live in her full time?*

No, the longest stretches we've spent in Moonbuggy are a couple months at a time when I teach climbing in Joshua Tree and Pinnacles each spring and fall. Beyond that, Kerri and I usually road trip a few times a year.

*What is the best trip you've been on so far?*

After climbing outside of Vegas and checking out the Guns N Roses reunion show, we really wanted to camp with the *Moonbuggy* on the racetrack playa in remote Death Valley on the way home to Tahoe. We decided to take the most off-the-beaten-path route (ego problem) and it turned out to be a mistake since the road just vanished off a cliff. It was the middle of the night, several thousand feet up, and we had to back down nauseatingly steep switchbacks until we found a place wide enough to make a 27-point turn and face downhill for our retreat. We loved it. We're going to try it again soon.

*What are your favorite things about Moonbuggy?*

*Moonbuggy* makes friends wherever it goes; driving downhill with a tail wind will get you up to 70mph; it can fit in exceptionally small parking spaces for a van; the upper deck makes a nice bunk bed; Moonbuggy looks pretty good with antlers.

*Anything you don't like about Moonbuggy?*

*Moonbuggy* makes friends wherever it goes - except mechanics, they don't want to touch it; trying to find parts makes you feel like Indiana Jones (not in a good way); it's reluctant to go up hill in anything higher than 2nd gear; the heater....what heater?

*With two of you on the road, does it get cramped sometimes?*

It's a bit cramped if we have a lot of gear with us, but usually we dig the tight space. It's cozy like a fort. We generally get along better on the road than at home. There's something calming about the motion. Also, to keep things fair, I always let Kerri pick the music (as long as it's my music).

*Do you have any advice for hopeful van-dwellers?*

If you're not careful, you'll find yourselves jotting down endless lists on how to make van life better or more fulfilling, rather than realizing you're RAMBLING AROUND IN A VAN! You've already won.

# REMORA

All Around Performance Slipper

Much like the fish this shoe was named after, the Remora suctions not only to your foot, but onto the rock as well. With tension applied in all the right places, the sock like fit in this slipper allows one to do it all. The Remora has been built with a traditional look, yet enhanced with features such as the power upper and SynFlex to give a consistent and precise fit.



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**TRANGO VERGO**

{ **\$89.95** }

From the steepest sport caves to top-managed belays on multi-pitch climbs, auto-assist belay devices have revolutionized the way we catch and lower our partners. While these devices can be virtually foolproof when used expertly, they often require a series of complex and un-ergonomic maneuvers to feed slack safely when lead belaying. The result is the desire for many belayers to simply override the device's locking mechanism for a few seconds while feeding slack. Although this seems harmless enough, it has resulted in countless accidents. Surprisingly, many of these auto-assist related accidents occurred among very experienced climbers and belayers.

In early 2016 a small number of climbing gear manufacturers began designing auto-assist belay devices that are capable of feeding slack in a smooth fashion without the need to override the locking mechanism of the device. One such device, is Trango's new Vergo belay device; an auto-assist style device that boasts [one of the smoothest](#)



[and safest slack-feeding designs.](#) The new Vergo emphasizes ergonomics and human-device interaction to deliver exceptionally safe performance. Clear [physical and visual indicators](#) reaffirm the correct usage of the device, and the geometry reduces the likelihood of misuse.

In testing we found the physical markings on the Vergo [a plastic thumb grip and forged forefinger groove] easy to identify and comfortable to use, and the device also scored points in areas like weight, style and overall utilitarian function. When used as designed, the Vergo seems to be a [safer, lighter and smoother-feeding alternative](#) to traditional auto-assist devices. Yet there simply is not an auto-assist belay device in existence that cannot somehow be overridden, and the Vergo is no exception. Proving once again that the best way to keep your partner off the ground is to become an expert with your device and to always pay careful attention to the action above.

**ASANA PRO CHALK BRUSH**

{ **\$8.95** }

There's nothing quite like a wet winter to wash a decade's worth of chalk from your project's crux holds. But if Mother Nature can't seem to get the job done, you'll need a brush that's burly enough to remove that stubborn caked-on chalk, yet soft enough that it won't erode the rock. Climbers have been experimenting with various hardware store models of brushes for decades, but the options found at these locations are usually far from adequate. The standard nylon brush works OK for removing dust, but it's far too soft for a deep clean. At the other end of the spectrum you have brass and steel bristle brushes, which are far too stiff and will scratch, polish, or even erode the rock - obviously a major bummer for everyone. Enter the boar's hair brush; the [absolute perfect combination of chalk-scrubbing capabilities](#) without the harmful characteristics of a wire brush.

Last summer Asana introduced their new Pro Chalk Brush, an innovatively designed brush made with boar's hair bristles and a Lycan body. Lycan is a material that is [very durable while still maintaining enough flex](#) for those hard to reach places. The sleek shape of the Asana Pro Brush also allows for a perfect fit on most chalk bags and bouldering buckets, while the curved shape of the bristles themselves assists with scrubbing and also provide [longer bristles in high-wear areas](#). The Pro Brush has been slightly re-vamped for 2017 with a wider head, a stronger neck and a [unique file on the stem](#) of the brush for those burly calluses or flappers. Most importantly, we'd like to thank the folks at Asana for squeezing all these practical and durable features into a brush that [costs less than a burrito](#).



Andy Cross



**Be a climber.**

Where you find joy: **pursue it.**  
Where you see others finding joy: **encourage it.**  
Whatever makes you a climber: **do it.**  
**These are words. See our actions at [beaclimber.com](#)**



FIXE HARDWARE ALIEN REVOLUTION

{ \$69.95 }

When Dave Waggoner introduced his Alien cams to climbing, the art of technical placements changed. After Waggoner's death in 2009, Kevin Daniels of Fixe Hardware purchased the brand to continue the legacy of the Alien cam. In the coming years Daniels has used the highest quality materials, designs and machinery to revolutionize the Alien cam and Alien Hybrid to exceed modern standards. When Fixe Hardware released a few test models of their re-vamped Alien Revolution model in late 2016, we asked Daniels how he felt about the new design. His answer was simple: "I couldn't make a better cam."

