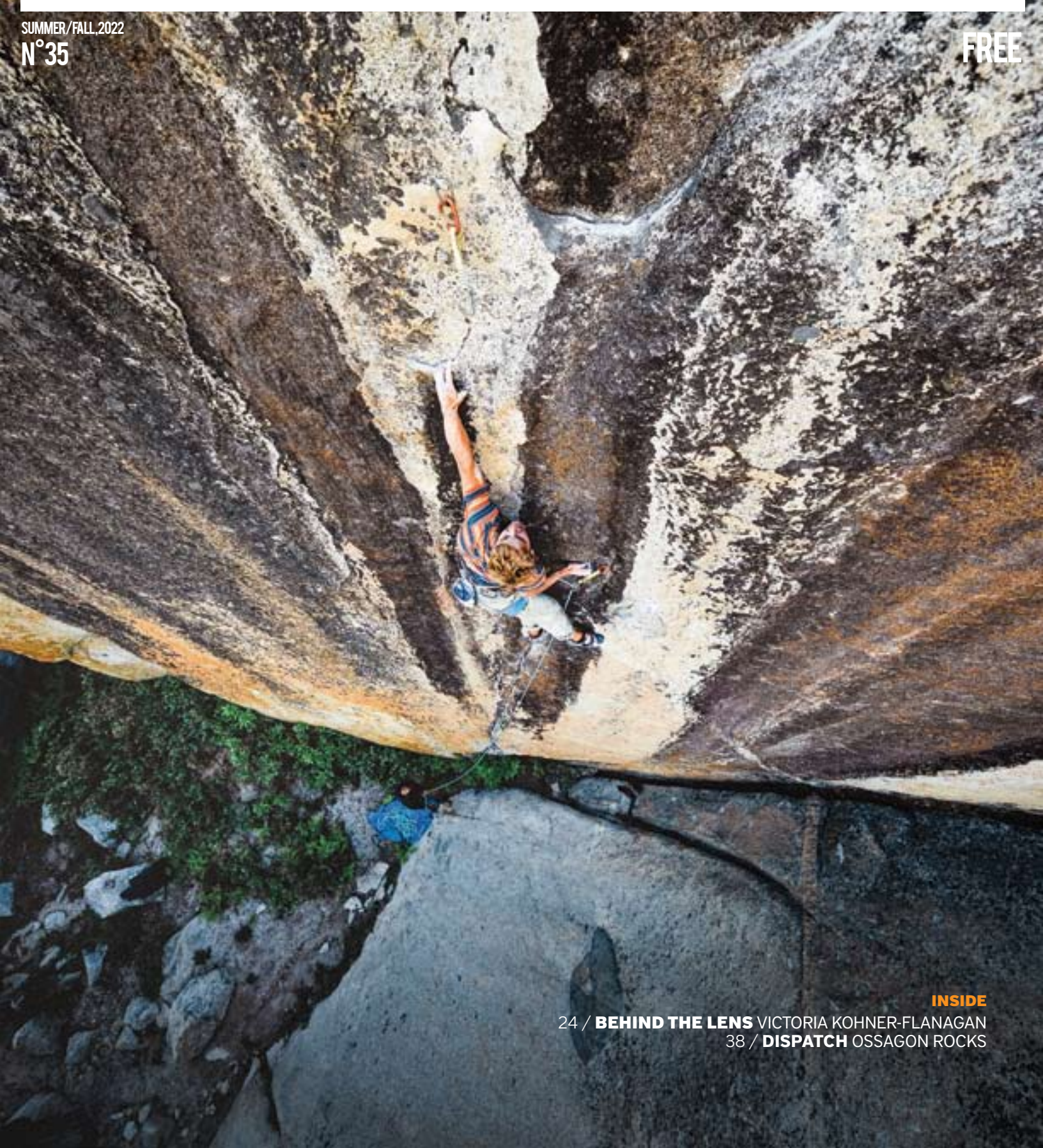


# CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

SUMMER/FALL 2022

N°35

FREE



## INSIDE

24 / **BEHIND THE LENS** VICTORIA KOHNER-FLANAGAN

38 / **DISPATCH** OSSAGON ROCKS





**ORION MINOR QUICKDRAW**

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CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

NO. 35  
SUMMER/FALL 2022

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FEATURES

- 24/BEHIND THE LENS: VICTORIA KOHNER-FLANAGAN
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ON THE COVER

Jeremy Schoenborn climbing  
*Broken Arrow* (5.14a), Tuolumne  
Meadows, Yosemite National Park.

IMAGE + VICTORIA KOHNER-  
FLANAGAN

THIS PAGE

Creg Phares making the first ascent  
of *Solar Power* (V9), Tuolumne  
Meadows, Yosemite National Park.

IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING



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Rachelle climbing an un-named V2 arête at the Ossagon Rocks, Humboldt Coast.



DEAN FLEMING

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EDITOR’S NOTE

ONE MORE TIME

At Columns of the Giants, a basalt rock formation on California’s Highway 108, geologists believe that an ancient glacier still remains, protected from the summer heat, far underneath a massive talus field that rises towards a gigantic cave; a feature that houses California’s steepest 5.12a, the wildly overhanging jug-haul aptly named *Delirious*. In the mid-day summer sun, I knelt down and pressed my face into a large hole in the talus field and began to feel the ice-cold air rushing out from deep below. I glanced ahead to see Julia, far above me, quickly and elegantly scampering her way up the talus field. Earlier in the day, back at the car, I complained about my heavy camera gear and jug of water as Julia stuffed the rope, the rack and all of the food into her pack. She laughed and then said something like, “Toughen up buttercup!” before she saddled the bag and headed across the parking lot towards the trail to Columns of the Giants.

By the time I finally slogged my way up the last bit of talus; Julia had harnessed up and traversed the base of the cliff. She flaked her rope beneath a potential warm-up and ate some of her sandwich as I awkwardly bounced up and down on one leg, trying to stuff my foot through a twisted loop in my harness. I didn’t even bother to look up at the “warm-up.” Everything at Columns of the Giants is at least 5.12a and I didn’t feel like attempting anything. My only goal for the day was to shoot a sunset photo of Julia on *Delirious* (5.12a).

I managed the rope as she lapped a few “moderate” 5.12 routes. In between belay duty I’d gaze backwards up the imposing overhanging wall and over towards *Delirious*, wondering how the hell I was going to get a photo of Julia from the vantage point that I wanted, mid-way up the cliff, and belay her on the route at the same time. As the sun fell lower towards the west slope of the Sierra, Julia tried a few harder climbs. Finally, we pulled the rope and started to get ready to make the photograph.

Reaching into my pack I pulled out a heavy bag containing a few lenses and the professional Canon camera that Julia had selflessly given to me on my birthday a few years prior. “Since you’re taking pretty good pictures with that shitty old camera, I figured you should probably have something that works half the time,” she’d said.

