

# CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

A full-page background image showing a person in a green shirt and red shorts climbing a large, light-brown rock formation. The climber is positioned on the left side of the frame, near the top of a vertical crack. The rock formation is massive and craggy, with a sharp peak on the right. The sky is a clear, deep blue.

SPRING 2022

N° 34

FREE

## INSIDE

12 / **ACCESS** BISHOP

36 / **BEHIND THE LENS** VALLEY OF GIANTS

48 / **CALIFORNIA CLIMBER** HIDETAKA SUZUKI





**ORION MINOR QUICKDRAW**

# FIXEhardware

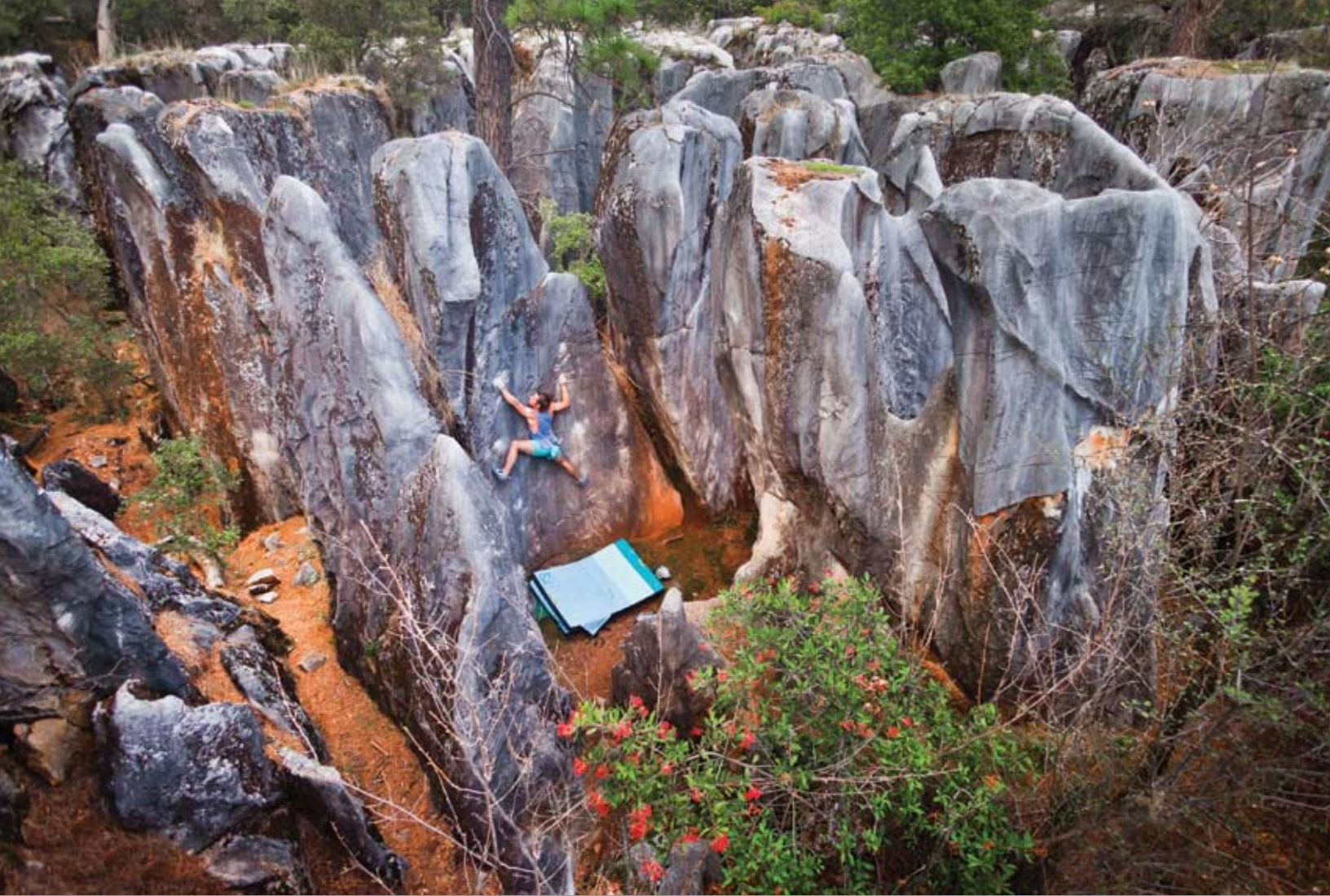


**FROM THE GROUND UP SINCE 1991**

Come Visit Our Showroom, Now Open in Downtown Bishop, CA







## CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

NO. 34  
SPRING 2022

CALIFORNIACLIMBERMAGAZINE.COM

### DEPARTMENTS

06/EDITOR'S NOTE  
10/EVENTS  
12/ACCESS  
20/STAND BY YOUR VAN  
22/ROUTE OF THE SEASON  
24/REVIEW  
30/GOLDEN STATE GALLERY  
56/LAST GO

### FEATURES

36/BEHIND THE LENS: VALLEY OF GIANTS  
48/CALIFORNIA CLIMBER: HIDETAKA SUZUKI

#### ON THE COVER

Hidetaka Suzuki on the first ascent of *Asteroid Crack* (5.13a) in Joshua Tree National Park.

IMAGE + GREG EPPERSON

#### THIS PAGE

Austin Schuler on *Cellar Door* (V6), Upper Arboretum, Columbia.

IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING

**TRANGO**

# ROCK PRODIGY TRAINING

- ▶ Two-Piece Designs Protects Shoulders
- ▶ Innovative Holds Offer More Training Options
- ▶ 3 Unique Boards Let You Optimize Your Workout

**PERFECT YOUR TRAINING SYSTEM**





# CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

CALIFORNIA CLIMBER MAGAZINE.COM

**PUBLISHER**

Dean Fleming

**ART DIRECTOR**

Alton Richardson

**SENIOR CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS**

Jerry Dodrill, Jim Thornburg

**SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITORS**

Fitz Cahall, Nick Miley

**CONTRIBUTORS**

Bruce Hawkins, Barb Eastman, Molly Higgins, Anne Carpenter, Lauren DeLaunay Miller, Ellie Hawkins, Mary Pottinger, Nick Miley, Greg Epperson, Hidetaka Suzuki, Dean Fleming, Bob Kincheloe, Keith Nannery, Sue Giller, Glen Denny

**CALIFORNIA CLIMBER**

California Climber

PO Box 94

Big Oak Flat, CA 95305

Email: climb108@yahoo.com

**MOST, IF NOT ALL, OF THE ACTIVITIES DEPICTED HEREIN CARRY AND PRESENT SIGNIFICANT RISKS OF PERSONAL INJURY OR DEATH.**

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.

Barb Eastman gets creative seeking warmth on El Cap Tower during the first all-female ascent of the Nose in 1977.



MOLLY HIGGINS



173 S. WASHINGTON ST.  
DOWNTOWN SONORA  
209.532.5621  
snacattack.com

everything you need  
for your next  
climbing adventure

Photo: ©Corey Rich / Novus Select

TC PRO  
FALL 2021



“ I'm really excited about the re-design of the TC Pro. I was a little nervous at first 'cause it just seems so sweet, I didn't want to mess with it, but as we've learned from La Sportiva, they tend to have a really good vision. One of the updates was to make the shoe more durable, while making sure the shoe could still crack climb and edge really well.

I got my first pair in 2008 and I can't go back!”

- Tommy Caldwell

*Tommy Caldwell*

  
LA SPORTIVA®  
SPORTIVA.COM  
FOR YOUR MOUNTAIN



EDITOR’S NOTE

We were in Junior High when my friend Derrick’s older brother left home for college. In the months that followed Derrick and I spent hours digging through the boxes of junk his brother had left in his old room at his parent’s house. We were looking for contraband, or course, and occasionally we’d strike gold and stumble upon something like a broken bb-gun; items like that would land in a pile we called “keepers.” It was in these boxes that I uncovered an old issue of Climbing magazine. I had never seen a photograph of rock climbing before, and although it was decades ago, I still remember the cover of the magazine vividly.

The picture on the cover was taken from the side with a long lens of Hidetaka Suzuki climbing *The Gift* (5.12d) in Red Rocks, Nevada. Suzuki was wearing black pants and a tank top. His right foot was high-stepping a seemingly impossible distance above his waist. The rope draped over his knee and a massive loop of slack hung down to the last bolt far below him. The equipment suspended from his harness reminded me of superheroes like Batman or characters from army movies like Rambo. Suzuki had a calm but determined expression on his face; I wondered why he didn’t look frightened. The photograph expressed a unique combination of physical mastery and mental fortitude that I had only seen in skateboarding photography. It made me want to be a rock climber.

In the years and decades that followed I became something of a rock climber, and with that pursuit I acquired an obsession for climbing photography and climbing magazines. In the late 1990s and early 2000s it seemed like every few months another photograph of Hidetaka Suzuki would pop up in an issue of *Climbing* or *Rock & Ice*. There I saw a few more photos of Hidetaka sport climbing at areas like Red Rocks, but lots of the images featured incredibly difficult crack climbs; routes like *Grand Illusion* (5.13c) at Sugar Loaf, *The Phoenix* (5.13) in Yosemite Valley, *Star Wars Crack* (5.13a) at Donner Summit, *Stingray* (5.13d), *Acid Crack* (5.12d), *Equinox* (5.12c) and *Asteroid Crack* (5.13a) in Joshua Tree. It seemed as though every difficult and beautiful crack climb that I dreamed about trying, Suzuki had either redpointed or established – and it seemed like he had done so in the late 1980s, when these climbs were among the most difficult pitches in existence.

<~~~~>

“We found that [Suzuki’s] climbing was way more progressive than we had supposed,” says Nick Miley in the introduction to this issue’s cover story, “California Climber: Hidetaka Suzuki.” “Just to put Hidetaka’s mastery into perspective, his 1988 first ascent of *Stingray* (5.13d) – a laser-thin overhanging tips crack in Joshua Tree – didn’t see a second ascent for twenty-two years until Sonny Trotter finally repeated it in 2010.”

But Hidetaka Suzuki isn’t only a master of hard cracks. In his youth Suzuki climbed extensively in the Northern Japanese Alps, repeating and establishing some of the most difficult alpine routes in the region. Some of his first winter ascents have never been repeated. Later in life, during the late 1990s and early 2000s Suzuki lived in Bishop where he climbed and established some difficult bouldering problems. “I was bouldering to get so many different hard moves on the rock which helps to onsite hard routes,” said Suzuki. “For three winter seasons I spent five to six months in Bishop and then the rest of the year I stayed in Briancon, France.” →



**Mega Pack 30** \$129.95  
**Mega Pack 40** \$159.95  
**Mega Pack 50** \$219.95  
**Mega Pack 60** \$269.95

**Greatest Hits - Bouldering Set**  
\$49.95

**Mini Jug 15 Pack/30 Pack**  
\$109.95/\$199.95

**Mods 15 Pack/30 Pack**  
\$109.95/\$199.95

# Eastside Sports

## Mountain Sports Specialists Since 1977

**WE HAVE ALL THE GEAR YOU NEED FOR:**  
Climbing  
Bouldering  
Mountaineering  
Day hiking  
Backpacking  
Trail running  
And just hanging out in the Eastern Sierra

**INCLUDING:**  
Mountain Footwear  
Books and Maps  
Apparel  
Tents & Sleeping Bags  
Accessories

**WE RENT:**  
Climbing shoes  
Bouldering pads  
Tents  
Sleeping bags  
Backpacks

224 North Main St. Bishop, CA 93514, tel 760-873-7520  
eastsidesports.com, info@eastsidesports.com

locally owned since 1977  
**OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK**

Bishop, California



EDITOR’S NOTE

The only thing potentially more impressive than Suzuki’s climbing resume is the list of places he has traveled around the US and beyond. Before Google Maps and the internet made traveling more easily accessible, Hidetaka rolled around in his pickup truck with a camper shell, traveling to places like Mt Lemmon in Arizona where he established *Golden Beaver* (5.13), to the Tennessee Wall in Chattanooga, to Mount Charleston in Nevada where he redpointed his first 5.14, *Soul Man*.

“Each year we would travel more than half the year, like camping out to stay and climb for a few months in Joshua Tree in winter, then for two months in Yosemite for each climbing season, then some years traveling to other states like Oregon, Nevada, Texas, Arizona and Missouri to check out the local crags, or very famous routes, or unrepeatd routes,” said Suzuki.

But Suzuki’s travels didn’t stop at the US border; over the course of his incredible climbing and kite surfing careers, Suzuki traveled and lived in places like Briancon, Chamonix and Verdon in France, Hawaii, Brazil, Kenya, Western Australia, The Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and countless other locations.

“15 or 20 limestone cliffs exist around Briancon, and you can go to any crag within a fifteen minute drive,” Suzuki fondly recalls of his time in France. “So many climbers were living there in the small town. People there finish working around 4pm, then walk home, and then go climbing with their friends, or with their kids. Briancon must have been the most popular town for climbers in France, but there is no climbing gym there.”

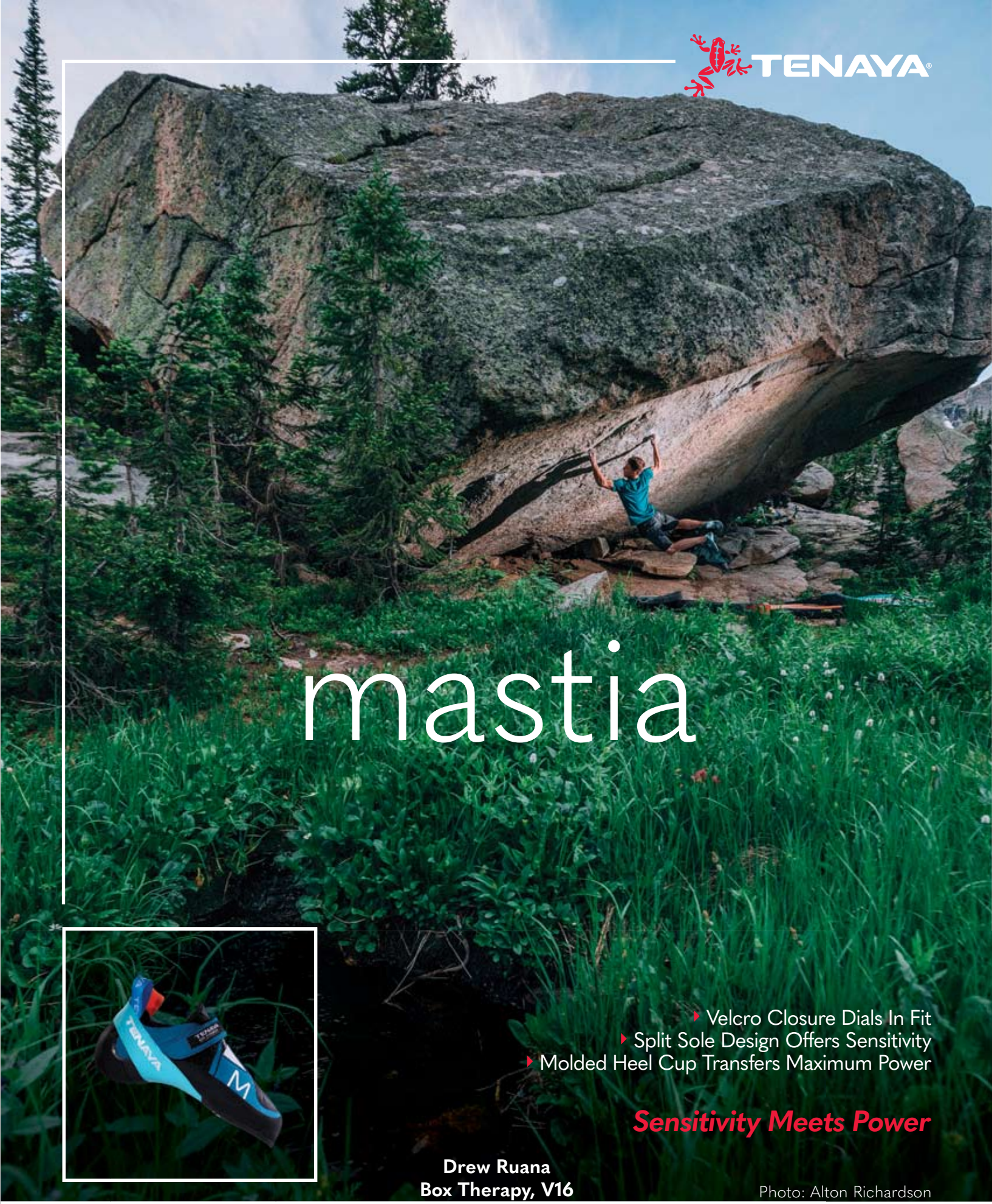
At the age of 70 Suzuki is now living and climbing in Japan, where he teaches children how to climb at the local elementary schools, exploring the local limestone cliffs on his days off. “It’s fun to go to the new climbing areas in Japan,” said Suzuki. “Since I lived outside of Japan for over 40 years, I don’t know Japan well, so Japan is like an overseas country for me. It’s very crowded in Tokyo, but once you go to the countryside of Japan, it’s so beautiful. Japan is such a small country, but has such beautiful nature around. I like to go out to be in the Mother Nature.”