We grabbed a few samples of the new Alien Revolution in the summer of 2016 and have since been testing the units on the foreboding granite cliffs of Yosemite Valley and Joshua Tree. The new Alien Revolution sports a number of renovated features, including a 20% reduction in weight, a reduced head width, aluminum trigger cables, replaceable steel trigger wires, a stronger aluminum cable swage, an option for a double sling and a burly riveted axle. The



Alien Revolution's action is beautiful, and the addition of an ergonomic rubber thumb pull helps to smooth out placements, especially when you're pumped out of your mind.

In review all testers agreed that the new Alien Revolution could compete with or outcompete other brands at the highest standard of active thin crack protection; however, we were absolutely blown away by the new Alien Hybrid units, which excelled beyond our wildest expectations in the flaring, bottoming placements famously found at areas like Joshua Tree. In the modest six month testing period we were able to craft countless belay-quality anchors using placements that seemed virtually un-protectable. If you're mostly climbing at areas like Indian Creek, where you can often slam blind placements into perfectly parallel fissures, these hybrid units might not seem as practical; however, if you plan to head up some famous California crack climbs at areas that are notoriously flared, pinned out or bottoming (like Joshua Tree, Yosemite Valley, Taquitz etc) a few of the new Alien Revolution Hybrid cams could save you a lot of grief.

HIPPYTREE SCOUT PANT

{ \$72 }

Today there are a number of companies offering quality clothing specifically for climbers. Still, it's hard to find a pair of pants that fit comfortably enough for climbing, but won't make you look like a complete knob at the bar or dinner table. California has always been a few steps ahead in regards to style, and so it comes as little surprise that one of the few manufactures to provide functional yet stylish clothing for men can be found right here in the Golden State. The Hermosa Beach based company HippyTree has been designing clothes that suite our multi-sport region for nearly a decade, and has successfully landed itself in solid favor among California's climbers, slackliners and surfers.

Last fall we picked up a pair of HippyTree's classic Scout Pants and promptly took them around the state in an effort to completely destroy them. At the crag and boulders we found that the stretch Bedford corduroy material and crotch gusset do provide exceptional flexibility. We also found that the front-slanting pockets on the Scout Pants were deep enough to let your objects sit below harness leg loops yet not so deep that you have to hunch over to find your keys. HippyTree uses a blended material of 98% cotton and 2% spandex to give a soft, natural feel with some elasticity in the material itself to aid in flexibility. We found this material to be really comfortable and lightweight, yet just thick enough so you don't rip through them super quickly.

These pants aren't indestructible however, and couldn't really compare in durability to a thick pair of jeans or something equivalent. If you wear the Scout Pants every day for about six months (like we did) you will start to notice some wear in the seat and knee areas. Of course, with a lightweight and very flexible pant that is designed for comfort while climbing, the resilience of the Scout Pant actually exceeded our expectations. With equal focus on comfort and style, the Scout Pants also include a waistband draw cord, engraved buttons and a coin pocket.



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## FEAR OF THE INEVITABLE (V6)

**FORESTVILLE LOCAL TRAVIS LOMBARDO HAS BEEN SCOURING THE SONOMA COAST** for climbable rock since the early 2000s. Lombardo is responsible for many unique boulder problems found between Sonoma County’s scenic creek beds and the Central California Coast, but perhaps his finest discovery has been aptly called “*the Arch*,” a beautiful overhanging jumble of sculpted tufoni sandstone blocks located near the classic route *Stoney White Boots Johnson* (5.13a) at Sonoma County’s Salt Point State Park.

For years the Arch has been a muse for landscape photographers, and some climbers have even passed under it, wondering if a line would be climbable on either of its intimidating facets, but when Lombardo saw the Arch he knew he had to try to climb it. Intent to rappel over the north face and clean some holds, Lombardo shortly returned with Sonoma County local Giovanni Traversi. This proved challenging as their arrival coincided with a phenomenon known as a “super tide;” a tidal event created by a super moon where

massive waves crash to shore over a 24 hour period. While a barrage of waves slammed into the surrounding cliffs and small peninsulas, the pair shakily lowered over the edge to scrub the sandy grips.

After chalking some holds and dialing in a few moves from the safety of a rope, Lombardo and Traversi had their sequences dialed. The pair returned a few days later and began to give the problem redpoint attempts. With his notoriously smooth style and steely fingers, Traversi quickly dispatched the climb for its first ascent. The pair named the route *Fear of the Inevitable* (V6), for they knew that this magnificent stack of sandy rock would someday succumb to the merciless tides and crumble into the Pacific.

A few weeks later I met up with Lombardo and his wife Bessie Lopez to climb on some of the Sonoma Coast’s best boulders. After a day of climbing blocks like *Fort Rosstafarian* (V6), *Triceratops* (V4) and *Waterfall Crack* (V2), we decided to grab all the pads so that Lombardo could give *Fear of the Inevitable* another shot. As the tide shifted out to sea the setting sun bathed the Arch in the most incredible evening light I’ve since witnessed. As Lombardo fought his way through the awkward side-pulls and powerful pinches, brilliant shades of orange and blue illuminated the Arch and the sea.

Lombardo didn’t send the problem the day this photo was taken, but he did return the following week to grab the second ascent. In the months to come word spread of this marvelous arch, and folks from all over the Bay Area began to drive north to enjoy this classically Californian location. This winter, however, the process of the inevitable collapse of the *Arch* moved forward, as an atmospheric river and colossal tides ripped a few massive blocks from the *Arch*’s belly. Yet surely the quality of this problem has not suffered from its inevitable demise, for the best things in life are often the ephemeral.



A full-page photograph of a river flowing over rocks. The water is blurred, creating a sense of motion. Large, light-colored boulders are scattered throughout the riverbed. In the upper right, a person is climbing a large rock face. The background features a steep, rocky hillside with some green vegetation.