I slung the camera over my shoulder and then scratched and scraped my way up the first vertical section of the route. Grabbing quickdraws, cursing and thrashing, I finally hauled myself up to the third bolt. I was able to swing to the left, clip a bolt on an adjacent route, and then equalize that bolt with the third lead bolt on *Delirious* to make a really huge and weird looking “anchor.” The plan was to climb the route in two miniature pitches. This way, as Julia climbed toward the lip of the impressive roof, I would be at a makeshift hanging belay at eye-level with her, belaying as the top priority, but with the camera ready to take some pictures when it felt safe. It was destined to be an all-out shit-show and I was glad there were no other climbers at the cliff to make fun of me as I squirmed around at the ridiculous looking hanging belay.

As the sun dipped slowly beyond the Sierra foothills to the west, Julia calmly and slowly made her way out the imposing roof feature, her legs dangling free in space as she swung gracefully from one gigantic hold to the next. As she gained the lip of the roof and clipped the last bolt, the sun moved just low enough to illuminate the massive cave feature behind her. “Do you feel safe there?” I asked. “Totally,” she said, practically whispering the words as she hung almost completely upside down. I tied a back-up knot below my Gri-Gri, slung my camera forward, and made the photograph.

<~~~~>



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EDITOR’S NOTE

As an art form, climbing photography is separated from landscape photography by a single element: the subject. The subject [or climber] can be as miniscule as a spot of color or shape on a far away boulder or cliff, or close to the lens, consuming the entire frame with action and expression. As enamored as we are with California’s vast and beautiful spaces, the exposure, the rocks and crags and cliffs and boulders, it is the subject of these photos that connects us and allows us to imagine ourselves interacting with these magnificent settings. A truly great climbing photograph is a thing of magic; a moment when the camera captures the marrying of subject and setting.

A good “subject” can be a person who knows how to rock climb and is willing to let you photograph them in a bright T-shirt, but to make consistently great climbing photographs, you need a great partner; a person who believes in your work as much, or more, than you do. Someone who is willing to wait while you take forever to haul up your camera gear, then flail and flap and spin in space, and botch the focus, and then oblige you when you ask them to do the move “one more time,” twenty more times. To the viewer, climbing photographs on printed pages represent an exciting experience in a beautiful setting, but to the photographers and subjects, these photographs represent a moment of vulnerability frozen in time between partners.

“Climbing is often an immensely personal experience, and I am grateful for those who let me share those experiences with them,” says Victoria Kohner-Flanagan in this issue’s Behind the Lens feature. “The photos themselves provide a sense of permanence to these otherwise fleeting moments,” adds Kohner-Flanagan, “I hope to cement moments that call attention to things we often lose sight of: extraordinary spaces, imposing and exciting challenges, and the people we get to share those things with.” In this edition of *California Climber* we’re proud to feature 12 pages of Kohner-Flanagan’s recent photographic experiences; some of her best work yet. For more, check out this issue’s Behind the Lens on page 24. —DEAN FLEMING

Julia McKenzie climbing *Delirious* (5.12a), Columns of the Giants.



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Drew Ruana  
Box Therapy, V16

Photo: Alton Richardson





EVENTS

SHECRUSHES @ GREAT WESTERN POWER CO, OAKLAND.

JULY 23RD  
SheCrushes is a casual community meet-up to bring together our awesome women and non-binary climbing community. This is for new\* and experienced climbers alike, so sessions can vary to meet the goals of the attendees—we may partner up on ropes, share beta on boulders, or even work in small groups to project climbs together. We are striving to create an inclusive space and community for women and non-binary people to meet and climb together. We hope you'll join us!  
Free for members, \$20 for non-members.

WOMAN UP! @ PACIFIC PIPE, OAKLAND

SEPTEMBER 9TH-11TH  
The Woman Up Climbing Festival is a celebration of the incredible women and non-binary folx present in every aspect of rock climbing—from route setters to weekend warriors to professional athletes and bright-eyed newbies. With this multi-day event, we hope to inspire more people who identify as women or non-binary to join our industry, achieve their personal goals, and find their community. For all the women and non-binary folx who've ever felt like they've had to justify themselves at the crag or the gym, this festival is a chance for us to remind each other that we CAN reach that hold, we CAN make that dyno, we CAN lead that pitch—and we can lead the industry, too.

YOSEMITE FACELIFT 2022

SEPTEMBER 21ST-25TH 2022  
Facelift this year will take place both in Yosemite and virtually! We want YOU to take the message of Yosemite Facelift to your hometown if you can't join in Yosemite. The objective of Facelift this year (and every year!) is for you to pick up litter and engage in service projects on our public lands safely. Whether you are participating remotely or in Yosemite, you must pre-register. Pre-registration for Yosemite participation ended on September 13th for gate passes. You may still pre-register if you are "Acting Local" or have other entry into the park. If you are participating in person in Yosemite, your name will be at the park entry gate if you pre-registered before September 13th. You must still show up at the mall near the Valley Visitor Center and check in with us, just like in previous years. Put your name on a ticket for giveaway drawings, buy a shirt, talk to an archeologist about artifacts; you know the drill!

LIBORISK: JOSHUA TREE CLIMB & CAMPOUT

OCTOBER 22 @ 4:00 PM - OCTOBER 23 @ 10:00 AM  
Come join other service members and veterans for rock climbing and camping in Joshua Tree, Oct. 21 – 23, 2022. This event is open to service members and veterans only NO FAMILY, CHILDREN OR SPOUSES AT ALL. LiboRisk events are hosted to bring troops together to further build camaraderie outside the military and expose attendees to new, positive experiences.



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**Woman Up Festival, a three-day celebration of the incredible women and non-binary folx in every aspect of rock climbing, is back!**

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**Saturday - Citizens Comp, Community Market, and Open Finals**  
**Sunday - Setting Clinic with the crew from Woman Up and more!**

**Everyone who identifies as a woman or non-binary is invited!**

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EVENTS

AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB, BISHOP CRAGGIN CLASSIC

NOVEMBER 11-13, 2022

This 3-day climbing festival is a true celebration of climbing and community in the Eastern Sierra. Started over a decade ago by local climbers looking to clean up the Buttermilks and drink some beers with friends, the Highball has always been a grassroots event by climbers, for climbers. The event has grown to feature films, climbing clinics, slideshows, games, gear, local beer, and good times—all in a massive gathering in the heart of downtown Bishop. And of course, we take pride in giving back through local stewardship projects, which take place in the Volcanic Tablelands and the Buttermilks.