For more on Hidetaka Suzuki, see this issue’s cover story “California Climber: Hidetaka Suzuki” on page 48. —DEAN FLEMING

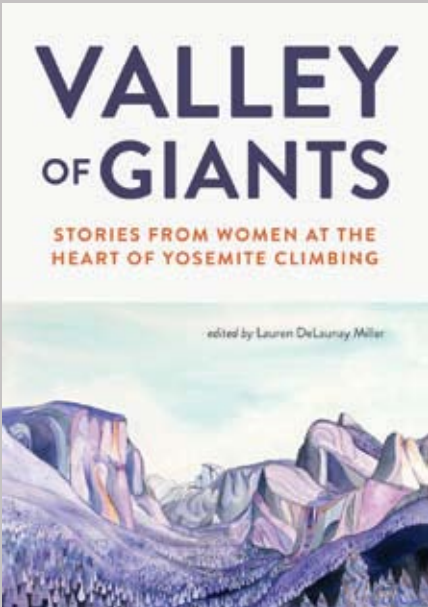


Hidetaka Suzuki making the first redpoint ascent of *Star Wars Crack* (5.13a) on the now infamous, Star Wall in Donner Summit.

Suzuki in Japan with blooming cherry blossoms, a far cry from the east side sage brush.



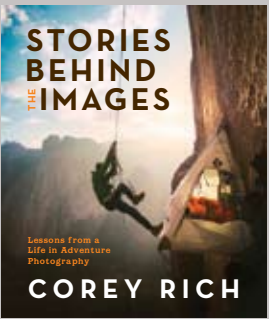
mastia



**NEW!**  
**VALLEY OF GIANTS**  
Stories from Women at the Heart of Yosemite Climbing  
by Lauren DeLaunay Miller  
Groundbreaking anthology featuring both untold and famous stories from the female trailblazers of Yosemite climbing. Contributors include notable climbers like Beth Rodden, Lynn Hill, Steph Davis, and Kate Rutherford.



**LIGHTING OUT**  
A Golden Year in Yosemite and the West  
by Daniel Duane  
A coming-of-age memoir with insight into the Yosemite climbing lifestyle of the early 1990s.



**STORIES BEHIND THE IMAGES**  
Lessons from a Life in Adventure Photography  
by Corey Rich  
A look behind the scenes of Rich’s iconic shots of adventure superstars. Featured athletes include Tommy Caldwell, Bear Grylls, Alex Honnold, and many more.



Scan to view our full catalog.

Available in book and outdoor stores, or online at [www.mountaineersbooks.org](http://www.mountaineersbooks.org)



- ▶ Velcro Closure Dials In Fit
- ▶ Split Sole Design Offers Sensitivity
- ▶ Molded Heel Cup Transfers Maximum Power

**Sensitivity Meets Power**

Drew Ruana  
Box Therapy, V16

Photo: Alton Richardson

[www.tenayausa.com](http://www.tenayausa.com) | Lafayette, CO

make it happen





EVENTS

ACCESS EVENTS:

ECHO CLIFFS, MAY 21ST  
CONSERVATION TEAM ADOPT-A-CRAG WITH SCMA

VERTIGO BOULDERS, LOS ANGELES, MAY 24TH  
CONSERVATION TEAM PRESENTATION

STRONGHOLD CLIMBING GYM, LOS ANGELES, MAY 26TH  
CONSERVATION TEAM PRESENTATION

HOLCOMB VALLEY, MAY 28TH-29TH  
CONSERVATION TEAM ADOPT-A-CRAG WITH SCMA

YOSEMITE VALLEY, JUNE 3RD  
CONSERVATION TEAM EVENT / YOSEMITE TRAILS DAY

STRAWBERRY STATION, 10AM, APRIL 10TH  
CRAGS TRAIL WORK VOLUNTEER DAY @ LOVERS LEAP

MEET-UPS & SOCIAL EVENTS:

BISHOP: MAY 19TH - 22ND  
GOLDEN STATE GUIDING, LADIES WEEKEND OUT 2.0

JOSHUA TREE: APRIL 30TH 6PM TO 10PM  
VALLEY OF GIANTS BOOK RELEASE EVENT

PACIFIC PIPE, OAKLAND: APRIL 14TH  
LATINX CLIMB NIGHT

QUEER CRUSH CLIMBING - NOR CAL GYM EVENTS:

PACIFIC PIPE, OAKLAND: APRIL 11TH

GREAT WESTERN POWER CO, OAKLAND: APRIL 4TH

PIPEWORKS, SACRAMENTO: APRIL 15TH

DOGPATCH BOULDERS, SAN FRANCISCO: APRIL 17TH

BENCHMARK CLIMBING, SAN FRANCISCO: APRIL 19TH

DIABLO, CONCORD: APRIL 20TH

THE STUDIO, SAN JOSE: APRIL 21ST

MISSION CLIFFS, SAN FRANCISCO: APRIL 22ND

IRONWORKS, BERKELEY: APRIL 25TH



KILTER

6,000+ SHAPES  
KILTER BOARDS

HOLDS@KILTERGRIPS.COM  
SETTERCLOSET.COM



14 GYMS.  
1 COMMUNITY.



TOUCHSTONE  
CLIMBING

- PACIFIC PIPE
- MISSION CLIFFS
- DOGPATCH BOULDERS
- GREAT WESTERN POWER CO.
- BERKELEY IRONWORKS
- PIPEWORKS
- STUDIO CLIMBING
- METALMARK FRESNO, CALIFORNIA
- LA-B
- VERDIGO BOULDERS
- CLIFFS OF ID.
- HOLLYWOOD BOULDERS
- DIABLO ROCK
- WILDFIRE





BISHOP: KNOW BEFORE YOU GO (EVERY TIME)

**FRED ROWE HAS MORE THAN 40** years of experience fly fishing and guiding fly fishing in the Eastern Sierra. Earlier this year Fred was on his way to the river when he noticed a table and a gathering of volunteers the Bishop Climbing Rangers and Bishop Climbers Coalition had assembled for a clean-up. He pulled over, and with enthusiasm and curiosity asked what we were up to. A few minutes of letting him know about the work of the Bishop Climbing Rangers and the Bishop Climbers Coalition led to an extended conversation about good stewardship and sustainable recreation in the region. The fishing community and climbing community have similarly struggled with sustainable usage.

Getting ready to head up towards the climbing area, Fred asked if he could join me. In his 40 years of exploring every nook and cranny of the river in the area and driving past the Happies on the way, he never made his way up the trail to see what goes on. I invited him to join me.

We made our way up the trail and passed a few parties from outside the region doing their warm-up laps. I told him that folks come from all over the world to climb in the Eastern Sierra. Some will visit once or twice and others are frequent 'second-lifers' in the region. "Just like fly fishing," Fred said.

I explained to Fred the concept of beta- how climbers work diligently at figuring out their intricate movement, positioning, and strategy for a problem or route- and how they may approach a problem or route that appears impossible only to find a way to ultimately make it possible. "Just like fly fishing!" he interjected.

We discussed how these areas have been impacted by continued use of the lands we love. Trails now exist where they hadn't before and impacted areas are expanding as more folks use the same areas over and over without giving them the time to heal. Educating folks about 'pack it in, pack it out' and making sure no waste is left behind has become a critical need. "...just like fly fishing," said Fred.

We also chatted about social impacts, and how important it is for respect within the user-group and outside the user-group. Folks sometimes come to the crag with a big party in mind, nestling a stones-throw from a small group who had been enjoying the solitude and quiet joy of the landscape. Sometimes folks are so focused on their objectives that they don't consider the space and experience of those around them and insert themselves on a problem without communicating with the group that is working on it. There are also times when a group will nest at a popular boulder or crag for the day and not consider that others also deserve the opportunity to enjoy those areas as well. On the other hand, there are also some folks that see and value only climbing and nothing else. Some forget about non-climbers and may view them antagonistically through an "us-versus-them" lens- while others maintain openness, consideration, and inclusivity. "Just like fly fishing," Fred said.

<~~~>

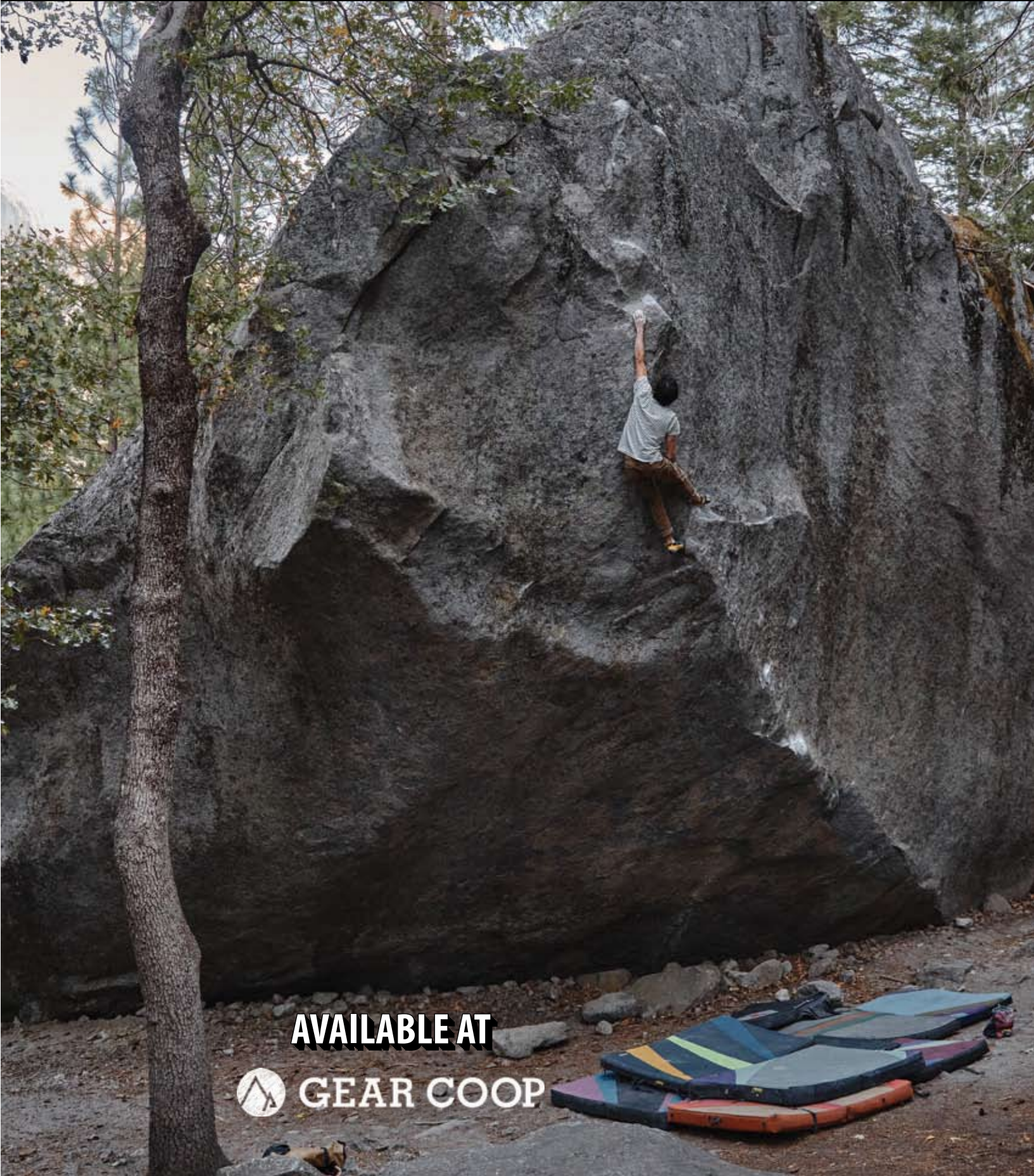
**F**or millennia, the diverse landscape of the Bishop area has been home to the Paiute ("Numu") and Shoshone ("Newe") people. Known as Payahuunadü ("Land of the Flowing Water"), the region surrounding Bishop is abundant in vastness and history. Today, Bishop plays center stage for year-round climbing in California.

Climbing has grown in popularity over the years. With that growth in popularity, there has also been a growing impact on local climbing areas around Bishop. As Bishop Climbing Rangers, we are seeing new and expanding impacts even within a single season. How do we keep these sensitive areas from being loved to death?

Observations and experience show that these areas have changed dramatically over the past few decades due to the impacts of climbing-use. There are expanding dead-zones around most popular boulders and along many crags and areas that people use for dispersed camping, along with this are the impacts associated with social trails: erosion, and reduced/damaged plant life. The cumulative effect of use in these popular areas often leaves a negative footprint.

Beyond environmental impacts, there are also social impacts. Many of the areas we climb have a rich cultural history and a story to tell. The Paiute and Shoshone peoples who live in the region have resided here for millennia and are intimately tied to these lands. There are also many non-climbers and local residents that enjoy these areas- whether to travel through or to appreciate the landscape in their own way. It might be easy to get lost in the stoke and to focus on your experience, but it is important to have consideration for all people, whether they are climbers or not.

In many ways, actions inform perceptions and perceptions inform decision-making. Consideration of how you drive, how you park, where you choose to camp, how you treat others, how you access and how you use these areas can demonstrate respect and reinforce positive perceptions.



AVAILABLE AT



GEAR COOP



Personal decisions to reopen a closed camping area or trail can be seen as antagonistic/disrespectful and can encourage agencies to make more strict decisions that will affect everyone. Failure to consider the environmental impact, other users and the cultural significance of the land are the factors that can lead to the loss of climbing access.

Leave No Trace is a keystone of sustainable recreation, but implementation of Leave No Trace principles can vary from region to region. Whether you have been to Bishop many times or have yet to make the journey - brush up on Bishop Area best practices and Leave No Trace principles each and every visit. The Buttermilk Area, the Happies and Sads, Pine Creek and the Owens River Gorge are each unique and amazing locations. We each need to do our part to help make sure we can keep loving these areas. It's our responsibility to know before we go - every time.

LEAVE NO TRACE: BEST PRACTICES FOR THE BISHOP AREA

[1] PLAN AHEAD & PREPARE

It is important to be prepared for when nature calls. If a toilet is unavailable at your destination, be sure to use a wag bag and pack out all waste (including toilet paper and sanitary products).