GOLDEN STATE GALLERY

CLIMBER Trevor Carter  
LOCATION Sonora Pass  
PHOTOGRAPHER Dean Fleming



CLIMBER Meredith Jabis  
ROUTE *Cloud Ripper*, Eastern Sierra  
PHOTOGRAPHER Ken Etzel





CLIMBER Enrico Baistocchi  
ROUTE *Italian Arrogance* (V10), Mt. Woodson  
PHOTOGRAPHER Jake Stein



WORDS + DEAN FLEMING // IMAGES + DEAN FLEMING & JIM THORNBURG

# LOST ROCKS



# LOST ROCKS



**N**o names, no grades. That's the first thing most climbers learn about Lost Rocks. But it shouldn't be. The first thing every climber should know about Lost Rocks is the delicate nature of the approach, as the boulders found here rest very close to a Native American sacred site. The boulders at Lost Rocks are located on the northern most portion of the Lost Coast, just south of the Klamath River near the boarder of Del Norte and Humboldt counties. A quick glance at a topographic map will reveal that simply parking near the mouth of the Klamath and walking south along the beach will lead to some boulders, however, this approach takes visitors directly through a Yurok native sacred site. The appropriate approach to Lost Rocks is found by traveling less than a mile south on Coastal Drive until a large gravel parking lot is reached. From here, a steep and somewhat overgrown trail leads directly to the beach and the center-most portion of the Lost Rocks boulders.

**PREVIOUS PAGE**  
Andrea Batt climbs out of the mist on one of the hundreds of quality moderate problems found at Lost Rocks.

**OPPOSITE PAGE**  
Sanam Pejuhesh gets lost in the fog on a very tide-dependent but beautiful problem. IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG

**ABOVE**  
Marco Clark examines the strange striations and veins of quartz crystal found on many of the boulders at Lost Rocks.

**ACCESS UPDATE:** In the early 2000s climbers learned that the land adjacent to the mouth of the Klamath River is private property owned by the Yurok Tribe and the rock closest to the Klamath, named Oregos by the Yurok, has cultural significance. It was publicly made known that there is to be no climbing on the private property from the Klamath River to Flint Rock. Around the same time, local climbers enforced a voluntary climbing ban on Split Rock out of respect for the Yurok's unique ceremonial location. Climbing at Lost Rocks and High Bluffs continued, with the ethic being on emphasizing respect of the land and the visitors.



LOST ROCKS



**G**azing over the coastline from the steep vantage point above the Pacific, as a thick blanket of coastal fog drifts in and engulfs the pristine landscape, it's easy to see why visitors and residents alike consider Lost Rocks sacred. Climbers have been visiting the massive gray blocks that litter the beaches here since the early 1980s, and in that time a strong tradition has been forged; a custom intended to preserve the wild nature of this unique area. Although a few of the most obvious blocks, like the "Flake Boulder," haven't quite escaped our basic instinct to place names to the things we find, the vast majority of boulders and problems at Lost Rocks remain unnamed and un-graded. As the years pass and we grow intimate with this region, we find that this practice does suit a utilitarian purpose. As the tides change, the sand levels rise and fall with them. In one season a block may reach heights over 40 feet, and in other seasons this same block could sit at a scant 5 feet tall. Because of this, the nature and difficulty of each problem found at Lost Rocks will often change drastically multiple times each year.

**OPPOSITE PAGE**  
An unknown climber making the dramatic final moves on the classic Flake Problem. IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG

**ABOVE**  
Northern Humboldt County hosts a huge diversity of climbable rock types. Devlin Gandy climbs above the tide pools on the kaleidoscopic colors of some incredible radiolarian chert.