JOSHUA TREE CLIMB SMART

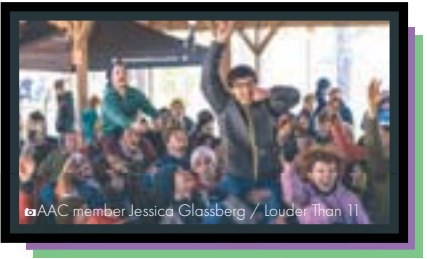
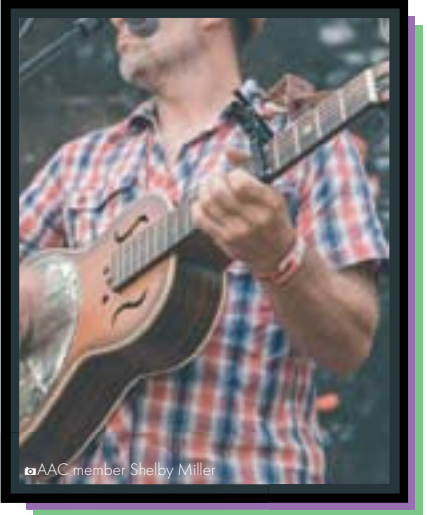
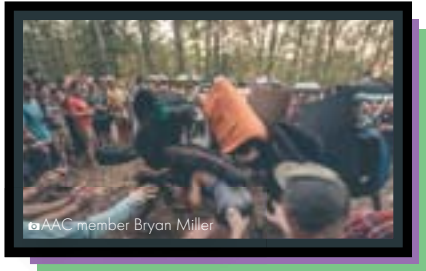
DECEMBER 2-4, 2022, JOSHUA TREE, CALIFORNIA (INDIAN COVE CAMPGROUND)

The 26th staging of the iconic FOJT Climb Smart Festival comes to Joshua Tree National Park December 2-4, 2022 for three days of education and practice, stewardship and comradery, and loads of fun! This event is a must-attend for the broader climbing community as the draft Climbing Management Plan will be coming to light at this time, drafted to manage climbing for the next 15-20 years. Understanding the issues and lending our collective voice have never been more important. Limited registration opens in June, so put a tickler in your calendar and subscribe to our newsletter if you haven't already.

COMPETITIONS SUMMER/FALL 2022:

TOUCHSTONE CLIMBING SERIES 2022:

- BERKELEY IRONWORKS (BOULDERING) SEPTEMBER 24
- CLIFFS OF ID IN CULVER CITY (BOULDERING) OCTOBER 1
- MISSION CLIFFS IN SAN FRANCISCO (SPORT) OCTOBER 15
- THE POST IN PASADENA (SPORT) NOVEMBER 5



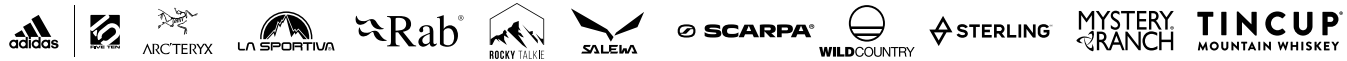
CRAGGIN' CLASSIC SERIES

BISHOP, CA



TOUR DATES	
RUMNEY, NH	09/16
NRG, WV	09/23
SMITH ROCK, OR	09/30
DEVIL'S LAKE, WI	10/14
SHELF ROAD, CO	10/21
MOAB, UT	11/04
BISHOP, CA	11/11

The Craggin' Classic Series is the country's largest climbing festival, uniting climbers at world-class destinations to climb, learn, connect, care for their crags, party, dance, and generally get weird. Each event features pro-taught skills clinics, films, slideshows, local food, craft beer, auctions, raffles, camping, dance parties, and tomfoolery. The Series, in it's heart of hearts, is a big, nation-wide celebration of the sport and culture of climbing. All it's missing is you.



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“VANISH”

Zack Weldon and his Dodge Ram 1500 ProMaster

How did you come up with the name?

ZW: This van has been given a bunch of names by myself or friends in the past, including, “Happy,” “Skridlov,” “Persephony,” “Big Red,” and “Clifford,” but the most recent and my favorite is “Vanish.” I think this name encapsulates an important aspect of van life; picking up and moving from place to place, or rotating through different spots, learning, people wondering where you vanished too, or never even knowing you were there.

Where did you find her and how much was she?

I found this van in Elk Grove; it was new, end of year. A pest control company ordered a whole fleet of these red ProMasters and didn’t take this one, leaving it as the only tall-roof, no-window, cherry red van in the entire mega lot. I paid 26k.

How’s the gas mileage?

The gas mileage feels all over the place. Depending on the terrain, I can get between 15 and 21 miles per-gallon.

Have you done any modifications?

It was bare when I bought it. I’ve done the interior in layers and sometimes multiple iterations. I’ve done none of the existing work in the van by myself. Some of my best friends have put their minds and energy in here to help me out. I

don’t know if I could do a project like this without direction. I’m not necessarily construction minded. First was the floor, then a hodge-podge of insulation, but no walls. The first bed was a medieval drawbridge-like contraption. I set up some folding murphy table, there was no great organization, just gear, clothes etc. floating together in rough groupings on the ground. Eventually a company installed electric and a vent fan. The bed is now in its second iteration and was thrown together at night with Keith in Leadville, in the snow with a jigsaw. Bernard masterminded by overhead storage. Carlin and I made the spice rack. It’s all simple.

Do you have any plans for future modifications?

I have learned a lot and I do have plans for things that I’d like to change, but who knows if I’ll get to them. I get caught up in enjoying it as it is. It would be really nice to build a little deck on the roof though...

How does it do off-road?

I am surprised how much it takes to make this thing tip, and always impressed at the steep grades and rough terrain it has been through. From sharp chunky rocks offroad near Quartzite, to snow in the Sierra with cables on, through sand, mud and dust in Utah. It definitely has its limitations though, and there is no skid plate under the engine and the transmission hangs the lowest, so you have to be careful.

Have you ever been stuck, broke down?

I’ve been stuck and broke down a few times. The transmission blew out (under warranty) in Bakersfield. Most recently, and uniquely, I got it stuck burying half the tires in the sand in the Joshua Tree dry lake bed next to a half burned sailboat. Luckily there was a lot of desert trash/treasure around. An old grill grate and a shovel got us out. It’s always scary going down a one-lane dirt road with no room to turn around.



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



# STAND BY YOUR VAN

What's your favorite thing about this van?

It's home and it's freedom; it keeps me less attached and able to be flexible in life.

Anything you don't like?

If you wreck you can lose your car and your home at the same time. It can be harder to grow and maintain roots in a community and show up for those that you love.

What was your favorite trip so far?

I can't think of a specific trip that was my favorite - there have been so many good trips for so many reasons. It's nice to have diversity on a trip. Traveling alone or with friends and family both have their own appeal. It's nice to experience a road trip with all the elements, that's my favorite.

Are you living in the van full time?

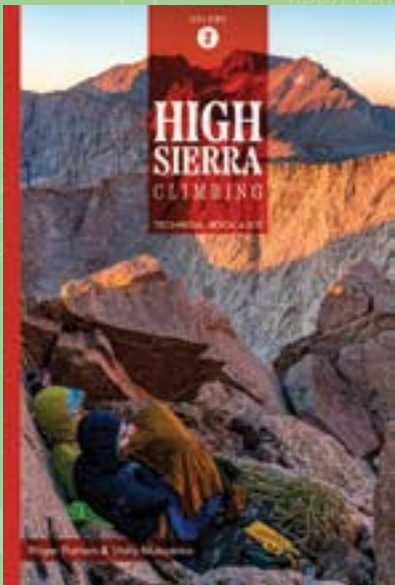
I'm not always in the van, but I've lived in it the majority of the time since 2018.