Weather conditions in this region often change quickly and vary drastically from location to location. Make sure you have researched the weather forecast and are prepared. Bishop is known for its arid climate with wide-ranging highs and lows. During the winter season, it's common to feel hot in the sun and cold in the shade. Windy conditions can also create problems - sand in the eyes or blown away tents and campsite items. Injuries have also resulted from crash pads being blown out from under falling boulderers.

Some of the roads leading to our climbing areas are rough (i.e. Buttermilk Road). Make sure you are prepared for the conditions of these roads. Cracked oil pans, damaged suspension, and other issues are not uncommon. When conditions become snowy/icy, vehicles frequently get stuck - and tow services can be very expensive.

The enforceable speed limit on Buttermilk Road is 25mph. Drive slowly. High speeds create damage to the road base. Speeding on dirt roads is also a safety concern for yourself, for other drivers, and for the pedestrians that use these roads.

For additional information, contact the Bishop Visitor Center and keep up-to-date on important information and climbing-specific issues by following the Bishop Climbing Ranger on Instagram, as well as the Bishop Climbers Coalition, Friends of the Inyo, and Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association.



[2] CAMP AND TRAVEL ON DURABLE SURFACES

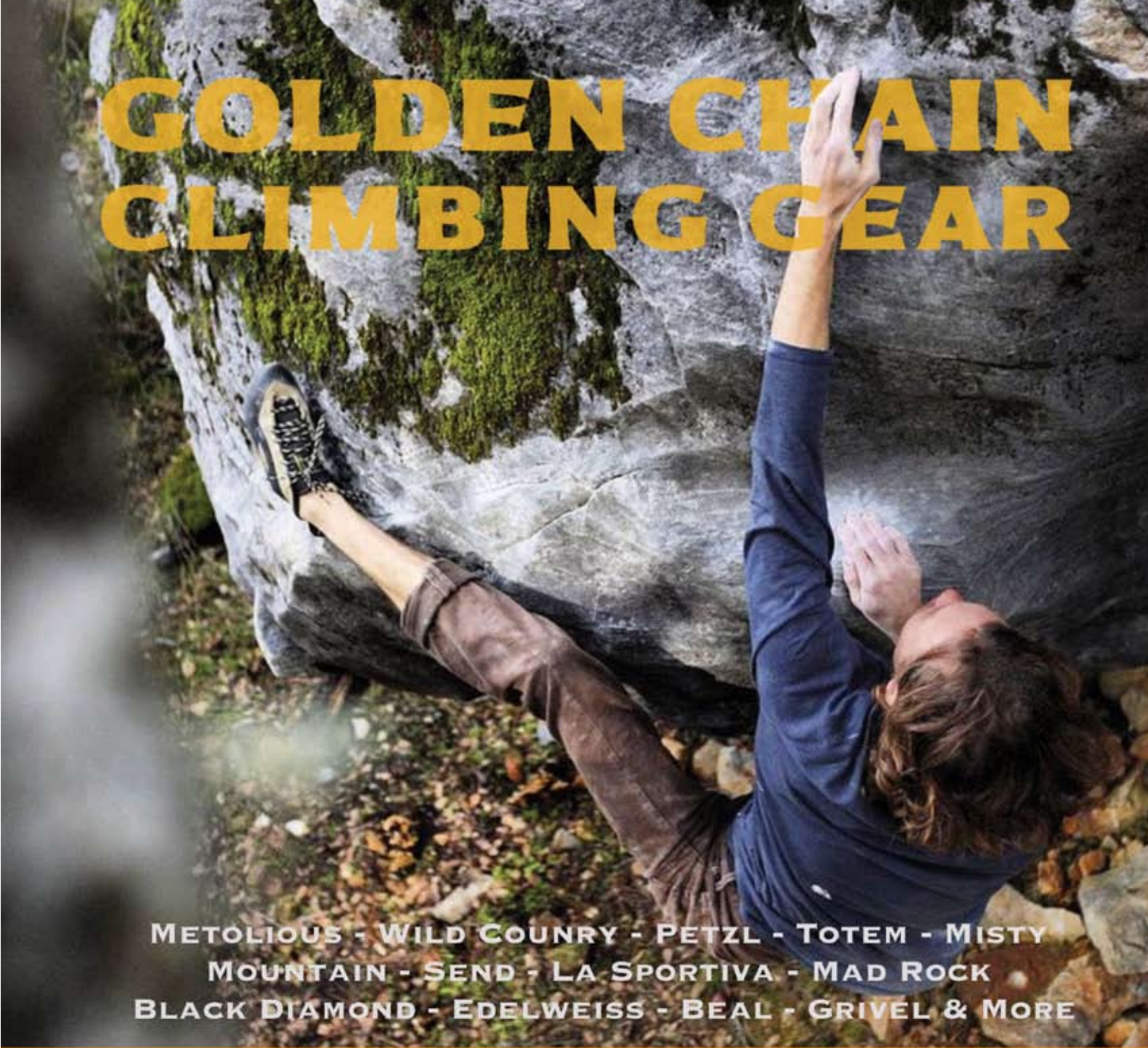
If you're planning to camp please use established campgrounds. The Pleasant Valley "Pit" Campground is an excellent option with maintained toilets and excellent views. It is also positioned in close proximity to the Happies and Sads, Pine Creek, Owens River Gorge, and the Buttermilk area. Open year-round, the sites at the Pit do not require reservation, are affordable, and can accommodate larger groups. You can also get a permit to extend your stay if you wish to stay longer than 14 days.

The Tri-County Fairground is another good option - with camping close to town. Sites include showers and electricity and can be reserved (but reservations are not required).

Dispersed camping is a very sensitive topic in the Bishop region. It is recommended to use an established campground. Areas that have been used for dispersed camping have become degraded with human waste and other trash that is not packed out. It is important to both park and camp only in the areas that have already been impacted. Some folks decide to park a little further into the brush or to place their tent outside the impacted area - expanding the footprint of the site by compacting topsoil and hindering plant re-growth.

[3] DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

Pack out all of your trash and dispose of it in a proper receptacle (this usually requires carrying your trash back to town). Unless you are at an established campground (such as the PV Pit), there are no trash services at any of the climbing areas. Used toilet paper or orange and banana peels, for instance, will not biodegrade until well after they become a nuisance for someone else. If we wish to sustain these natural landscapes, we need to do our part to pack out our waste.



METOLIOUS - WILD COUNRY - PETZL - TOTEM - MISTY  
MOUNTAIN - SEND - LA SPORTIVA - MAD ROCK  
BLACK DIAMOND - EDELWEISS - BEAL - GRIVEL & MORE

18204 Main St.  
Jamestown CA

NOW  
OPEN

209.770.5326  
@GOLDENCHAINCLIMBING





# ACCESS

For human waste, use an established toilet/ porta-john - like the ones at the Buttermilks, the Happies trailhead, the Pratt's area parking (in Pine Creek seasonally) and in central ORG. If you don't have access to an established toilet, use a wag bag and pack it out with your toilet paper and any pads, tampons and other sanitary products. These areas are far too popular to bury waste. Buried waste often reemerges in very unpleasant ways.

## [4] LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

You may find something of natural beauty that you want to take with you. Make sure to leave these items so the next person may also find the same joy when they discover them. You may also find carved rock or a shard of obsidian, for instance. If you find anything like this please leave them where you find them. These items are protected cultural resources that are historic to the native people that still live in the Bishop Area. We strongly suggest you visit the Paiute Shoshone Cultural Center to learn more about the history of these lands and its people.

## [5] MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

Learn how and when to have a campfire responsibly by getting a free campfire permit. A California Campfire Permit is a required permit for campfires on any public lands - including campfires in established campgrounds. Better yet, consider not having a campfire. Most of the time, a campfire is not necessary. Much of California and the West has suffered from human-caused wildfires via direct fire threat or from resulting air quality issues. Consider how important a campfire is to your experience before creating one.

What is the difference between a campfire and a wildfire? Your skills and how responsible you are. 80% of wildfires are human-caused. A single mismanaged and mishandled campfire can destroy our vulnerable landscape and our homes. A recent, mid-winter fire near Bishop scorched over 4,000 acres. Had the wind direction been different, many homes would have been lost. Ask yourself if you really need or want a campfire.

Use only existing fire rings and do not expand or modify these fire rings. Do not scavenge from the landscape for material to burn. Plant life may appear dead, but it is in fact alive and dormant. Before leaving any fire unattended, the fire must be put out - this means cold to the touch. Have extra water with you for that purpose. A portable propane fire pit can help to alleviate most of these problems.



## [6] RESPECT WILDLIFE / PLANT-LIFE

All kinds of wildlife roam these areas. Respect their home. Give all wildlife their space - keep control of pets (always leash pets in high-use areas), and avoid quick movements/loud noises. Also, be sure not to leave out food and pack out all trash (especially human waste). Furthermore, plants in these areas are delicate. Sagebrush is large and noticeable, but the landscape is also teeming with smaller, delicate plants that are not tolerant to being stepped on. Be mindful of your surroundings and tread lightly - do not hang gear on or tie your dog off to sagebrush or any other plants in the region. Keep dogs on leash in high-use areas. This helps to protect wildlife and plant-life, as well as respect others' experiences.

## [7] BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS

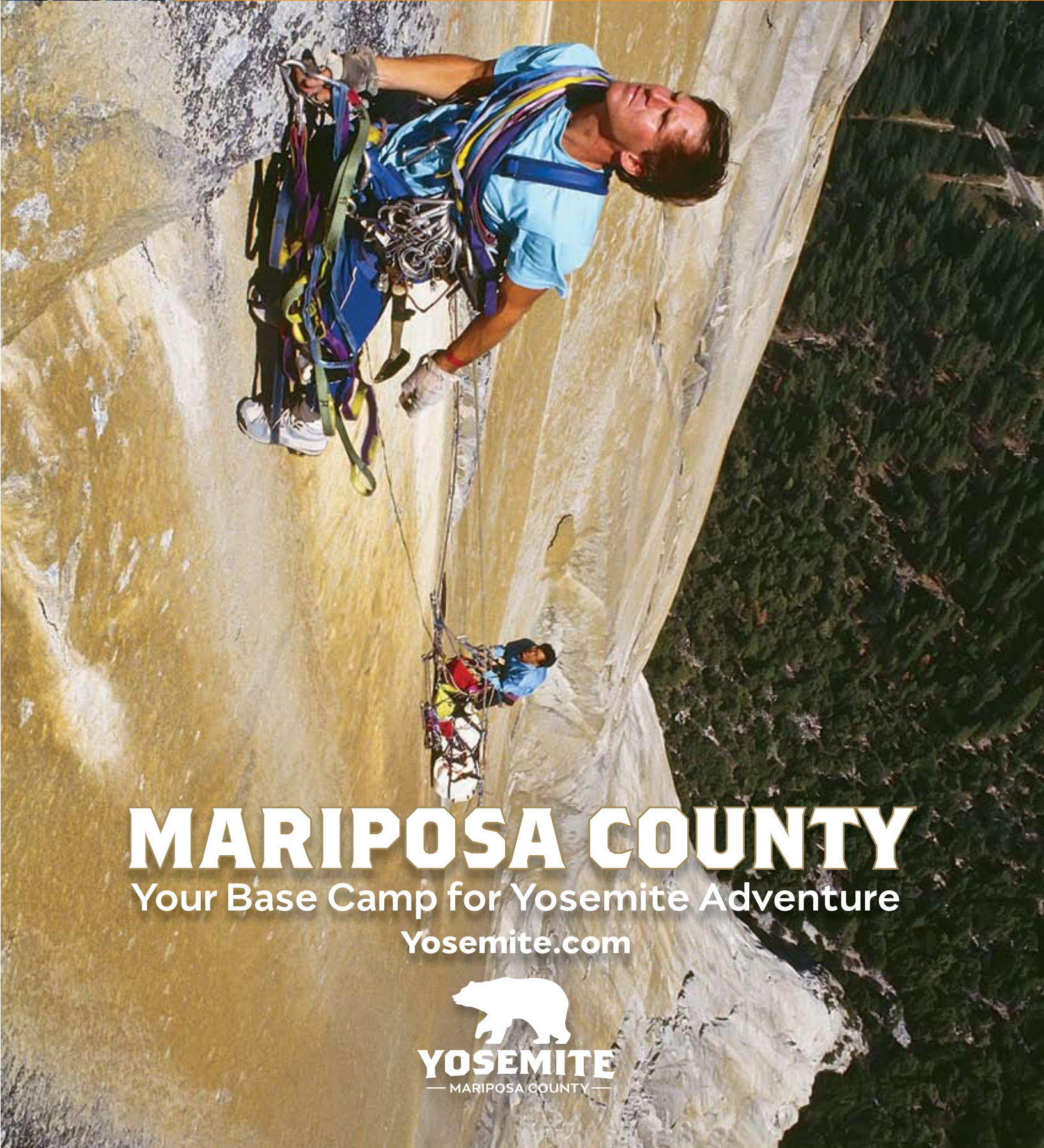
Respect the experiences of others while climbing. Drones, unruly dogs, playing music, and large groups can all have an impact on others' experiences. You can do your part by striving to reduce loud noises and keeping your party-size small.

There are many boulders and routes in every main area. If a party is at a boulder or on a route that you want to climb at, consider going to another spot that isn't occupied. If you can't do that, ask them if you may join - and accept that they may ask for you to wait. While you might be driven toward your ticklist, understand that others may be enjoying their space. At the same time, no one has a claim to any route, boulder, or problem. If you are nested at a popular boulder or at the base of a classic route, respect that others also deserve the opportunity to climb there. In any case, be considerate and maintain respect.

If the feeling of solitude in the outdoors is important to you, avoid taking trips on holidays and weekends. The Buttermilks, the Happies/Sads, Pine Creek and the Gorge are all often well-visited during these times.



VISIT KEN YAGER &  
**YOSEMITE CLIMBING ASSOCIATION'S  
NEW MUSEUM** | in the town of Mariposa, CA  
@yosemiteclimbing.org



**MARIPOSA COUNTY**  
Your Base Camp for Yosemite Adventure  
Yosemite.com





# ACCESS

**P**ark respectfully. Do not create a bottleneck on any roads (if a large emergency services vehicle cannot comfortably pass around your parked vehicle, that is a bottleneck) and do not make your own parking spot by parking on top of any plant life. If neither of these can be achieved, park elsewhere and walk. The mild inconvenience of walking a longer distance can help to reduce big issues and help to prevent negative perceptions of climbers.

It is important to recognize and have consideration for all people, not just climbers. Many different user-groups and members of local communities often enjoy the areas around where we climb. Actions of climbers inform their perceptions of the climbing community. These perceptions are often what inform decision-makers. If the climbing community is respectful and considerate, that goes a long way.

Last but not least, if you are traveling to the Bishop area or to other rural areas to climb - consider the local gateway communities that you may be passing through. Many rural communities lack resources and are often neglected by visitors passing-through to their destinations. There is a lot you can do to help - regardless the duration of your visit:

- Support local businesses and artists in the towns you are visiting. Instead of buying everything from the nearest city and driving in, consider buying goods locally. Bishop has plenty of grocery stores and restaurants, and some excellent shops that feature works of local artists.
- Support local nonprofits. Consider supporting youth/cultural organizations (such as AkaMya Cultural Group or Sacred Rok), local domestic crisis centers (for instance, Wild Iris), search and rescue teams (i.e. Inyo County SAR), local climbing organizations (like Bishop Climbers Coalition), or one of the many other area environmental/social nonprofits that are doing meaningful work (such as Friends of the Inyo or Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association - which houses the Bishop Climbing Ranger Program). Do some research and make the effort. Your contributions are meaningful.
- Expand your circle. Step outside the climbing scene and explore different activities, restaurants, shops, and events. Take the time to visit the Paiute Shoshone Cultural Center, hire a fishing or mountain guide and spend a day on the river or in the backcountry, or visit some of the unique events in the region or shops on Main Street. Connect with people from the local community with openness and learn about their ways of life and the things that are important to them, without judgment.