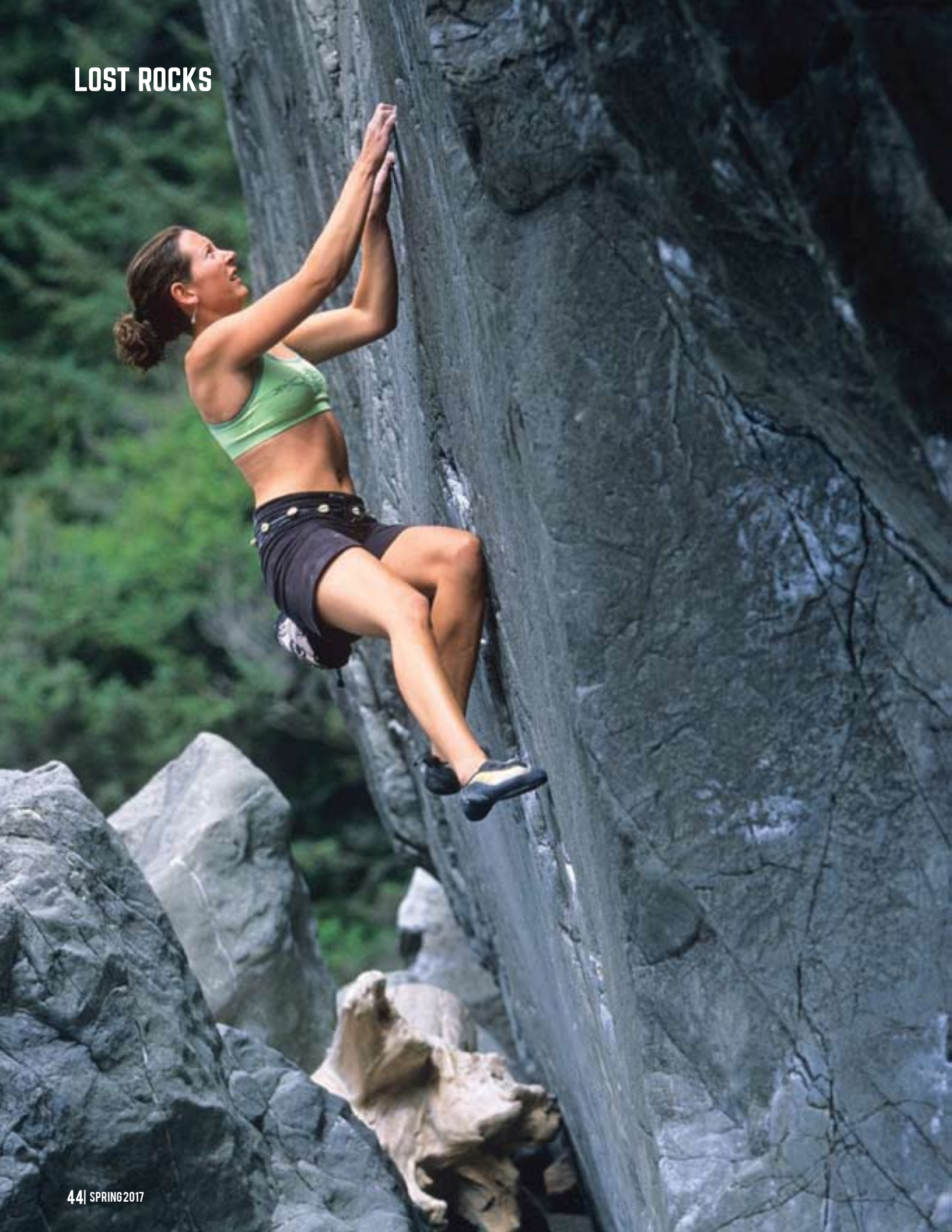




## LOST ROCKS







**S**o what can you expect if you do decide to visit Lost Rocks? You certainly won't find a well-known classic that you can check off in a guidebook or list in your 8a.nu account. But there are a few things here that never seem to change. The thundering sound of one of California's roughest shore breaks booming across the beach and up the steep, brushy hillsides. Here you can witness some of the most diverse and unique wildlife including elk, otters, whales, black bears and salmon. Of course you'll probably get beat down by the mud and poison oak and stinging nettle and mist and rain and mile-long hikes with heavy loads. But maybe you'll find it's all worth the while, and maybe you'll even be inspired. Perhaps you'll even pick up a few pieces of trash on your way out. Whatever you decide, if you do intend to make the long drive north to this wonderful region, please use the utmost respect and admiration during your visiting.

**PREVIOUS PAGE**  
Strong tides and shore breaks often change the levels of the sand and the accessibility of problems at Lost Rocks. Andrea Batt takes one final lap on an un-named moderate before the tides come in.

**OPPOSITE PAGE**  
Rebecca Taggart moves steadily up the notoriously perfect crimps found on many of Lost Rocks' best problems.  
IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG

**ABOVE**  
Dennis Baumsteiger finds a steep problem just south of the main Lost Rocks beach.





## LOST ROCKS





## LOST ROCKS



### PREVIOUS PAGE

Jim Thornburg climbing into the fog on excellent quality stone.  
IMAGE + Jim Thornburg Collection

### OPPOSITE PAGE

Nathaniel Potter (Big Nate) makes the big move on one of Lost Rocks few graded problems, a V7 on the iconic Flake Boulder. Although changing tides can drastically affect the height and difficulty of the problems on this boulder, it remains one of the premier blocks found on the Lost Rocks beach and thus hasn't escaped our instinct to place names and grades to the routes we find.

### ABOVE

Austin Schuler is one of the few local climbers born in the town of Arcata. Over the past few years Austin has been scouring the bluffs and unobvious blocks along the Humboldt Coast, establishing new lines and repeating some of the hardest test pieces. Here he dispatches a blunt arête established by local boulderer Zach Miller; an estimated V8.