Has anything weird or unusual ever happened?

I was living in Leadville and got a job hanging Christmas lights and I just got the van about a month before this. I was living with my partner at the time in the van and there was basically nothing in it, just a little bit of insulation and the scary medieval drawbridge bed. We were living in there and every night we would go and sleep somewhere in the city, and every morning we would wake up with all this humidity



and condensation. I didn't have a vent fan yet, so it was really bad, and it was so cold that there were ice crystals forming inside the van on the insulation. It was too cold to really want to roll down the windows. After a few weeks my partner and I started to get really sick and we didn't know why. At first I thought it was diesel fumes from the trucks we were working on, but then I discovered a giant spot of mold underneath the bed... I didn't treat the wood and everything was slapped together. So anyways, we were just breathing mold spores for days and got really sick from it. It was a very stressful, cold time... So yeah... #vanlife

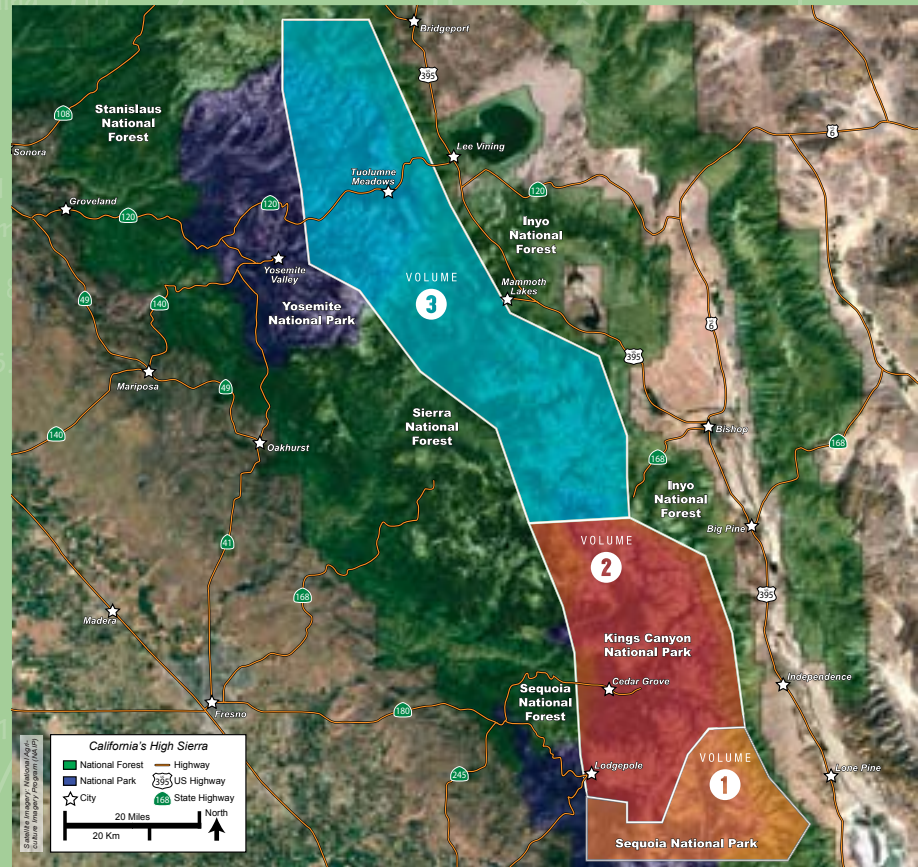


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Photos by Chris Beauchamp



BETA

ROUTE: *Mousetrap Arête*  
GRADE: **5.10b**  
FIRST ASCENT: **Daniel Forbes, James Barnett, Lance Kimball & Dean Fleming**  
LENGTH: **60'**  
ROCK TYPE: **Granite**  
SEASON: **Summer - Fall**  
STYLE: **Single Pitch, Trad**  
RACK: **Singles to 3", 4 bolts**  
LOCATION: **Burst Rock, Sonora**  
APPROACH: **30:00**  
DESCENT: **Lower off or rappel on fixed anchors**  
GUIDEBOOK: *A Climber's Guide to the Sonora Pass Highway 2nd Edition* by Brad Young

DESCRIPTION

Toeing the line of the Central Sierra's Emigrant Wilderness at a wind-sucking elevation of 8,500 feet, the colorful granite buttresses at Burst Rock have been a favorite mid-summer climbing destination for Sonora Pass locals since the early 1990s. Routes at Burst Rock mainly consist of elegant, very high quality granite traditional climbs that offer a mix of natural protection and bolt-protected face climbing. The short traditional route *Mousetrap Arête* (5.10b) [AKA *Chutes and Ladders*] is a quintessential Burst Rock classic set in an unusual and dramatic location. *Mousetrap Arête* starts in a beautiful, slightly overhanging thin hands and finger crack which quickly dissipates, forcing climbers out onto a steep and exposed arête that is littered with huge incut "thank God" jugs. To top off the experience, the anchors sit directly beneath a precariously positioned glacial erratic boulder. This interesting and somewhat terrifying feature was the inspiration for the formation's namesake climb *Mousetrap* (5.11c) and the subsequently added *Mousetrap Arête* (5.10b).

James Barnett on the spectacular upper column of *Mousetrap Arête* (5.10b).

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DMM SHORT HAUL

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The DMM Short Haul is a more compact and lighter version of DMM's ever popular Flight bag – a pack designed for air travel that features a suitcase style opening for easy access and straps with a breathable mesh finish for a comfortable carry. The smaller (30L) Short Haul bag is ideal as a gym or sport climbing kit bag but not out of place as a work bag, with a built-in 15 inch side-entry laptop/tablet sleeve.

Like the DMM Flight bag, the Short Haul is sized to meet most airline carry-on requirements, and the main compartment opens like a suitcase, making it easy to access the interior. The face fabric is ultra tough and durable 630D Ballistic Gucci; a fabric tough enough to withstand some bushwhacking and the occasional haul on long routes. Although the Short Haul makes a great bouldering sack and multi-pitch bag, the



pack is aimed at the 'work-to-wall' market, and is designed to provide urban climbers a dedicated stylish yet-functional bag option from the DMM range.

The Short Haul's thermoformed back panel is light, comfortable and venting and the bags removable webbing waist strap makes for even slimmer stowing options. The Short Haul's interior is large enough to stow a small sport rack, shoes, harness, rope, lunch and snacks, with a quickdraw racking system to organize your climbing kit neatly. The single external pocket is sized large enough to keep your guidebook close to hand, but separated away from leaky water bottles. An additional large internal zippered pocket keeps all your valuables safe. Finally, the Short Haul features a bicycle light holder for safe urban commuting.