**K**now before you go – plan ahead and prepare, camp like a pro, stay on trail, respect wildlife/ plant-life, and be considerate of others. Help by doing your part. We are all in this together. There is a lot of nuance to each principle and we all need to do the deeper work of understanding how to reduce our impacts with informed decision-making. If you haven’t already, familiarize yourself with Access Fund’s Climber’s Pact and dive deeper into climbing ethics.

*Tim Golden is a Bishop Climbing Ranger, a co-founder of the Bishop Climbers Coalition and a former president of the Bay Area Climbers Coalition*



bishopclimbers.org

@ExploreInyoCounty



# Bishop...Small Town with a Big Backyard

We welcome all climbers.

@visitbishop #recreateresponsibly

**San Francisco** **BISHOP**

*Fly to Bishop!*

Photos by Chris Beauchamp

**BISHOPVISITOR.COM (760) 873-8405**

## Protect this.

Despite its rugged good looks, the Eastern Sierra landscape is very fragile. So, stand up for this amazing backyard. Recreate responsibly while you’re here. Camp in existing sites. Pack out your waste (and your dog’s, too). Park intelligently. Pick up your trash. And generally just be a kind person.

The Bishop Area Climbers’ Coalition looks after the Eastern Sierra and the folks who love it. Through stewardship, education, and outreach, we seek to

foster an engaged, inclusive climbing community and healthy (and happy) crags, boulders, and mountains. Learn more and get involved at [bishopclimbers.org](http://bishopclimbers.org).





## “BABY”

Nick Miley and his 1999 4WD Chevy Astro Van

### How did she get the name Baby?

I don't generally name cars, but I do call her baby fairly regularly. As in, yeah, baby! when she impresses me again with how sweet of a ride she is.

### Where did you find her and how much was she?

I found this van in Portland Oregon. It was in the crazy COVID times when everyone was hitting the road. But this guy could tell I was really going to use her like he had and so he held onto the van for me while I flew up there. I bought it and drove it home – camping in it the first night. It was a good way to start our relationship. I got it for 10 grand.

### How's the gas mileage?

I think gas mileage is the most frustrating thing about the vehicle. If it's doing really good, I can get 16 or 17 but around town it's pretty poor.

### Have you done any modifications?

Yeah, the van has a lot of modifications. First of all it's not all wheel drive, it's four-wheel-drive – the previous owner dropped in a Chevy Blazer transfer case which is pretty much plug-and-play. It's a nice option since it allows you to run it in rear wheel drive most of the time and then I have four low and four high when I need it. That helps keep the wear and tear on the tires to a minimum and it helps with gas mileage. The van also has a three inch lift which is really sweet for rutted dirt roads. I also put bigger wheels and tires on the van. It's subtle but I think it makes the van look badass. There's also an auxiliary radiator to cool the transmission fluid and a shift kit. These two items are a real plus because the legendary Vortec engine is a beast but

the transmission isn't exactly matched up. These upgrades keep the transmission running cool and shifting smooth. All told, it's a very reliable system. Finally the whole interior of the van has been gutted and built into a camper with a plumbed stove and sink, a futon style bed, custom wood finish, and dimmable LED lighting throughout. Finally the passenger seat rotates 360° which is really nice – you can have three people hanging out in the van quite comfortably.

### How does it do off-road?

I've had Baby in mud and snow and ice and everything in between. It does great. I'm not much into four-wheeling but I like to get into a sweet campsite when I can and it's been great for that.

### Have you ever been stuck?

I've never been stuck, and have never broken down. I'm pretty conservative with her because I want to keep her running true as long as I can.

### What's your favorite thing about this van?

Straight up, my favorite thing about this van is that it is my home away from home. Just park it, flip around the captain's seat and you're ready to rock 'n' roll. It's got a queen size bed so I can fit company when I have it. And, there's plenty of storage that's easily accessible. With past vehicles, storing and accessing gear was always a pain.

### What was your favorite trip so far?

I spent several weeks in Arizona two winters ago riding bikes and climbing. It was an awesome experience. The desert in the winter is truly unique. We had several little snow storms during that trip. The dustings of snow on the saguaro cactus together with the rugged rawness of that landscape edged with green from the moisture – it's as strange and different and beautiful of a place as you can get while still being on Earth. The rock and the trails are exceptional, too. And the food down there... Ah! So good.

### Is there anything else you'd like to add?

I've owned three Astro Vans at this point and despite the issues inherent with American made vehicles; there really isn't a better rig for the money if you need AWD/4WD. The build is just awesome. The only things I'd like to add are a solar panel and then auxiliary battery and I want to get [a] heater in there. That's pretty much it. Then it would be fully dialed. I should also add that I've recently decided to sell this van. I'm asking \$10,500 but I want to see the van go to someone who's going to maintain and use her. So I'm open to reasonable offers. If anyone is interested they can contact me at nicholasmiley@gmail.com.



TheVansmith.com

@the\_vansmith



My van is what makes life on the road go from bearable, to downright comfortable. Having a warm, well-lit place to escape the elements at the end of the day makes a huge difference in the quality of my rest and recovery. Vansmith's warm design and uncompromising quality, it really feels like home!

ETHAN PRINGLE,  
CLIMBER OF ROCKS  
AND VAN AFICIONADO



# ROUTE OF THE SEASON

WORDS & IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING

**BETA**

ROUTE: **Judge Dredd**  
GRADE: **5.13b**  
FIRST ASCENT: **Chris Summit**  
LENGTH: **70'**  
ROCK TYPE: **Sandstone**  
SEASON: **Spring - Fall**  
STYLE: **Single Pitch, Sport**  
RACK: **9 draws plus anchor**  
LOCATION: **Sea Crag, Sonoma Coast**  
APPROACH: **10:00**  
DESCENT: **Lower off or rappel on fixed anchors**  
GUIDEBOOK: **Bay Area Rock** by Jim Thornburg

**DESCRIPTION**

The Sonoma Coast is quickly becoming renowned for its high quality bouldering, including the Fort Rastafarian Boulder, the Stoney White Boots Johnson boulder, the Triceratops Boulder, the Shroomland Boulders and the Johnny Cash Boulders. But the coastline here also features a small yet very high quality selection of sport climbs at cliffs like Sea Crag – a deceptively overhanging sandstone shield that contains some of the most difficult sport routes in the Bay Area. Here visiting climbers can find the spectacularly positioned *Judge Dredd* (5.13b), first climbed by Chris Summit in the 1990s, and the neighboring *Jury Duty* (5.13c), first climbed by Jason Campbell. *Judge Dredd* (5.13b) looks intimidating from below, but it is adequately equipped with nine bolts in 70 feet with excellent, closely spaced placements near the crux moves. All the routes on Sea Crag's Main Rock can be lowered off from fixed anchors or walked off. However you decide to get off this climb, once on the summit, don't forget to turn around and take in the world class ocean view below.

Ben Pope climbing Judge Dredd (5.13b) at Sea Crag, Sonoma Coast.

# EASTSIDE SPORTS



**FIXE**hardware Siurana 9.6

Now Available at the Finest Retail Locations



THE YOSEMITE CLIMBING MUSEUM

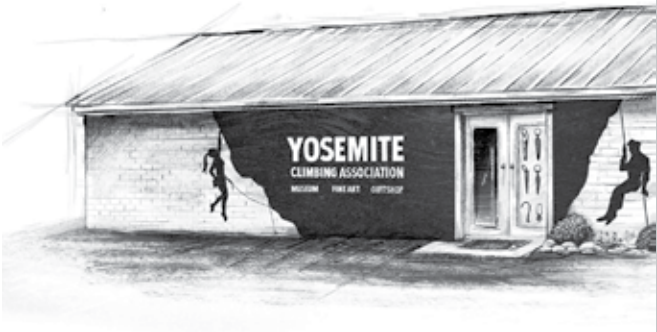


It was love at first sight when Ken Yager entered Yosemite Valley for the first time in 1972. After serving his rock apprenticeship under Warren Harding, Yager finally started living his Yosemite dream by moving to the Valley when he was 17 years old. Yager’s love for Yosemite motivated him to establish the Yosemite Climbing Association in 2003. Under this umbrella, he has collected decades’ worth of climbing gear and history and advocated for the establishment of the Yosemite Climbing Museum.

After years of efforts by the Yosemite Climbing Association and volunteers like Ken Yager and photographer Dean Fidelman, the Yosemite Climbing Museum and Gallery in Mariposa, California has opened its doors to the public. The venue has proven to be an invaluable asset to the global climbing community, with a space that provides a unique forum for displaying and curating historical climbing artifacts as well as photography, publications, and memorabilia: collectively, our community’s art. Yosemite local, Ken Yager realized there was a need for preserving climbing history decades ago and the Mariposa space demonstrates his commitment to filling that need.

The YCA first started working on the space in 2019. Today the artfully arranged gallery walls showcase Yosemite’s climbing history through the lens of prolific artists. These walls are lined with high quality photography, but also with display cases which feature impressive artifacts and hardware, showing the evolution of climbing and gear over time. Additionally there is interest from the outdoor industry’s top art producers for future exhibits. The Museum’s first exhibition, Climbing through the Ages, features an extensive collection of Yosemite climbing history, ranging from the 1930s to the 1970s. This covers the foundations of rock climbing through some of the most important ascents in climbing history.

The Yosemite Climbing Museum is located at 5180 Highway 140, in the gateway town of Mariposa, California and is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Museum tours are also available on a by-request basis. The YCA is passionate about having the opportunity to share this climbing history with the public and would greatly appreciate donations; the suggested donation upon visiting is \$5 for a self-guided tour.



@bluewaterropes -100% family owned, dedicated to crafting the finest quality ropes since 1969. Photo: @boonespeed

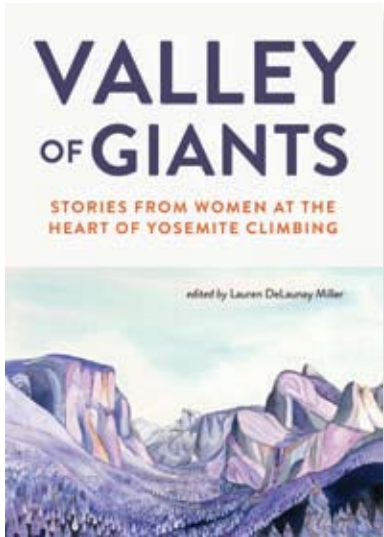






VALLEY OF GIANTS LAUREN DELAUNAY MILLER

{ \$21.95 }



Lauren DeLaunay Miller’s new book “Valley of Giants” is a chronicle of female climbers in Yosemite Valley. Far from being a complete history, this book is a collection of personal accounts drawn from interviews, memoirs, magazines, and books with notes from Miller to provide context. The book will instantly feel familiar to the seasoned California climber because many of the events discussed, and the geologic features on which the stories unfold, are well known. What makes this book a unique gem, is that it tells the stories from a perspective not often recited in the parking lots and campsites where climbers congregate.

Miller is an artful curator of Valley-focused female climbing stories. By organizing the book chronologically, she gives the text momentum, displaying the progression of Valley climbing in general and female climbers in particular. The authors sharing their experiences from the several decades between the 1930s and early 1970s have illustrious names like Farquar, Mendenhall, Sacherer, and Robbins. These women’s names are familiar – at least to this author – because they were married to well-publicized pioneers of the Sierra Nevada. “Valley of Giants” reveals that these women were strong and capable; regularly climbing without their husbands in what Marjory Bridge Farquhar calls “Hen Parties.”

As the book progresses forward into the modern era, the author’s names – Hill, Feagin, Davis, Brown, Rodden, Rutherford – are recognizable not for their relationships to famous men, but for their accomplishments on vertical stone. Yet, as Lynn Hill points out, the feats of previous female climbers were omitted from the annals of Yosemite Valley by writers like

Galen Rowell in his seminal book “The Vertical World of Yosemite.” The absence of these stories has had a lasting impact. Miller’s work addresses this issue head-on and provides the climbing community with a richer picture of Yosemite climbing through the ages.

Not surprisingly, the picture provided of Valley life is familiar. Particularly telling is Meredith Ellis Little’s 1963 letter to a friend recounting the Park Rangers’ confiscation of camping gear in Camp 4 in a futile effort to enforce the Park’s 10-day occupation limit. Much like her male counterparts, Little was mischievous and not above a bit of deception to remain in the Park for the length of the climbing season.

As “Valley of Giants” moves into the modern era, the stories frequently drift into blow-by-blow climbing narration typical of contemporary writers. Nonetheless, it is not hard to see the value of these stories – they are bona fide tales of inspirational, if not heroic, climbers in the greatest climbing area in the world. It isn’t hard to imagine a wide-eyed young climber reading this book with sweaty palms, imagining their first trip to the Valley.

In Kate Rutherford’s essay, “Thirty Bruises,” she ends with a poignant question referencing the people who aided and inspired her. She asks, “How can we ever reciprocate this gift? Can we draw a map of inspiration for others? I hope this story is a start.” Ultimately, that is what this book is: A map of inspiration that refutes the notion that men are better suited to the vertical world of Yosemite.

Halfnut 8 being put to good use on Regent Street (E2 5c), Millstone Edge, England. © Ray Wood

tools of  
the trad



Increase your placement options with DMM’s Halfnuts. New for 2022 are four larger sizes. These lightweight nuts have the same tapered faces and sides as our popular Wallnuts. The reduced width makes them ideal for shallow cracks, pin scars and situations where every gram counts.



Halfnuts 1 - 11



Halfnut 11



# CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

**PRINTED IN THE USA SINCE ISSUE #1**

We've had a great time making this magazine.  
Thank you for reading and contributing.



- Donate via Paypal to [climb108@yahoo.com](mailto:climb108@yahoo.com) -
- Subscribe at [californiaclimbermagazine.com](http://californiaclimbermagazine.com) -







**CLIMBER** James Lucas  
**ROUTE** Spin Doctor 5.12d, Columns of the Giants  
**PHOTOGRAPHER** Dean Fleming



GOLDEN STATE GALLERY



**CLIMBER** Alton Richardson  
**ROUTE** *Freerider 5.13a*, El Capitan  
**PHOTOGRAPHER** Self Portrait

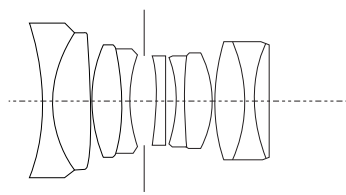




**GOLDEN STATE GALLERY**

**CLIMBER** Taylor Carpenter  
**ROUTE** *Throw Up, V4, Anza Borrego State Park, Culp Valley*  
**PHOTOGRAPHER** Dean Fleming





# VALLEY OF GIANTS

WORDS + LAUREN DELAUNAY MILLER

RIGHT

Ellie Hawkins during a solo ascent of El Cap’s *Never Land* (VI 5.9 A3). Despite Ellie’s sometimes debilitating dyslexia that caused her to struggle with her gear, she was a pioneer in female solo big wall climbing in the 1970s and 1980s.

IMAGE BRUCE HAWKINS

**TO STEAL FROM AUTHOR JOHN GREEN**, I fell in love with rock climbing the way you fall asleep: slowly, and then all at once. I was an indoorsy undergraduate at the University of North Carolina when I fell face-first into the world of climbing, thanks in large part to a picture in a magazine. My love for climbing has always been attached to an obsession with Yosemite, that ultimate proving ground of American rock climbers, but before I could make my way out there myself, I tried as hard as I could to connect with that world while still confined to the walls of libraries in Chapel Hill. Climbing literature was my portal, but it didn’t take long to exhaust my options. I don’t know if I could have articulated to you then why—or even that I was—searching for books written by women, but what I did know was that I was going to learn as much as I could about my heroes and try as best as I could to follow in their footsteps.