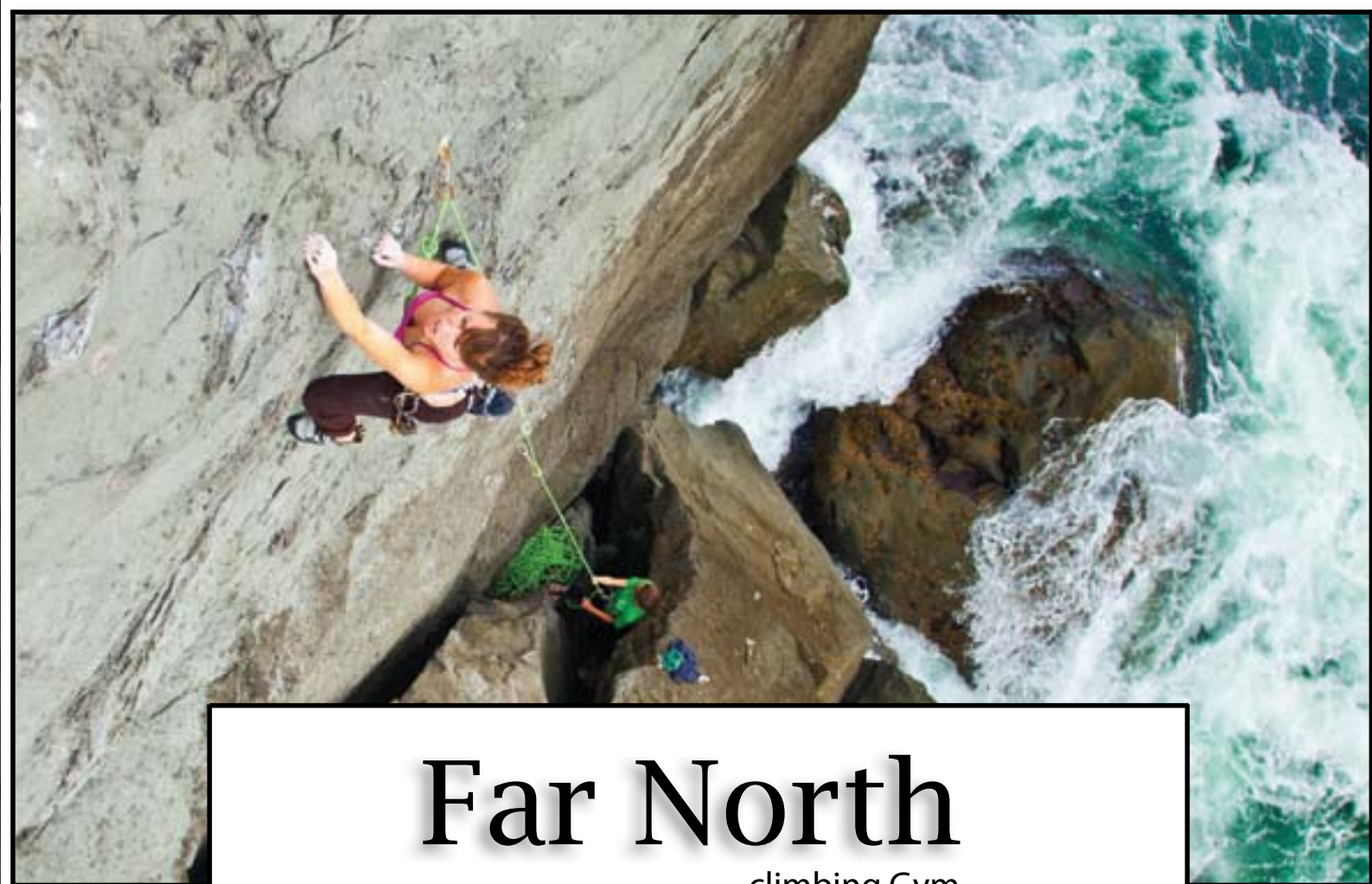


Sanam Pejuhesh styles up a tall moderate on the backside of the Flake Boulder.  
IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG



## LOST ROCKS

Andrea Batt warming up on a moderate arête, one of the first boulders encountered after the steep approach.



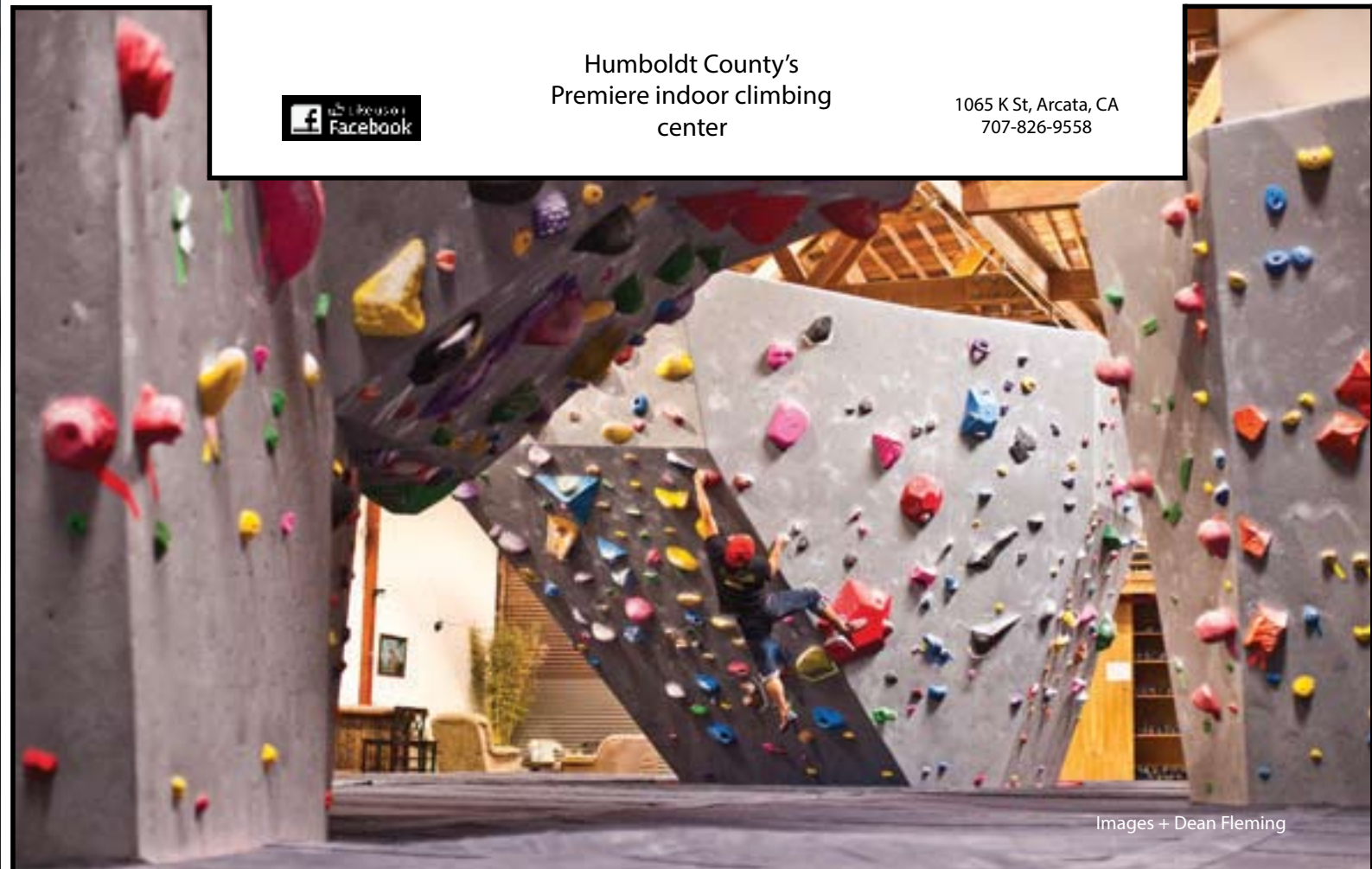
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# FISK MILL COVE