PETZL REVERSO

{ \$29.95 }

The Petzl Reverso is the "OG" guide-style belay/rappel device: A versatile and lightweight unit designed for use with one or two ropes with the ability to belay a follower directly from the anchor. The design of the original Reverso was groundbreaking, but not without a number of flaws, including a backing plate that would get so sharp with use that you could shave a goat with it. Don't ask how we know that... Anyways, since the introduction of the Reverso, a number of climbing manufacturers have imitated the design – most popularly, the bulky, heavy, clunky & cumbersome Black Diamond Guide ATC, which, despite its many setbacks, including a painfully complicated tension-release operation, momentarily lead the competition in the guide-style belay category. But Petzl quickly bounced back with a re-designed unit which is specifically manufactured to allow the rope to glide smoothly through the device and reduce



wear; an upgrade that greatly reduced the capacity for sharp edges to develop over use. Petzl also manufactured a "release hole" in the device which allows the belayer to give slack to a follower with just one carabiner.

The Reverso is compatible with most rope diameters, single 8.5 to 10.5 mm, half 7.1 to 9.2 mm, and twin 6.9 to 9.2 mm. The latest rendition of the Reverso is easy to use: feeding slack and catching falls are accomplished using standard belay techniques, always keeping a hand on the brake side of the rope. In testing we found that ropes of varying diameters do glide smoothly through the device, while V-shaped friction grooves enable controlled braking. The Reverso can be used to belay a climber or to rappel on one or two rope strands. "Reverso Mode" allows the user to belay one or two followers with assisted braking. All this comes in a compact and ultra-lightweight (only 57 grams) package.

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Genevive Walker, Escalante Canyon, Colorado, USA. © D. Scott Clark



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METOLIUS WASTE CASE

{ \$69.95 }

Yes, you can totally make your own poop tube for big wall climbing. We've done it using a stick of 5" ABS sewer pipe, a glue-on cap and a glue-on threaded adaptor. These home-made units work pretty good; they're basically air-tight, and they're cheap, but damn if they don't make the most annoying "clanging" sound when they bounce against everything while hauling. And if that's not bad enough, PVC and ABS poop tubes have been known to explode while hauling, sometimes sending a god-awful mess down the cliff; sometimes nailing your jugging partner directly in the face. This is not the best first big wall experience; in fact, it's not the best 149th big wall experience...

The Waste Case is a clever design by Metolius intended as the [ultimate big-wall poop dragging system](#), and an [environmentally responsible choice](#) to big wall waste disposal. Metolius constructs the Waste Case with



Durathane™ - the same material they use on their haul bags, which makes the system light, [durable and flexible](#). The Waste Case comes with 6 WAG BAG® by Cleanwaste kits, each containing: one waste bag with Poo Powder® by Cleanwaste, zip-close disposal bag, toilet paper and hand sanitizer.

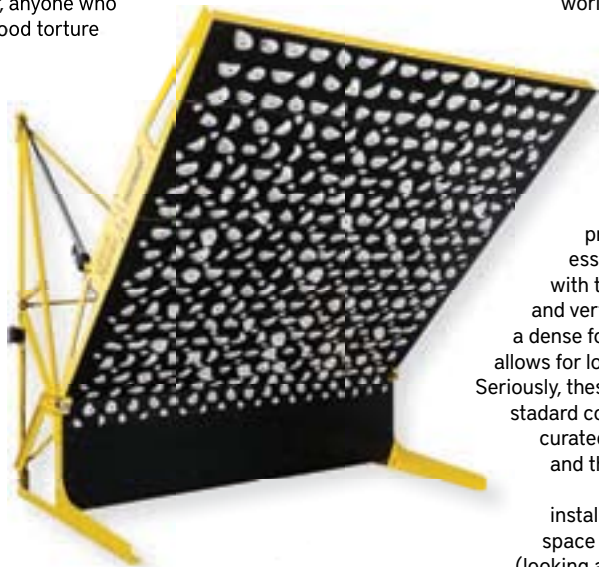
The WAG BAG® kits are approved for disposal in landfills. The Poo Powder® by Cleanwaste is a specially engineered mix of a non-toxic polymer-based absorbent (similar to what is in baby diapers), along with an organic decay catalyst and odor neutralizer (no perfumes). When waste comes in contact with the powder, the powder gels the liquid waste, encapsulates the solid waste, removes odors and begins the decay process. "Can't you just use kitty litter?" Sure, but this stuff is noticeably better. The Waste Case weighs in at only 10.6 oz. (300 g) and boasts a capacity of 500 cubic inches (8.2 L). Sure, it's a little bit expensive, but the person jugging underneath the haul bags thinks it's worth every penny.

KILTER GRIPS KILTER BOARD

{ STARTING AT \$2K }

If you're even remotely serious about training for climbing, odds are you will or already have, spent time on a training board of some kind. However, anyone who has spent time under these primitive plywood torture walls, deciphering binders of problems with grip coordinates that are reminiscent of the game 'Battleship', has long thought; 'what if you could light up the holds?'

Enter in Kilter Grips. If you have climbed in a gym in the last 25+ years, at all, you likely have climbed on holds shaped by Kilter founder Ian Powell. Ian is one of the godfathers of modern hold design and his [illuminated climbing hold footprint](#) is one of the things that sets the Kilter Board apart from the rest in a market that is growing increasingly saturated. Illuminated boards are now standard, however early attempts were quite literally lost as you ascended the wall. The lights positioned under the holds made it difficult to quickly obtain your next foothold, often forcing a climber to stop and look around unnaturally. The holds on the Kilter Board feature a fully illuminated ring around the entire footprint of the hold that lights up via an LED light kit assembled into the back of the wall.



Utilizing the Kilter Board mobile app, you have [access to thousands of boulders](#) set by users all over the world. Using various refinement filters allows a climber to easily find climbs to try, while the [70 degrees of adjustability](#) (if the wall allows for it) helps you dial in the exact steepness and intensity.

Both the Original and Homewall layouts are offered in multiple size options to best fit into whatever space you have. The smaller versions share similar problems to their larger counterparts by essentially being the center portion of the wall, with the larger sizes being expansions horizontally and vertically. All the holds have been shaped in a dense foam providing a [less-abrasive texture](#) that allows for longer sessions and more of them in a week. Seriously, these grips are more comfortable than most standard commercial holds. Each hold layout has been curated through thousands of hours of development and the final products reflect that process.

Whether you are a lucky sole who will be installing the Homewall, or your local gym has a space dedicated specifically to the full size Original (looking at you GWPC), consistency on the Kilter Board [will improve your climbing](#). I'm sure any board would do that, but training should be fun and the best kind of training never feels like it. These boards are simply fun. If you don't enjoy climbing on them, even for short sessions, then you probably don't really enjoy climbing anyways.

CLIMB SMART

DECEMBER 2-4, 2022



On December 2-4, 2022, Climb Smart will take place INSIDE Joshua Tree National Park (JTNP), offering education, stewardship, and connection to the climbing community. As in years past, we'll stay at the Indian Cove Campground & Amphitheater.