Five years after graduating, I moved into my new home in the back of Camp 4. The Yosemite Search & Rescue site has a mystical, magical air. To walk into the site is to, quite literally, walk in the footsteps of giants. I’ve climbed at a lot of American climbing destinations, from the New and Red River Gorges in the East, to Indian Creek, Joshua Tree, Red Rock Canyon, and Rocky Mountain National Park, but nowhere have I found the lore as strong as in Yosemite.

At my now-local crag, we often refer to routes as “that 10b arête” or “the 5.11 crack to the left of the 12a.” But in Yosemite, routes have names. *Astroman*, *the Central Pillar of Frenzy*, *Steck-Salathé*, *The Nose!* We know their first ascensionists, and we know their stories. And these stories get passed down, sometimes in writing but often at campfires and dinner parties, fueled by whiskey or coffee or both. So while it didn’t take long for me to realize that there was a gap between the women’s stories I was hearing and those I was reading, it did take me a few years to muster up the courage to try to close that gap myself.

The idea for the book lived quietly in my head, but as it became louder and louder, I started to shyly share it with my climbing partners. “Don’t you think it would be cool,” I’d mutter, “if there were a whole book about women climbing in Yosemite?” The more I shared my vision, the more it grew. I started scanning old climbing magazines, making lists of the women I’d need to include. Friends started sending me articles they came across, screenshots of Supertopo

forums and Mountain Project threads. I spent days at the new Yosemite Climbing Association museum in Mariposa going through thousands of pages of old magazines.

I started with the people I knew or could get personal introductions to. I met with Babsi Zangerl in her campervan in the Valley, and she was eager to be a part of the book. That was the moment I thought that I might actually be able to pull this off. Soon, Liz Robbins called, thanks to some coaxing by Ken Yager at the Yosemite Climbing Association. I drew on all the connections I’d made through my climbing career, and every response gave me a jolt of electricity. Fourteen months later, I turned in everything I had: 38 stories, totaling over 76,000 words.

Of course, this book, *Valley of Giants: Stories from Women at the Heart of Yosemite Climbing*, is not perfect. There are holes—gaping ones—ones that jump out at me baring teeth and ones that, surely, I will see more clearly with time. But soon we will have in our hands the stories of 38 women who have, at one time or another, found themselves at the center of Yosemite climbing. We start in 1938 and run smack into the present, and it would horrify my editor if she knew that I were still adding stories the day before my first draft was due. But just as Steck and Roper implored us to think of their *50 Classic Climbs* as some classic climbs and not the classic climbs, so too do these stories tell of the experiences of some women, not the women. Because there are so many more stories, so many more voices, so many more experiences worth telling and retelling. And as Liz Robbins so eloquently writes: I’ve only just begun the excavation.

The photos included here (with the exception of one) are a few of the amazing images that didn’t make it into *Valley of Giants*. There were countless photos to choose from, and after deliberating over space and equal representation among the generations, I had some tough decisions to make. I hope these photos serve as further proof that the history of women’s climbing in Yosemite is vast, requiring of further excavation.

*The above text is an excerpt adapted from a piece originally written for and published by the American Alpine Club’s 2021 Guidebook to Membership, with help from Shane Johnson and Jeff Deikis at the American Alpine Club and Emma Walker of Bonfire Collective.*







#### LEFT

Barb Eastman perches on the top of the *Arrowhead Spire* (5.8) in Yosemite Valley, 1976. For Barb and Molly, this route was one of many they completed on their path to become the first all-female team to climb the *Nose*.

IMAGE MOLLY HIGGINS



#### ABOVE

Meredith Little plays a recorder on top of Eichorn Pinnacle, Tuolumne Meadows. Meredith brought her love for music everywhere she went, even to this high country. 1965.

IMAGE GLEN DENNY / MEREDITH LITTLE COLLECTION

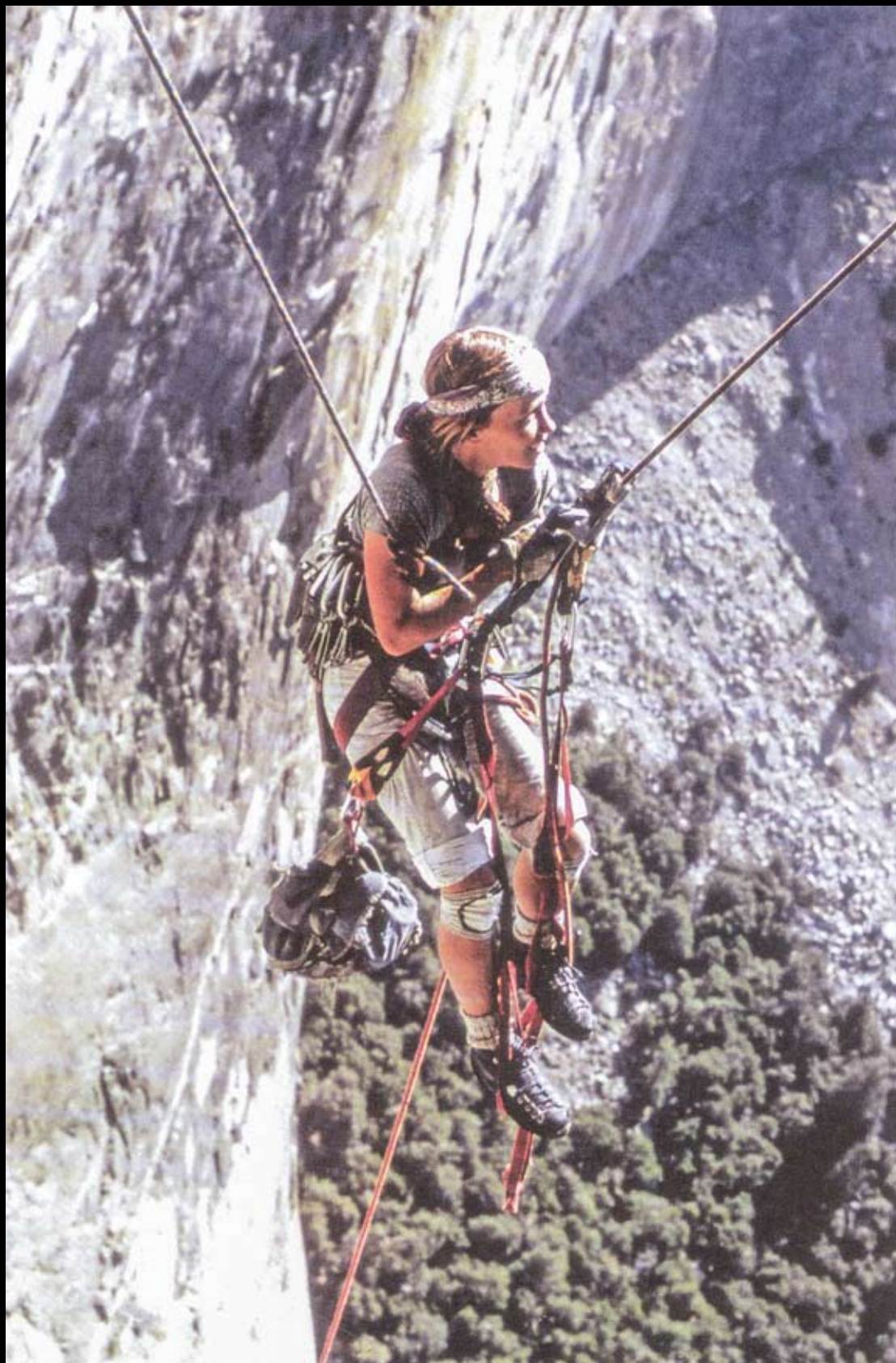




Anne Carpenter (L) and Mary Pottinger (R), members of the Stanford Alpine Club. In the 1950s, the National Park Service required climbers to register for every climb. The Stanford Alpine Club was one of a few organized groups that were pioneering routes at the time. Yosemite Valley, early 1950s.

IMAGE BOB KINCHELOE





#### LEFT

Ellie Hawkins suspended in space on an early ascent of the *North America Wall* (VI 5.8 A3), El Capitan, 1973. Ellie sewed her own harness and haul bags for this ascent with sail cloth and backpack straps.

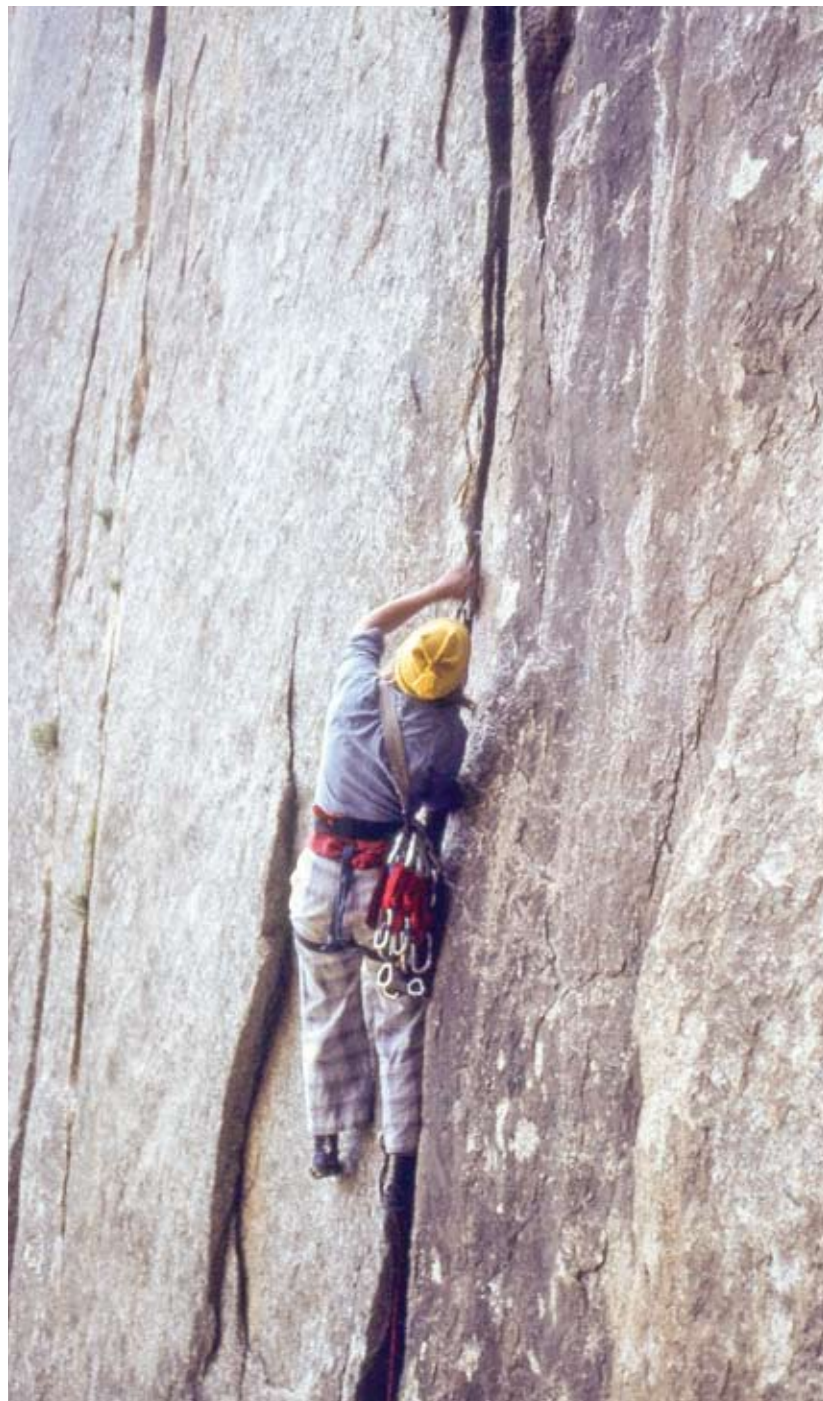
IMAGE KEITH NANNERY

#### ABOVE

Sue Giller, cool as a cucumber on an ascent of the *East Face of Washington Column* in 1979. Sue and Molly's ascent was a proud one at the time, as the route had only been recently free climbed and renamed *Astroman*.

IMAGE MOLLY HIGGINS





#### THIS PAGE

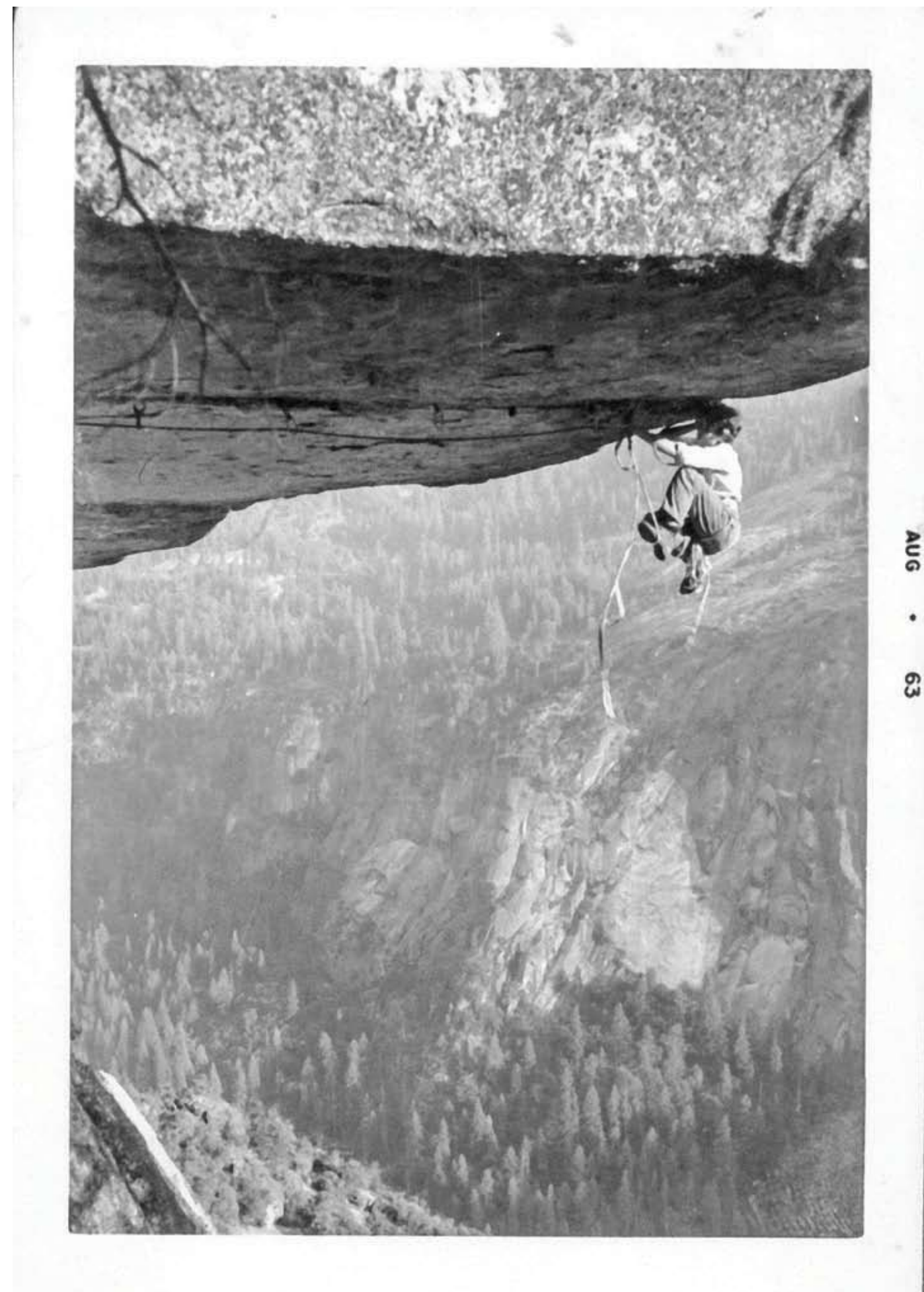
A rope, a rack, and the chocks on your back? Molly Higgins climbing *Outer Limits* (5.10c), Yosemite Valley, in 1977 with an impressive rack of hexes. *Outer Limits* was, and in many ways still is, a single-pitch testpiece at the Cookie Cliff in the Lower Merced River Canyon.