WORDS + DAVE STALLARD / IMAGES + JIM THORNBURG

**PING!** IT WAS A STRANGE SOUND TO HEAR WHILE FALLING. WHEN THE ROPE CAME TIGHT I LOOKED DOWN AND SAW A QUICKDRAW SPINNING DOWN THE CORD BEFORE STOPPING ON THE DRAW BELOW. I THOUGHT IT HAD SIMPLY COME UNCLIPPED BUT WHEN I LOOKED CLOSER, THE QUICKDRAW WAS STILL CLIPPED TO THE BOLT HANGER AND THE NUT AND STUD WERE FUSED TOGETHER. EVERYTHING IN MY BODY CLENCHED AND I LOOKED AT THE BOLT I WAS NOW HANGING ON. IT LOOKED IDENTICAL TO THE ONE THAT HAD JUST BROKE UNDER ABOUT TEN POUNDS OF TENSION FROM THE ROPE COMING TIGHT ON THE DRAW, AND I HAD JUST DYNAMICALLY LOADED THE BOLT I WAS LOOKING AT WITH 170 POUNDS.







A week prior I had dogged my way up the same 5.12 route, *Yardarm*, at the seaside climbing area Fisk Mill Cove, on the same 15-year old hardware. The bolts were stainless and installed by folks who knew what they were doing, but time, salt and stress corrosion cracking (SCC) had been working on these bolts. Visually, they still looked good, with only slight surface discoloration. But, as I inspected the broken bolt more closely it was apparent that it had rotted entirely through, just below the hanger. Later, the first bolt on the route also failed under a slight outward pull that was considerably less than bodyweight.

Spooked, I continued up the route, but fear of the old bolts was magnified 100 times on the last thirty feet of 5.10 to the anchors. I was pumped and now over-gripping hard, fear stink sweating out of me, imagining what it would be like to fall and zipper the entire pitch. That was the end of our redpoint efforts until new bolts arrived.

<~~~>

*Yardarm* (5.12) is found on the Shipwreck Wall at Fisk Mill Cove in Salt Point State Park; a great spot to beat the summer heat. Pioneered by prolific North Bay explorers Marcos Nunez and Jordy Morgan, the Shipwreck and its sinister neighbor the Treasure Chest at Fisk Mill Cove are gems. The area is accessed via a short hike through a moist coastal forest thick with redwoods and ferns. Once on the coast, the coarse sandstone walls are hidden until you hike down to the ocean via a steep trail (Shipwreck Wall) or rappel (Treasure Chest).

## PREVIOUS PAGE

When Marcos Nunez and Jordy Morgan established Captain Hook at Fisk Mill Cove, they rated it a conservative 5.10a. That's probably a bit stiff, but in the ballpark - IF conditions are perfect (rare) and you do EVERYTHING right (also rare). Now add in some booming surf, a little salt-rime mixed with sea spray on the holds and the knowledge a sleeper wave might take your belayer out - maybe 10c seems more accurate? Now, say you face the wrong way in the chimney, can't find the jug at the lip of the roof and end up totally pumped for the run-out to the anchor - how's 5.11 sound? Oh, and if you can't get up it, you better be a really good swimmer. Whatever the rating, this is probably the most epic 45ft, 5-star sport-route you'll ever do. Climber: Gabrielle Nobrega.

## OPPOSITE PAGE

Christine Galecki makes the big move to the jug on *Captain Hook* (5.10c). This move makes the transition from the arête to the chimney climbable at 'only' 5.10.

## ABOVE LEFT TOP

An old 1/2-inch stainless steel wedge bolt next to new Titanium glue-in bolt. Titanium is resistant to seaside corrosion, and the glue provides a further buffer against moisture. A properly placed Titanium bolt might last 50 years or more.

## ABOVE

Steven Roth on *Ride or Die* (V4 R/X). This highball problem traverses a sloping rail that goes up and right while the hillside below drops steeply down and left. The rock is perfect, but you'll be 25 feet off the deck at the crux!



FISK  
MILL  
COVE







I'd struggled in the past with coastal crags because they take more work to prep the climbs into condition. Often the holds have a thin veneer of salty slime residue requiring brushing. Or, like the tide and swell-dependent Treasure Chest, you need to make a committing rap into the crag from above then climb out. Not your standard show up and drop the rope-bag style sport area, and definitely unnerving to watch the swell ebb just feet from your packs.

But that first day the quality of the climbing and the delicious sea breeze lifted my mood. Walking through the quiet forest in an ethereal fog to find that the sandstone was more like gritstone, with holds that have been sculpted by wind and water into dishes, huecos and perfect little pockets, I knew I was onto something.

Two weeks later I was back with my friend Jim Thornburg, his drill and a bucket of Titanium bolts and glue. Our first mission was to re-bolt *Yardarm*. After the glue had set, it was time to get back to the route. Spirits were high as we re-sussed the moves. It felt good to practice the wild maneuvers without the gnawing fear of bolt failure. After the draws were hung, it was time to give it a real try. I felt good on the lower section, but I pitched off the crux when my core collapsed trying to make the "yardarm" reach and keep the feet tight in the overhang; distressing, because I had put a lot of pressure on myself to send that weekend. I was out of attempts and I was scheduled for surgery that would require a minimum of three weeks off with no exercise to heal. Gloom set in, a natural partner to my fear of surgery.