**BUY YOUR TICKETS by September 15 for the \$179 early-bird special!**

Yosemite Climbing Association & Friends of Joshua Tree are partnering to bring the Facelift to JTree!

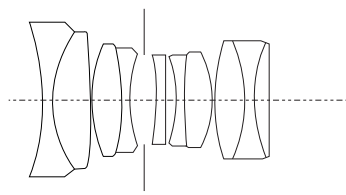
Date: October 22, 2022

Time: 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

Register for free at [joshuatreefaceliftactlocal.eventbrite.com](https://joshuatreefaceliftactlocal.eventbrite.com)







# A SENSE OF PERMANENCE

IMAGES & WORDS + VICTORIA KOHNER-FLANAGAN

**IT WAS 9 PM AND I WAS HAGGARD**, driving around the Valley. Sam and Jordan had invited me to go shoot them the next day as they romped up the Salathe in “speed/French-free/NIAD” style to celebrate Jordan’s birthday. The conversation went something along the lines of: “Have you ever rapped in on El Cap?” “No.” “Do you know where the East Ledges are?” “No.” I hadn’t even been on El Cap, and in many ways, was totally unprepared. As I ran around collecting gear and beta from generous friends, I thought about how silly it was that my first time on the imposing formation would be rapping off the top. So much for the adventurous ground-up style.

A full liter of coffee and certainly not a full night of sleep later, I found myself trudging up to the base of the fixed lines of the East Ledges, regretting a winter of flat and short approaches in Joshua Tree and the Buttermilks. As a climbing photographer, I’ve done my fair amount of juggling but always with one jumar and a gri-gri and never efficiently. Halfway up the first pitch, ridiculously swinging around with my heavy pack and faffing with the two jumars, I had a moment of humility. Pulling out my phone, I searched “how to jumar.” Up popped “How To Big Wall Climb - Basic Jumaring Techniques” by Chris McNamara, and I watched the full YouTube video as I swung there. Turns

out, it’s much easy to jumar when it’s properly set up. A few more hours of plodding later, I tossed my pack down at the final anchors of the Salathe wall. Reflecting on this experience, it was fortunate I was by myself so no one else had to witness me panting for air and the copious sweat dripping down my face. After a quick nap, hiding in my empty haul bag from the wind, I grabbed my camera gear and worked up to the nerve to rap off the edge. El Cap is central to American climbing and to experience it for the first time, even just rapping off the top, is something I will hold dear for the rest of my life.

The photos on the following pages represent the endless stoke and try-hard of my friends, shivering in the 4pm darkness of Joshua Tree in winter, 5am wake up calls in the muggy heat of Yosemite in late spring, hacky sack circles and spliffs, caffeine-fueled crag dance parties, and a willingness by those photographed to let me tag along. Climbing is often an immensely personal experience, and I am grateful for those who let me share those experiences with them. Being on the wall with someone while they are going a la muerte is intimate. I’ve witnessed firsthand moments of failure and success, frustration and ecstasy. The photos themselves provide a sense of permanence to these otherwise fleeting moments. Given the tendency of climbers to stew on unsent projects and getting stronger, I hope to cement moments that call attention to things we often lose sight of: extraordinary spaces, imposing and exciting challenges, and the people we get to share those things with.

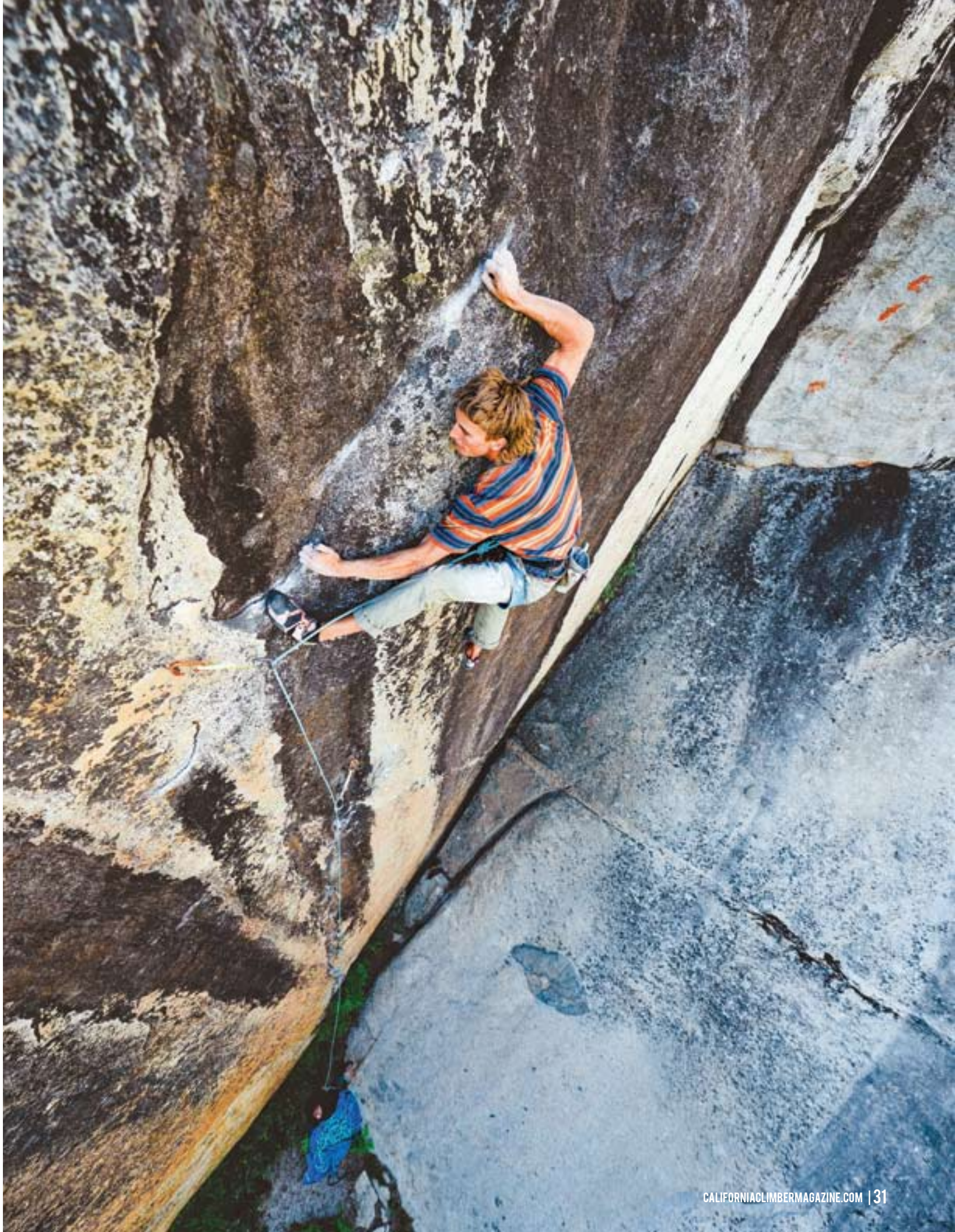
*Victoria Kohner-Flanagan is a traveling rock climber and photographer. She finds joy capturing people in moments of vulnerability on and off the wall. Her work strives to capture the meaningful connections forged between the people and landscapes she encounters on the road. She is a 2021 Red Bull Illume "Emerging" Category winner. Find her on Instagram @vickyvicti and online at [www.victoriakohnerflanagan.com](http://www.victoriakohnerflanagan.com)*