IMAGE MOLLY HIGGINS COLLECTION

#### RIGHT

Meredith Little aids out the *Owl Roof*, hanging over the Lower Merced River Canyon in Yosemite, in 1963. The *Owl Roof* was freed in 1977 by Dale Bard, but in the 1960s, when this photo was taken, it was a practice aid line.

IMAGE MEREDITH LITTLE COLLECTION



AUG • 63





Ellie Hawkins, solo again, during the first ascent of *Dyslexia* (VI 5.10d A4) in the Ribbon Falls Amphitheater in 1985. Her ascent marked the first new route established solo by a woman in Yosemite.

IMAGE BRUCE HAWKINS

# CLIFFHANGER GUIDES

JOSHUA TREE, C.A.

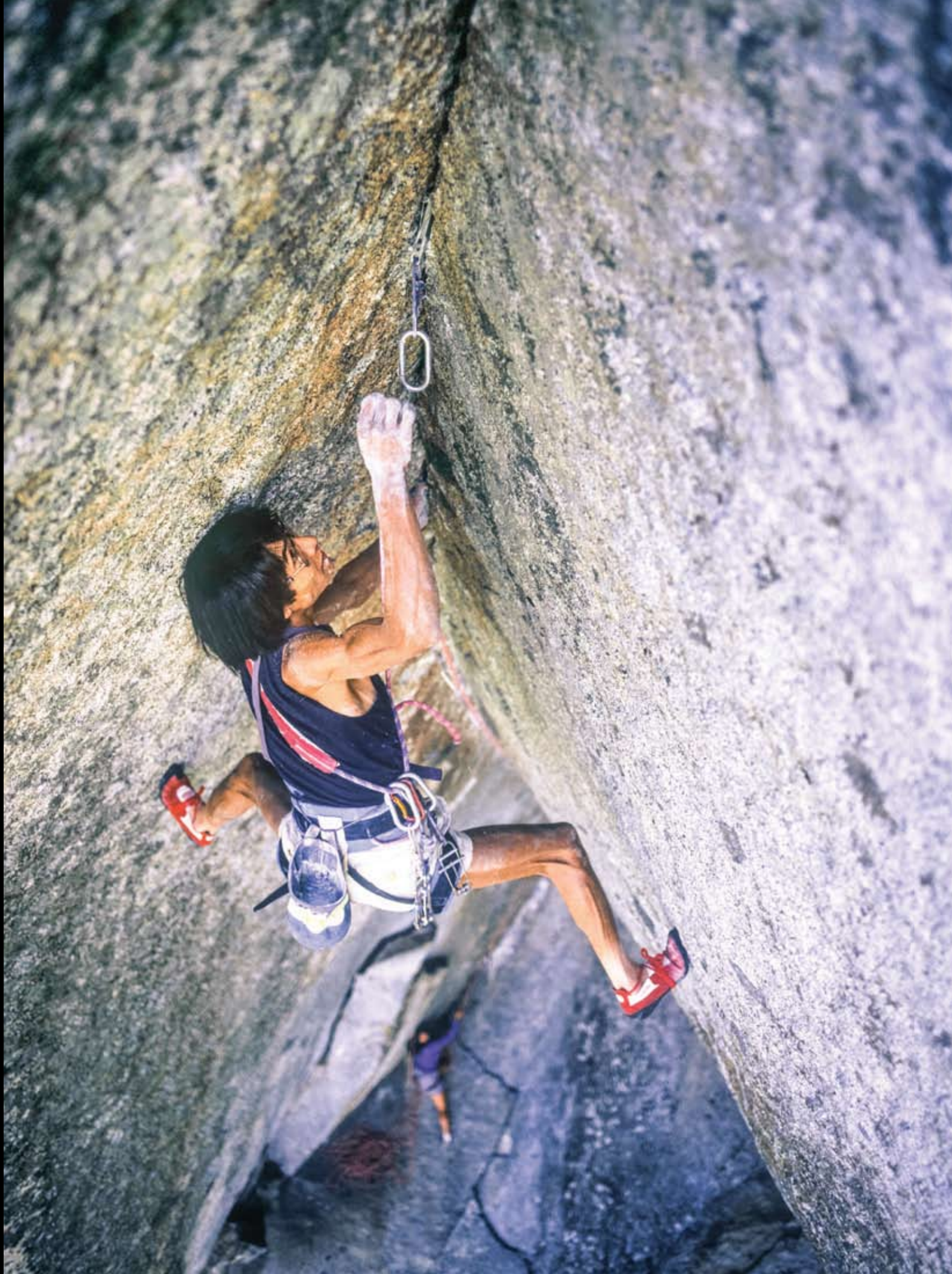


Photo: The Artist Formally Known As Hobo Greg

1818 AIRBNB'S IN JOSHUA TREE

[WWW.CLIFFHANGERGUIDES.COM](http://WWW.CLIFFHANGERGUIDES.COM)





## GRAND ILLUSION (5.13c)

In 1984 the insanely steep and relentless *Grand Illusion* (5.13c) in Sugarloaf, was the hardest crack climb in the world. Pictured here, Hidetaka Suzuki makes the fourth ascent.

IMAGE + GREG EPPERSON

CALIFORNIA  
CLIMBER:

# HIDETAKA SUZUKI

INTERVIEW + NICK MILEY

**HIDETAKA SUZUKI.** The name has a certain mystique. For those of us that grew up watching the Masters of Stone flicks, the segment of Hidetaka on the Salathé Headwall in Masters of Stone II was like a mind-altering substance adding our still-developing brains. Here you had this dude flowing like water up overhanging granite thousands of feet above the Valley floor, then the video cuts to Hidetaka lounging on a ledge, looking like a zenned-out professor, saying that the climb is the most beautiful crack he's ever seen; it was undoubtedly the coolest part of the film. And then, poof, it was like he just disappeared from the California climbing scene. Since that time, stories about this man and his climbing feats have swirled around in the mountain ether like a fragmented myth.

Prior to this interview, we assumed that some of the stories about Hidetaka were inflated. But what we found was that his climbing was way more progressive than we had supposed. Between 1983 and 1988 Hidetaka established or repeated all of the most difficult crack climbs in the west, and he managed to do so with impeccable style, arduously attempting to redpoint the routes from the ground up while placing each piece of protection on lead. Just to put Hidetaka's mastery into perspective, his 1988 first ascent

of *Stingray* (5.13d) – a laser-thin overhanging tips crack in Joshua Tree – didn't see a second ascent for twenty-two years until Sonnie Trotter finally repeated it in 2010.

Hidetaka leaves a lasting impression on people whether you've met him or not. A small part of it is that his Japanese ex-pat English makes familiar words sound new and interesting. But the real reason that Hidetaka has been lodged in the collective climbing conscious are the hand-full of spectacular images of him stylishly ascending ridiculously hard crack climbs. These timeless pictures epitomize California climbing at its finest.

At 70 years of age, Hidetaka still climbs at a high level, he redpointed 5.13 just four years ago at the age of 66. However, his main focus now is enjoying and protecting naturally beautiful places. The following words capture some rad moments in Hidetaka's life and some heart-wrenching ones, too. But, taken as a whole, Hidetaka's story provides insight into what it is we seek with our outdoor pursuits. In this way, he is something like a heady sage – an exemplar of the humble mountain athlete that took it to a higher level and in doing so found greater truth.





### STAR WARS CRACK (5.13A)

*Star Wars Crack* is an incredibly steep finger and hands crack that splits the right side of the Star Wall at Donner Summit. A bouldery start leads to pumpy climbing and a heinous move just before the anchors. Pictured here is Hidetaka on the first redpoint ascent.

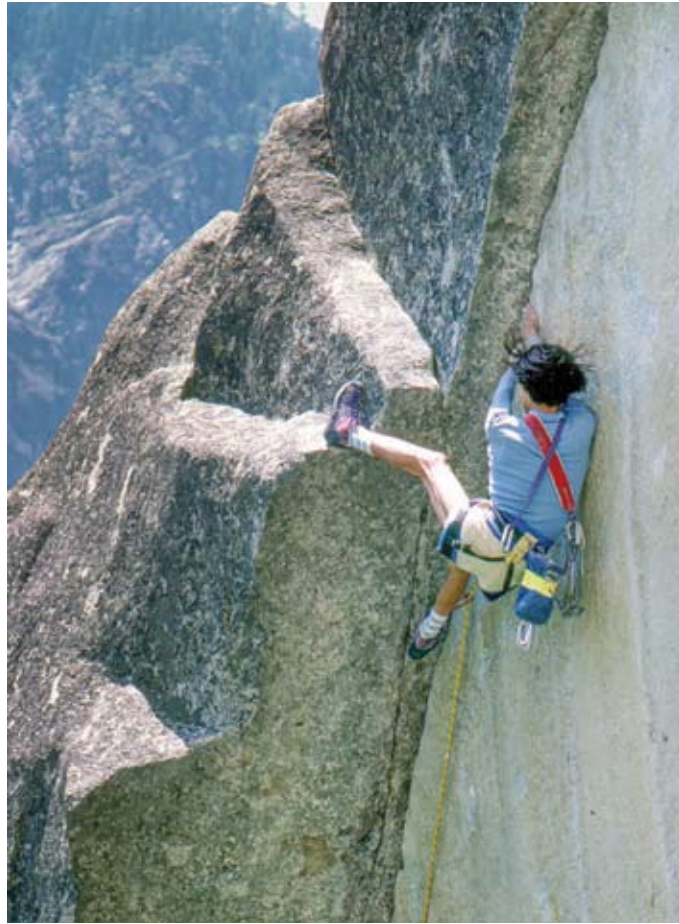
IMAGE + HIDETAKA SUZUKI COLLECTION

### WHEN I WAS 21 YEARS OLD I MET A GUY WHO LIKED HIKING THE MOUNTAINS OF JAPAN.

We went to hike the Northern Japanese Alps, staying in the mountain lodges for a few nights in the summer together. It was a fun experience for me. Then he told me I should try some demanding sports instead of just hiking mountains. He told me I'm so tough and I have a strong body so I would not be satisfied with just hiking mountains. Actually I kind of felt the same, so I decided to try rock climbing. Around that time there was no free climbing in Japan, just Alpine rock climbing. I guess I was quite talented as an alpine rock climber, physically & mentally, so once I got some good experience I started to challenge some very hard alpine routes in the Japanese Alps and some other big cliffs in the mountains in winter. In a few years I made some first winter ascents and first winter solo ascents. A few of them have never been repeated even now. I quit college right after I started climbing.

### I MOVED TO CHAMONIX, FRANCE IN THE SPRING OF 1978 TO CLIMB THE HUGE WALLS OF THE MONT BLANC ALPS.

In the spring and summer seasons I did quite a few hard big wall routes there on pure rock, ice and mixed routes. A couple of them



### HANG DOG FLYER (5.12C)

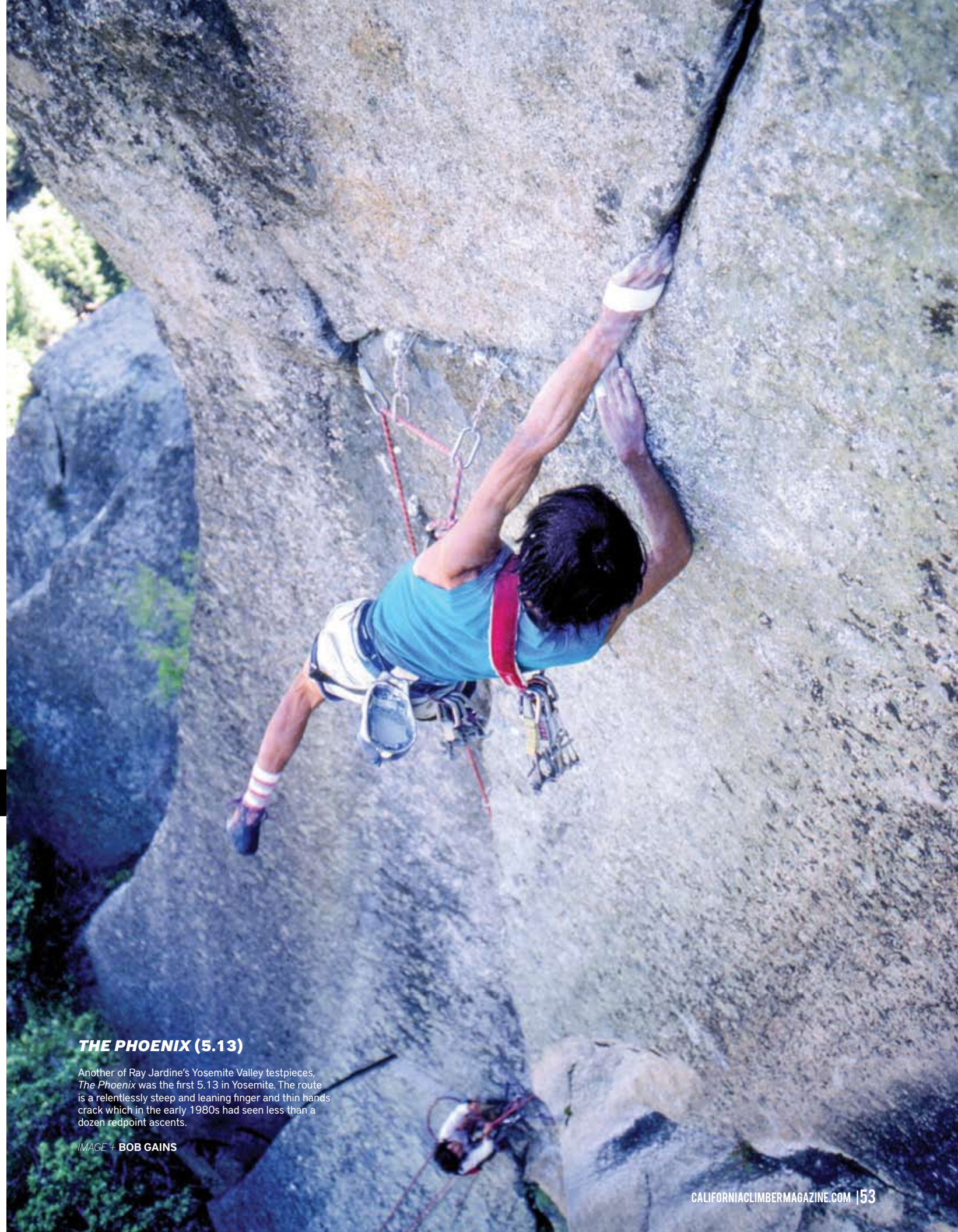
This viciously steep and heavily leaning Yosemite layback corner was first established by Ray Jardine. To this day *Hang Dog Flyer* is seldom repeated.

IMAGE + BOB GAINS



## I BEGAN HEARING THAT THERE ARE SOME HUGE WALLS IN YOSEMITE... I DECIDED TO MOVE BACK TO JAPAN TO WORK & MAKE SOME MONEY FOR VISITING YOSEMITE.

were the first Japanese ascents there. Around that time the legendary French climber, the guy that started free climbing in Europe, Patrick Edlinger, was doing a lot of bouldering problems on the big boulders in Chamonix. Then I started to do bouldering too. I liked it a lot. Also around that time I began hearing that there are some huge walls in Yosemite in California from young local French climbers. So I started to think about going to Yosemite the next spring. I decided to move back to Japan to work & make some money for visiting Yosemite.