Weeks went by. I felt stiff and weak. But Jim wanted to return and redpoint. After doing nothing for weeks I really just wanted to get

#### PREVIOUS PAGE

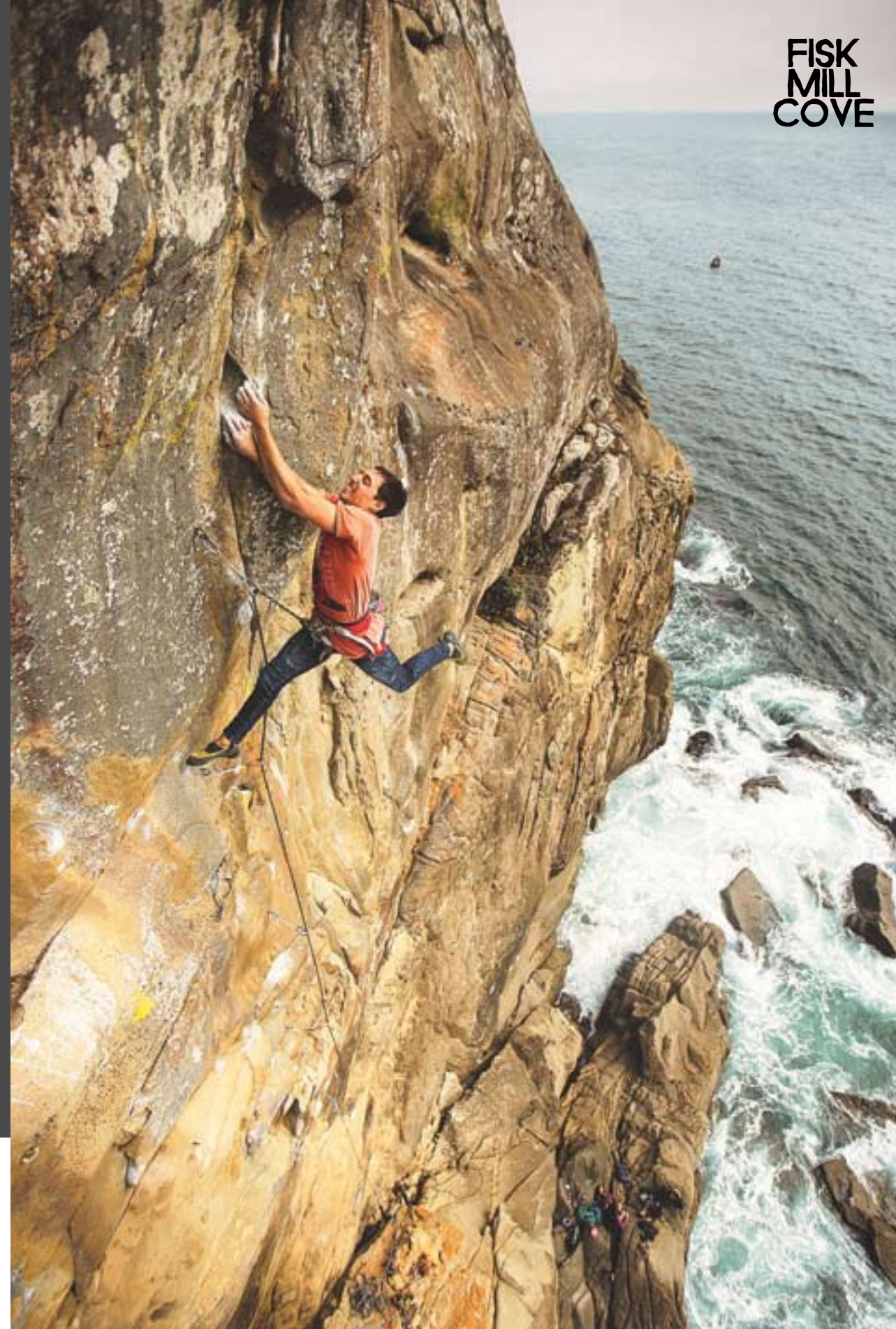
Christine Zalecki on *Booty* (10d); another short line that packs quite a punch. Tip: Check the holds on the rappel in - if the climb has no chalk, swing over and brush and chalk the holds on the way down - or just go for it, but be prepared to hunt for hard-to-see holds.

#### BOTH PAGES

At 80 feet, *Yardarm* (5.12a) is the longest line on Shipwreck Wall. Beautiful moves lead to a welcome rest at the fourth bolt. A few bolts higher you'll encounter the crux - one of those moves that can't be dumbed down. There are several different solutions for this section, and all of them involve trying really fucking hard! Jonathan Wright demonstrates.

in a couple gym sessions to regain some fitness. A day in the sun next to the sea sounded good and I thought I might have a little residual fitness despite my idleness. There was a whole crew out there that day. The warm-up already had a line three deep. I just looked at Jim, shrugged and asked "Yardarm?"

"Yesss!" was the reply. So I jumped on it ice cold, stiff as an old man, my fresh surgical scars feeling tight and foreign. Despite the stiffness, the moves were still wired into my brain. I reached for holds without looking and was taking them perfectly, one of the best feelings in redpointing.



FISK  
MILL  
COVE





## FISK MILL COVE

Despite all the excuses I carried out to the Shipwreck that day, I was flowing. Right until I fell off the crux. But the draws were up, and the warm-up performance boosted confidence like a ray of sunshine.

"I got some new crux beta from Jono the other day and I think it makes it easier" Jim said. He went next and demoed the new beta. He fell off, but it was the warm-up. I was reluctant to switch beta late in the game, having tried to push my beta through for at least three days.

Tying back in I felt the normal redpoint jitters and I still wasn't sure when I left the ground which beta I was going to run through the crux, but as I shook and chalked I thought why not? The new way looked fun... and I stuck it. It felt right on the edge, but I recovered, hiked the feet and stabbed out right to the good holds and the rest. I just leaned against the rock for a minute, trying to combine the feelings of excitement and relief with the beauty of the setting.

It was the release I needed, and I climbed joyfully the last bit to the chains. Months later it seems a bit silly how much that redpoint helped me, the culmination of months of frustration, work on the route, the hardware and the work on my body. Before this route, I'd only heard other climbers talk about not being attached to the outcome and how light they felt when climbing without expectations.

Today, the Shipwreck Wall and neighboring Treasure Chest have been entirely re-bolted with Titanium bolts. Thanks to the ASCA, FISH Products and friends Steven Roth, Conrad Frausto, Casey Zak, Matt Ulery and Caden Picard, we have replaced over 100 bolts with either stainless steel or Titanium glue-ins. Fisk Mill Cove is a great crag in a unique setting, just be sure to check the swell and tide before you go. And be sure to save a little time for the two minute hike to the observation platform above the crag for sunset; a favored local tradition.