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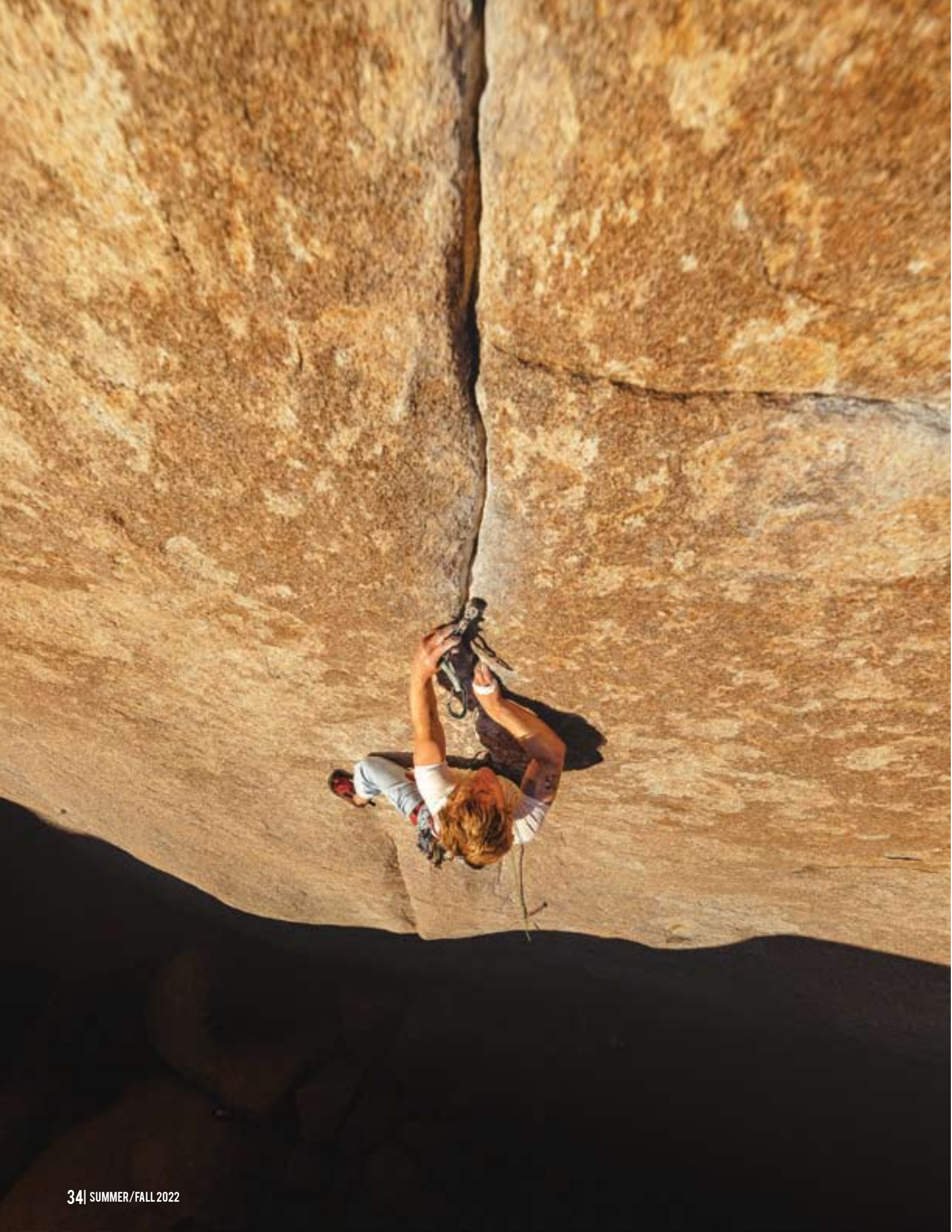
Jeremy Mullet climbing in freestyle mode. Photo by Derek Troxell.



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# CAPTIONS

{01}     **“IRON CURTAIN”** - Joshua Tree National Park

Jeremy Schoenborn climbing *Iron Curtain* (V11) in Joshua Tree National Park (2022). Many walk by this massive patina wave on their way to the more renowned Planet X, but it’s worth the detour to go stare at (or climb on) *Iron Curtain*. To quote Jeremy: “long, scary, and all the while you’re getting barreled.”

{02}     **“PEACE”** - Toulumne Meadows

Weronika Lojewska climbing *Peace* (5.13c) inTuolumne Meadows, Yosemite National Park (2022). Driving in from the Valley, it’s impossible not to be awestruck by Medlicott Dome. Its golden granite face is striking, and even from the road the black water streak of *Peace* is obvious. The position of the climb is hard to beat, with a view overlooking Tenaya Lake and Half Dome. Shooting it in the evening golden hour seemed like the way to do the golden wall justice. Ronnie hucked laps on the upper crux as the shadow crept towards us as I snapped some shots.

{03}     **“CAMPGROUND ARETE”** - Rock Creek, Bishop

Bryce Bozovich climbing *The Campground Arete* (V9) at Rock Creek, Bishop (2021). Rock Creek is the underappreciated little sibling of Bishop bouldering, but the Yosemite-style granite and the cooler temps are not to be missed. Rock Creek offers respite from the baking sun and fingertip bruising crimps, and though there aren’t a ton of problems, most are incredible.

{04}     **“THE FARCE”** - Yosemite Valley

Jordan Cannon climbing *The Farce* (V9) in Yosemite Valley National Park (2022). It had been lightly snowing on and off all morning, and I was hiding in the lodge drinking another cup of coffee when Jordan and Sam texted methey were heading out to the boulders in Camp 4. I grabbed my camera and left the warmth of the lodge, not convinced it would be dry. I was wrong, and Jordan ran a quick lap on “*The Farce*” as it continued to snow while I snapped some shots under the protection of the giant oak tree’s canopy.

{05}     **“BROKEN ARROW”** - Toulumne Meadows

Jeremy Schoenborn climbing *Broken Arrow* (5.14a) in Tuolumne Meadows, Yosemite National Park (2022). Small gear, hard moves, bad temps, and aquick send by Jeremy. Broken Arrow hasn’t seen many redpoint accents; it’s short but extremely sustained and the gear is finicky. Not often are you pulling off the ground with the first piece of gear between your teeth, as Jeremy did. Tuolumne is known for scary slab climbs that top out the domes, but the hard single pitch climbing nestled in the trees are not to be missed.