### THE PHOENIX (5.13)

Another of Ray Jardine's Yosemite Valley testpieces, *The Phoenix* was the first 5.13 in Yosemite. The route is a relentlessly steep and leaning finger and thin hands crack which in the early 1980s had seen less than a dozen redpoint ascents.

IMAGE + BOB GAINS



## IN EARLY MAY OF 1979 I WENT TO YOSEMITE FOR A MONTH AND A HALF WITH MY JAPANESE CLIMBING FRIEND.

El Capitan is the most impressive looking big wall I have ever seen. We did the Nose and Salathe Wall on El Capitan and Half Dome's North East Face after some long routes like Middle Cathedral's East Buttress. But I was still not very interested in crack climbing much. Of course it was our first experience to use stoppers to lead cracks at that time. I led quite a few 5.9 pitches on short routes around Camp 4, but on the long routes I used the way of aid climbing. Then I met John Bachar and saw him do Midnight Lightning, then finally I bought rubber sole shoes. But still my climbing goal was to do big walls in the French Alps, so I moved back to Chamonix right away.

## I MET MICHIKO IN CHAMONIX.

She moved to France in late 1978 for skiing mainly, but she had done some climbing in Japan. Then she did the second Japanese female ascent of the Matterhorn in winter of 1979. Once I started climbing with Michiko, right away I felt she's very reliable, the best climbing partner for me. We did a one-day ascent of the Dru East Face, American Direct, an 800 meter tall vertical wall established by Royal Robbins and a few Yosemite climbers. I really wanted that route. Then we moved back to Japan in late October of 1979 together and focused on visiting Yosemite the next spring.

Michiko and I went to Yosemite in mid-April of 1980; this was our start of living and climbing in the US. I still wanted to do big walls, so we did the West Buttress and the West Face of El Capitan and some long routes on Middle Cathedral. In the summer of 1980 we heard about the Diamond wall of Longs Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park, but first we went to El Dorado Canyon near Boulder. I liked the overhanging face climbing in Eldorado since I was doing gymnastics in junior high & high school. We stayed at Steve Kimoto's house in Estes Park in Colorado for nine and a half years. I had very fun moments, almost countless, with so many amazing people. Around that time Tommy Caldwell was a kid and his dad was a Mountain guide. So Tommy would come to Steve's house sometimes and I would have hang out and play with him for a while.

I REPEATED THE SPHINX CRACK AGAIN... I FELT IT WAS QUITE EASY. THEN I DID GRAND ILLUSION IN THE SAME WAY. I FELT LIKE BOTH OF THESE ROUTES ARE NOT HARD ANYMORE.

## ACID CRACK (5.12D)

First redpointed by John Bachar in 1983, Joshua Tree's *Acid Crack* remains a seldom-repeated overhanging thin fingers crack that requires immaculate technique and staying power through a brutal layback.

IMAGE + GREG EPPERSON

## WHEN I STARTED GETTING INTO CRACK CLIMBING IT WAS SO INTERESTING FOR ME, SINCE JAMMING HAS SO MANY VARIETIES OF TECHNIQUES.

Then I just wanted to climb cracks all the time, every day. I felt like I was born to climb cracks. I would just go climbing all day long every day. Once I kept climbing for 27 days straight without any rest days in Joshua Tree.

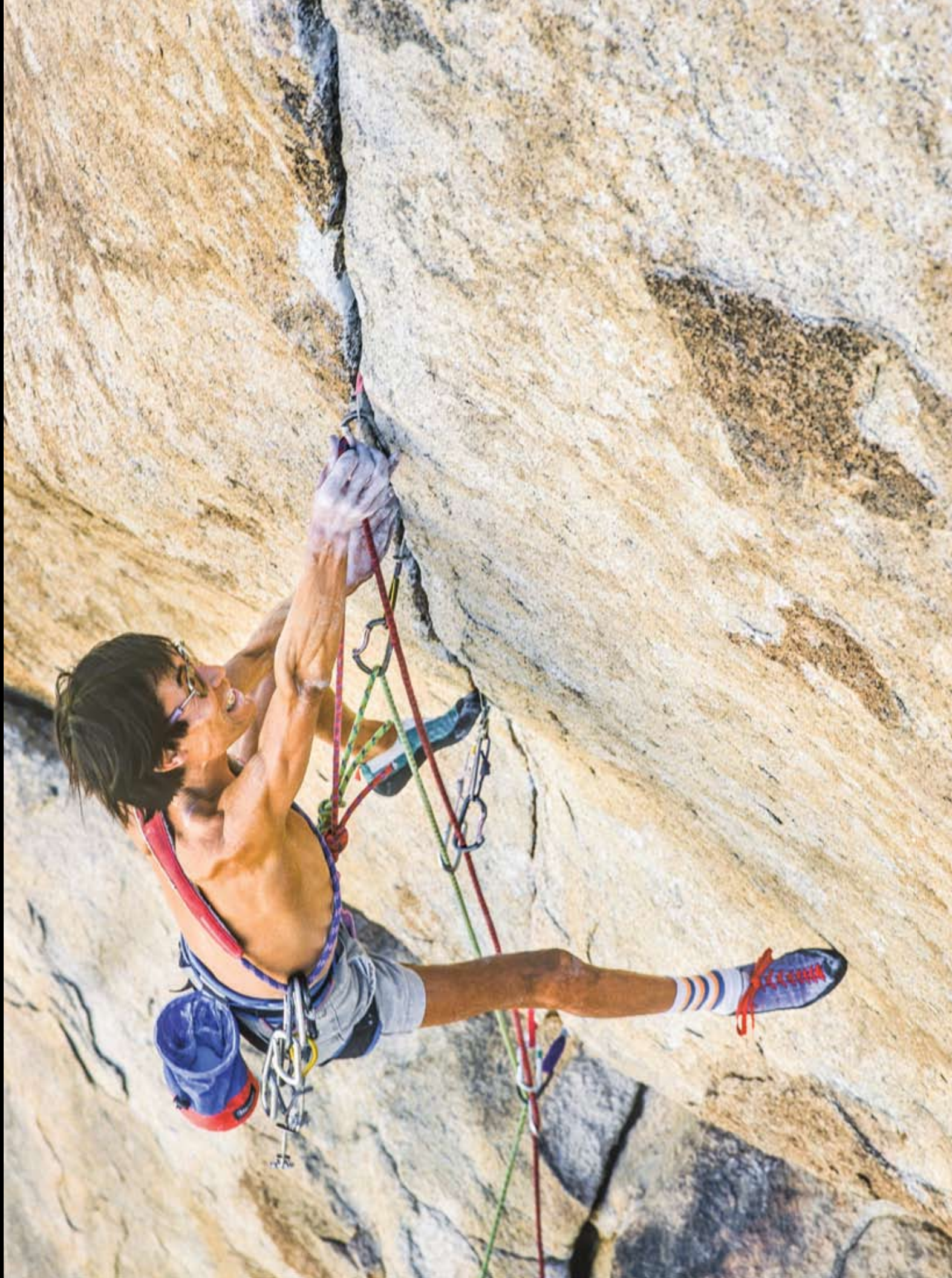
## EACH YEAR WE WOULD TRAVEL MORE THAN HALF THE YEAR.

Like camping out to stay and climb for a few months in Joshua Tree in winter, then for two months in Yosemite for each climbing season, then some years traveling to other states like Oregon, Nevada, Texas, Arizona, Missouri etc to check out the local crags, or very famous routes, or unrepeatable routes. During our trips I was lucky to see the nice crack lines or the routes that had never been done, even some that the locals had been working on. So I made quite a few first ascents; like Star Wars Crack and Bronco on Star Wall at Donner Summit, and Golden Beaver on Mount Lemon in Arizona. Each year I would raise my climbing ability. I climbed tons of 5.11s in 1981, then 5.12s in 1982, then quite a few 5.13s in 1983. I did the fourth ascent of Grand Illusion, which was the hardest crack climb in the world, in 1984.

Around that time there was no sport climbing in the US, even on bolted face climbing routes, so no hang dogging was the rule. If you fall the belayer lowers you down to the ground, then you had to start to climb the route from the ground again, then finally, if you make to the top without falling, you can say "I made this route." I always tried to keep the best style of climbing, so even if I did a route with one lower and then made it to the top, I would keep trying the same route until made it to the top without any falls while putting the protection in from the ground to the top. I was getting better at crack climbing each year. In 1988, before we left Colorado for California, I repeated the Sphinx crack again. I lead it with no falls and then right-a-way I top-roped it clean without falls. I felt it was quite easy. Then I did Grand Illusion in the same way. I felt like both of these routes are not hard anymore.







## STINGRAY (5.13D)

In 1988 when Hidetaka Suzuki made the first redpoint ascent of *Stingray* (5.13d) in Joshua Tree, this ferocious overhanging tips crack was the hardest crack climb in the world. Stingray remained unrepeated for over twenty years and has still only seen a handful of ascents.

IMAGE + GREG EPPERSON

WHILE I WAS RESTING WE TALKED A LOT ABOUT OUR FUTURE, LIKE WHERE WE SHOULD GO. WE HAD MANY RELAXING AND FUN MOMENTS, LIKE IN THE DREAMING WORLD.

## IN MAY OF 1988 WE DROVE TO JOSHUA TREE TO HANG OUT FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

I met Mike Paul there and I heard he had found a new line, an amazing looking crack, so I asked him where it was, but he wouldn't tell me where. Walking around, I finally found it. It looked so impressive, an overhanging thin crack. Right away I started to try it, and then finally I made the first ascent of *Stingray*. I felt it was way harder than *Grand Illusion*, so I rated it 5.13d. It took me six days to make it on top-rope and it took another six days to make the first ascent on lead. Definitely this is the most impressive and unforgettable route of my life.

1988 was a very fulfilling year for me. The days I was working on *Stingray*, with only Michiko who was belaying me. While I was resting we talked a lot about our future, like where we should go. We had many relaxing and fun moments, like in the dreaming world. After *Stingray* we met Greg Epperson in San Diego then we drove to Lake Tahoe to climb at areas like Donner Summit and Sugarloaf. We stayed at a motel for ten days or so in the small town at Donner Lake. It was a very comfortable and relaxing time with a lot of talking and laughing. I felt so strong and in good shape then. I was enjoying climbing so much.



## BOYS DON'T CRY (5.12A)

*Boys Don't Cry* is the most difficult route at the Love Nest, a small block with a couple obscure sport climbs in Joshua Tree. *Boys Don't Cry* takes the most obvious line up the block with a distinct, bouldery crux at the third bolt. Pictured here, Suzuki enters the crux sequence.

IMAGE + GREG EPPERSON

## WHEN WE GOT BACK TO ESTES PARK IN COLORADO WE FOUND OUT THAT MICHIKO HAD MELANOMA CANCER.

The next four months we had a very hard time. I would get up early to drive two hours to take Michiko to the hospital in Denver, for two weeks, every day, where she got anti cancer drug treatment, then drive home at night. She couldn't eat at all; she was losing weight and getting so weak. Her cancer moved to her whole body and the doctor told us she could survive for only a few more months. She lost 30 pounds in a few months; then she said she wanted to die in Japan. We flew back to Japan and she died four months later. That eight month period was very sad and heart breaking, struggling moments for her and me. After her funeral, I came back to the US by myself and started traveling to a bunch of different states. The first year while I'm driving my pickup truck, sometimes I talked to the passenger seat, then I find out Michiko's not there, she's gone. But when I traveled to the local crags, everyone was super nice and friendly; most of them knew that Michiko was gone. Sometimes they let me stay at their houses for a few days. I'm living in Japan now, but I still like friendly and open minded American people.



# THE FIRST YEAR WHILE I'M DRIVING MY PICKUP TRUCK, SOMETIMES I TALKED TO THE PASSENGER SEAT, THEN I FIND OUT MICHIKO'S NOT THERE, SHE'S GONE.

## ONCE I STARTED SURFING, MY FUN MEMORIES OF MY CHILDHOOD CAME BACK.

I grew up in Yokosuka, Japan, a town by the ocean, so when I was a kid I spent a lot of time on the water and at the beach. I loved to swim and hang out on the beach all the time in summer, so I hooked up on surfing quickly. I really wanted to learn surfing more, so I called Randy Leavitt who is a good friend in Escondido, a great climber and surfer. Then I flew to Oahu, Hawaii to see Randy's friend Jeff who lives on the North Shore of Oahu. Jeff let me stay in the guest room in his house for three months. The first year after I moved to Hawaii I kept climbing at the Mokuleia cliff, but I did almost all of the good routes right away. There are about 50 routes there, up to 5.13a. It's very technical, slightly overhanging 70 foot tall cliff, so it's a very fun and good climbing area. I put up one new sport route called *Dragon Slayer* 13a, and then I stopped climbing and focused on kiteboarding. Kiteboarding took the place of my passion for climbing. I love kiteboarding so much.

## I DEFINITELY DON'T CARE ABOUT CLIMBING AS MUCH AS WHEN I WAS YOUNG.

My priority now is protecting the beautiful nature of this Earth. I learned a lot from the people in Hawaii. Since I lived in North Shore for 18 years, and I met a lot of locals, I realized that they love this beautiful nature of the Earth. It seems most residents in North Shore are surfers or love the ocean. Definitely the nature around North Shore is the most beautiful nature I have ever seen. On the way back from work, or kiting evening sessions, I see the beautiful sunset at the Haleiwa beach, or whenever clouds are moving in after a few minute squalls, you see the beautiful rainbow across the blue sky. Everyday I'm on the island I see some amazingly beautiful scenes. I guess all locals have a same feeling as me. Every Sunday morning a bunch of locals and kids are cleaning their local beaches by picking up abandoned trash and bottles to keep the beach clean. I really hope we can stop this serious problem of global warming and keep human beings living on this beautiful planet Earth forever in the future.

## THE GIFT (5.12D)

*The Gift* (5.12d) in Red Rocks was made famous by a photograph of John Bachar free soloing the route in the early 1990s, and has since been commonly referred to as the best hard 5.12 sport climb in North America. Pictured here, Hidetaka cruises through the steep, crimping testpiece.

IMAGE + GREG EPPERSON



## THE LAST 18 YEARS I LIVED IN HAWAII, BUT EVERY WINTER I WENT TO OTHER WINDY & GOOD SPOTS IN THE WORLD FOR KITEBOARDING FOR A FEW MONTHS.

I traveled to countries like Brazil, Kenya in Africa, west OZ, some islands of the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, etc. But in the spring of 2018 somehow I hiked up to the Mokuleia cliff and saw that a bunch of climbers were hanging out there. I watched their climbing and all of the sudden I felt like climbing is fun and I should go back to climbing again. Then I started going climbing on my days off. In four months after I started climbing again, after over 15 years of absence, I could redpoint 5.13a again after four or five tries and I onsighted 5.12b. I feel climbing is fun again.