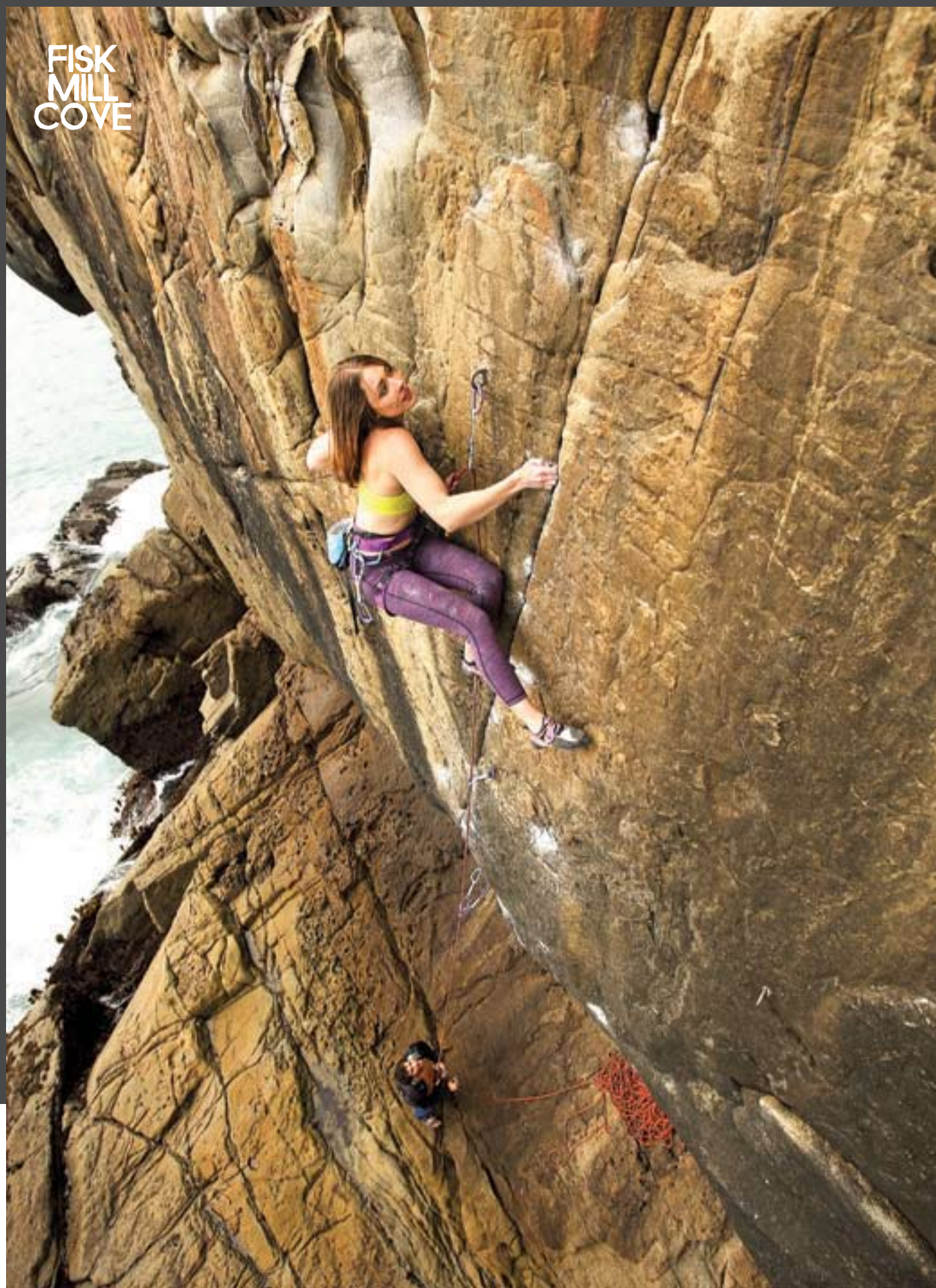
### OPPOSITE PAGE

Gaby Nobrega on *Avalon* (5.12a). This climb starts with 50 feet of very fun 5.10 face climbing followed by a decent rest on a huge jug. Finding a sequence up the 15-foot barn-door crack above is super-technical and pumpy. Crack the crux and you get to perform an awkward and harrowing mantle eight feet above the last bolt.

### THIS PAGE

*Pegleg* (5.9) is the only route at Fisk Mill that has good holds and relatively straightforward moves. That said, some of the holds are REALLY far apart. Nicole Bell Isle climbing.





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THE BETA

**GETTING THERE**  
The main rock formation at Fisk Mill Cove is called Sentinel Rock which includes the Shipwreck Wall, the Treasure Chest and the South Buttress. Parking for Sentinel Rock can be found at a slender dirt pullout at mile marker 4286 on Highway 1 about one mile north of Fisk Mill Cove State Park. From this parking lot follow a faint trail toward the coast and the top of Sentinel Rock.

**WHERE TO STAY**  
Camping can be found at Salt Point State Park, Gerstle Cove Campground and Woodside Campground.

**GUIDEBOOK**  
"Bay Area Rock" by Jim Thornburg

FIVE STAR ROUTES

- Pegleg (5.9)
- Captain Hook (5.10c)
- Yardarm (5.12a)
- Avalon (5.12a)
- El Sabroso (5.13c/d)



**PREVIOUS PAGE**  
Gaby Nobrega on *Mr. Salty* (12b). This fun, hard route is easily previewed via the main rappel used to access the base of the Treasure Chest. A powerful start (stick clip) connects small crimps via big moves. The leaning seam above is easier, but you'll likely be very pumped.

**ABOVE**  
Steven Roth on *El Sabroso* (13c/d). The short but striking prow at the end of the cliff is guarded by a wild and powerful V10 boulder problem. Dry conditions are helpful when trying to stick to the sloping rail in the middle.



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



# SENTINEL

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