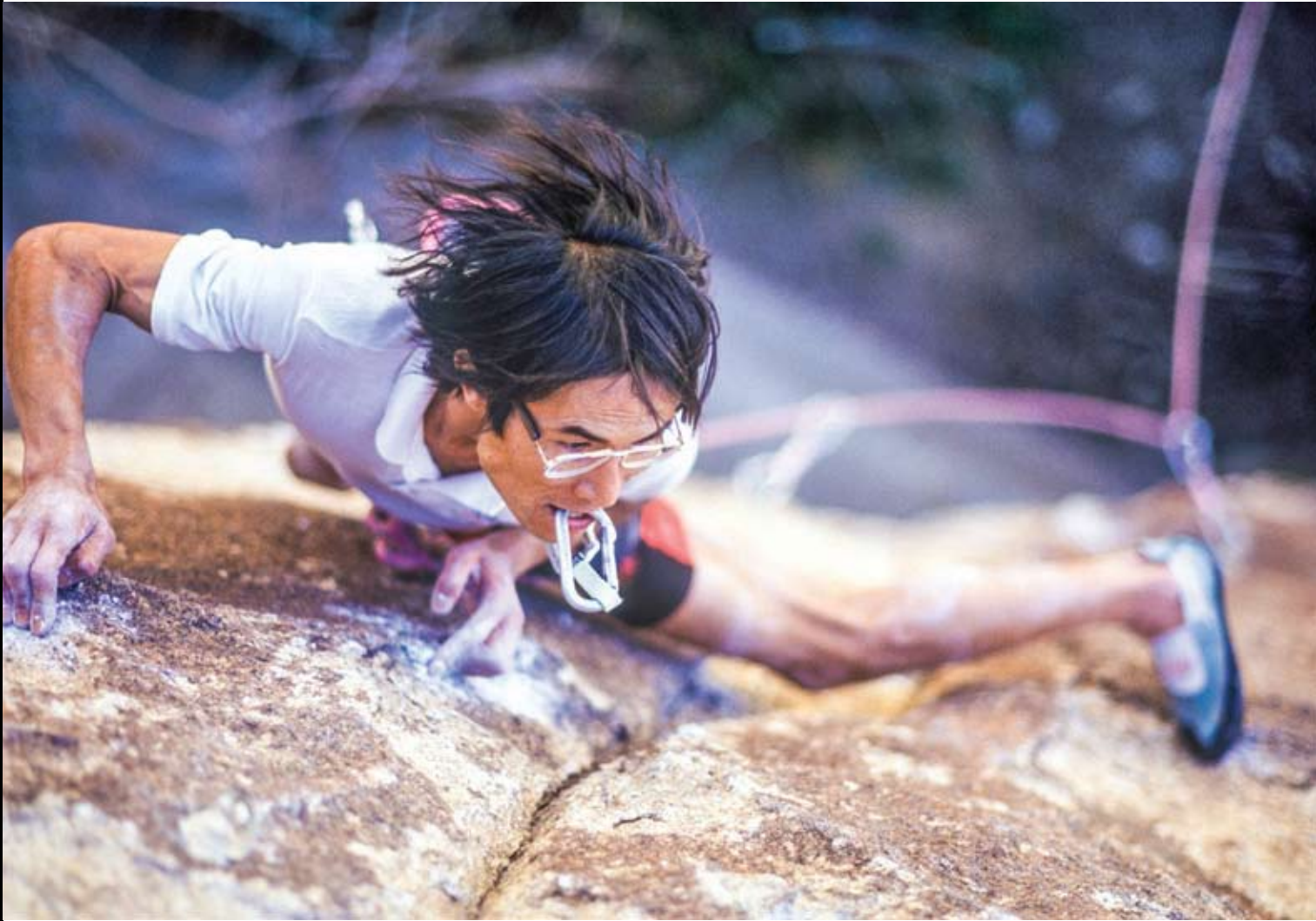


## DESERT GOLD (5.13A)

Perhaps the most striking and photogenic pitch in all of Nevada, it's no wonder climbers from around the globe traveled thousands of miles to Red Rocks to attempt *Desert Gold* (5.13a) after Stephan Glowacz made the first redpoint ascent in 1987. Pictured here, Hidetaka calmly enters the incredible roof crack.

IMAGE + GREG EPPERSON





**DESERT SHIELD (5.13B)**

Scott Cosgrove famously redpointed this Joshua Tree endurance route in 1991 while sick with the stomach flu. “It was and still is one of the most pumping climbs, as no one move is much harder than the next, but it never gets easy,” said Cosgrove. Pictured here, Suzuki battles the relentless moves at mid-height.

IMAGE + GREG EPPERSON

**I THINK THE US CLIMBING HAS A BRIGHT FUTURE.**

I like the way of climbing in US all the time. For me real climbing is climbing the rocks, not the plastic holds. Climbing in the gym is more like training, but in Japan it rains a lot so a lot of climbers climb just in the gym. It’s kind of bad I feel. I did 5.13a again about four years ago when I was 66 years old. But a little later, the weather was so bad that I couldn’t go outside much, so I was mainly climbing in the gym, sometimes climbing in the gym for eight hours a day. Then I hurt my left shoulder. It’s a very serious, bad injury for climbers. The rotator cuff of my left shoulder is broken so I can’t raise my left arm over my head anymore. So it’s hard to climb the hard routes, so no goals on climbing now, I just try to climb for fun. But it’s fun to go to the new climbing

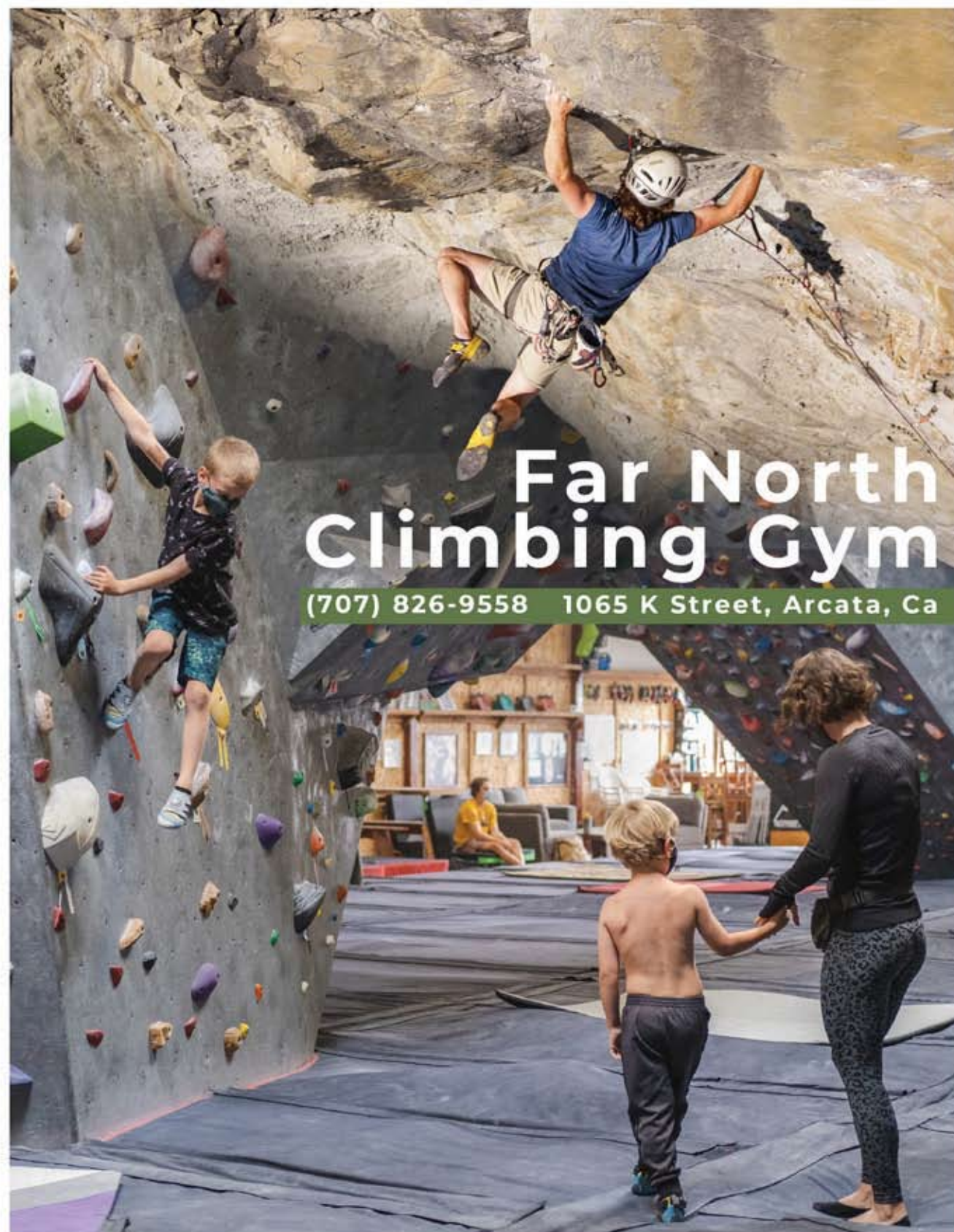
areas in Japan. I lived outside of Japan for over 40 years, so I don’t know Japan that well. Japan is like an overseas country for me. It’s so crowded in Tokyo, but once you go to the countryside of Japan, it’s so beautiful. Japan’s such a small country, but has such beautiful nature around. I like go out to be in the Mother Nature. My life is for challenges and encountering new things and people. Since I go out for climbing and kiting and traveling, I met countless amazingly beautiful things and people. I have had a happy lifetime.



**FIXEhardware Alien**

Now Available at Mammoth Mountaineering





# Far North Climbing Gym

(707) 826-9558 1065 K Street, Arcata, Ca

# NOW OPEN!

# BEAR TENT

*Brewing Co.*

18145 Main St Jamestown, CA 95327 • 209-782-5022  
Thursday-Saturday 1-9pm • Sunday 11-7pm

**32 OZ.  
CRAWLERS  
AVAILABLE  
TO GO!**



**BEST ENJOYED OUTDOORS**



DISTRIBUTORS

LOS ANGELES

**Arc'teryx La Brea**  
159 South La Brea Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90036

**Sender One**  
1441 S. Village Way  
Santa Ana, CA 92705

**Rockreation**  
11866 La Grange Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

**Hangar 18 Upland**  
256 East Stowell Street  
Upland, CA 91786

**Hangar 18 Hawthorn**  
4926 West Rosecrans Avenue  
Hawthorne, CA 90250

**Hangar 18 Riverside**  
6935 Arlington Avenue  
Riverside, CA 92503

**The Factory**  
1547 West Struck Avenue  
Orange, CA 92867

**Top Out Climbing Gym**  
26332 Ferry Ct  
Santa Clarita, CA 91350

**Gear Co-Op**  
3315 Hyland Ave  
Costa Mesa, CA 92626

**LA.B**  
1375 East 6th Street Unit #8, Los Angeles, CA 90021

**Cliffs of Id**  
2537 S Fairfax Ave  
Culver City, CA 90232

**Vertigo Boulders**  
266 E Magnolia Blv  
Burbank, CA 91502

**Hollywood Boulders**  
1107 N Bronson Ave,  
Los Angeles, CA 90038

SAN DIEGO

**Mesa Rim**  
10110 Mesa Rim Road  
San Diego, CA 92121

**Vertical Hold**  
9580 Distribution Avenue  
San Diego, CA 92121

**Nomad Ventures**  
405 West Grand Avenue  
Escondido, CA 92025

JOSHUA TREE

**Nomad Ventures**  
61795 Twentynine Palms Highway A,  
Joshua Tree, CA 92252

**Cliffhanger Guides**  
6551 Park Blvd,  
Joshua Tree, CA 92252

CENTRAL COAST

**Pacific Edge**  
104 Bronson Street  
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

**Sanctuary Rock Gym**  
1855 East Ave  
Sand City, CA 93955

CENTRAL FOOTHILLS

**Metal Mark**  
4042 N Cedar Ave  
Fresno, CA 93726

**Alpenglow Gear Co**  
40879 CA-41 #1f, Oakhurst, CA 93644

**Sierra Nevada Adventure Company Sonora**  
173 S Washington St, Sonora, CA 95370

**Sierra Nevada Adventure Company Arnold**  
2293 CA-4, Arnold, CA 95223

**Sierra Nevada Adventure Company Murphys**  
448 Main St, Murphys, CA 95247

SACRAMENTO

**Sacramento Pipeworks**  
116 N 16th St, Sacramento, CA 95811

**The Boulder Field**  
8425 Belvedere Ave #100, Sacramento, CA 95826

BAY AREA

**Berkeley Ironworks**  
800 Potter St, Berkeley, CA 94710

**The Studio Climbing**  
396 S 1st St, San Jose, CA 95113

**Great Western Power Co.**  
520 20th St, Oakland, CA 94612

**Dogpatch Boulders**  
2573 3rd St, San Francisco, CA 94107

**Mission Cliffs**  
2295 Harrison St, San Francisco, CA 94110

**Planet Granite Belmont**  
100 El Camino Real, Belmont, CA 94002

**Planet Granite Sunnyvale**  
815 Stewart Dr, Sunnyvale, CA 94085

**Planet Granite San Francisco**  
924 Mason St, San Francisco, CA 94129

**Bridges Rock Gym**  
5635 San Diego St, El Cerrito, CA 94530

WINE COUNTRY

**Rockzilla**  
849 Jackson St suite 5A, Napa, CA 94559

**Vertex Climbing Center**  
3358 Coffey Lane  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

NORTH COAST

**Far North Climbing Gym**  
1065 K St C, Arcata, CA 95521

EASTERN SIERRA

**Big Willi Mountaineering**  
120 S. Main Street, Suite 13, Lone Pine, CA 93545

**Elevation**  
150 S. Main St.  
Lone Pine, CA

**Eastside Sports**  
224 N Main Street  
Bishop, CA 93514

**Fixe Hardware**  
TKTK

**Hostel California**  
213 Academy Ave, Bishop, CA 93514

**Sage to Summit**  
312 N Main Street,  
Bishop, CA 93514

**Spellbinder Books**  
124 S Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514

**Mammoth Mountaineering**  
3189 Main Street  
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

**Mammoth Gear Exchange**  
298 N Main Street,  
Bishop, CA 93514

**Black Sheep Coffee**  
232 N Main Street,  
Bishop, CA 93514

**Mountain Rambler**  
186 S Main Street,  
Bishop, CA 93514

**Fixe Hardware**  
17 South Main Street, Bishop CA 93514

GREATER LAKE TAHOE AREA

**Basecamp Climbing Gym**  
255 N Virginia Street,  
Reno, NV 89501

**Blue Granite**  
1259 Emerald Bay Rd, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

**Greater Tahoe Gripworks**  
Pine and, Sage Ave, Markleeville, CA 96120

**High Altitude Fitness**  
880 Northwood Blvd  
Incline Village, NV

**Alpenglow Sports**  
415 N Lake Blvd, Tahoe City, CA 96145

**Truckee Sports Exchange**  
10095 W River St, Truckee, CA 96161

**The Backcountry**  
11400 Donner Pass Rd #100, Truckee, CA 96161

**Strawberry Store**  
28620 Herring Creek Ln, Strawberry, CA 95375



NEW & USED  
OUTDOOR GEAR STORE

LOCALLY OWNED IN OAKHURST, CALIFORNIA



CONSIGN YOUR GEAR TODAY – RECEIVE 60% OF SALE  
GET EQUIPPED FOR YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE  
HIKING, CLIMBING, BIKING, SNOWSPORTS,  
LOCAL ART AND MORE!

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT ALPENGLOWGEARCO.COM





LAST GO

ALTON RICHARDSON

**WHISKEY, BEER & SPLIFF HITS FOR  
BRERAKFAST (V4)**  
SAD BOULDERS, BISHOP

Our Art Director Alton is actually a really nice guy, this is just the only way he can fit his fat fingers into tiny Table Lands' pockets.

IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING

FIGHT THE POWER

 **CHALK CARTEL**

[chalkcartel.com](https://chalkcartel.com) #thefutureoffriction #chalkcartel #earthfriendlypackaging

photo: Troy Mayr · lyric: Public Enemy · climber: Timy Fairfield





# EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

TOP AND SIDE PROTECTION in our helmets.  
Various construction methods of our harnesses.  
Longevity of our carabiners.  
THESE ARE THE PETZL DIFFERENCES WORTH JUSTIFYING.

© 2021 - Petzl Distribution - Tara Kerzhner



Access  
the  
inaccessible®