{06}     **“ASTEROID CRACK”** - Joshua Tree National Park

Bryce Bozovich climbing *Asteroid Crack* (5.13a) in Joshua Tree National Park (2021). Sometimes I get lucky, right moment at the right time. My friends had spent the afternoon sessioning *Asteroid crack* and I wandered out right before sunset with my camera to see how it was going. As Bryce went up for another attempt, the setting sun illuminated the rock in a soft glow. It was one of those moments I was glad I actually had my camera with me.

{07}     **“HOT ROCKS”** - Joshua Tree National Park

Willing friends make photographs. Early on in the season, I noticed that a distinct shadow crept up the base of *Hot Rocks* (5.11b/c) as the sun set. The climb glowed gold as the base sunk into shadow, I knew I had to try and shoot it in that light. Unfortunately, *Hot Rocks* is exactly that: hot. It gets sun most of the day, and by evening, any reasonable climber would avoid it. Thankfully, I have friends like Jack who are willing to sacrifice some skin in order to get photos like this one.

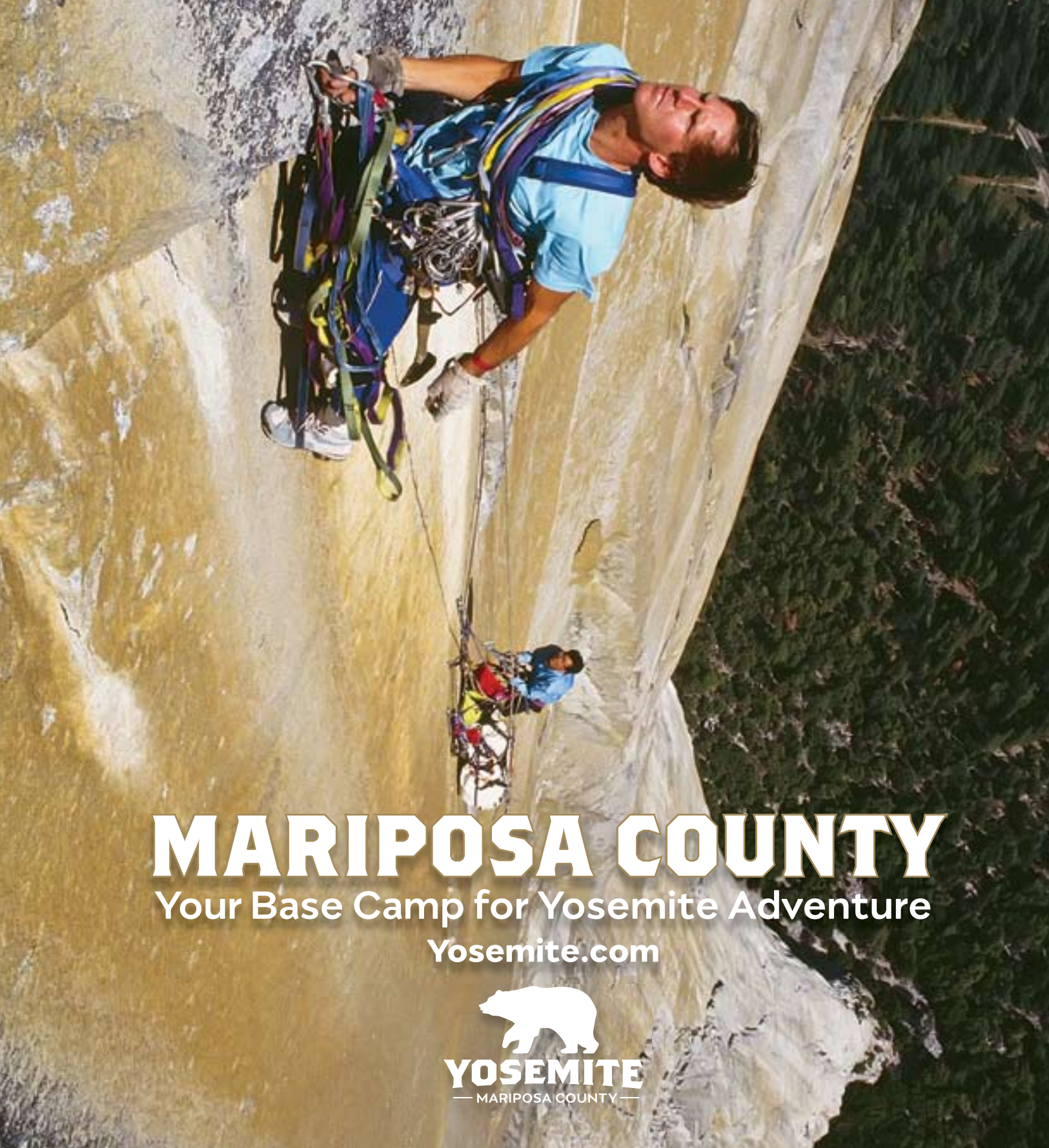
{08}     **“SALATHE VIA FREERIDER”** - El Capitan, Yosemite Valley

Jordan Cannon and Sam Stroh climbing *The Salathe Wall* (5.9 C2) in Yosemite National Park (2022). This spring was my first real season in the valley, and I was (and still am) pretty intimidated. Jordan and Sam climbed “*Salathe* in a day” to celebrate Jordan’s birthday this year and graciously invited me to come shoot. This photo represents many firsts for me: first time hiking up, first time rapping in, first time shooting, and just in general, first time being on El Cap. I was excited about the photos, but perhaps more excited about the incredible nap I took on Long ledge.





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**DISPATCH:**  
THE OSSAGON ROCKS  
WORDS & IMAGES + DEAN FLEMING





**AT THE END OF EACH FALL SEMESTER,** in the small northern California city of Arcata, the students of Humboldt State University take to the streets. Wearing their finest marijuana leaf patterned pajama pants and oversized Mexican blanket ponchos, the students shuffle down from apartments, dilapidated townhouses and suburban rentals, dragging broken and bongwater-stained furniture onto the sidewalks. These “free piles” are then resourcefully picked over by the thrifty full-time residents of Humboldt County. In the fall of 2014, while sifting through a free pile in the Arcata Bottoms, I scored a big L-shaped desk. “The perfect addition to the Command Center,” I thought.

After dragging the desk for a few blocks, I wiggled it through the front doorway of the “Z House” and then shoved it into the corner of my room. I tossed my computer on the desk and then adjusted the huge topographic maps and ocean swell charts that were tacked to the walls above. The maps were littered with brightly colored thumb tacks;

blue tacks marked the locations of boulders that we had visited, red tacks marked beaches where boulders were suspected to exist. I scanned the maps until I came to a section with only a few blue thumb tacks; the coastline at Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park, an area in the far northern reaches of Humboldt County that includes some well-known boulders, most notably the Ossagon Rocks.

The following morning I met a group of rag-tag boulderers at the usual meeting spot; Wildberries Market at the corner of 13th and G Street in downtown Arcata. Some trudged into the store to procure overpriced rations for the day’s excursion while others loitered in the parking lot. Anywhere else this procedure would be expected to take about twenty minutes, but here, in a place where a phenomenon called “Arcata Time” exists, a 9am meet-up can easily lead to a late afternoon departure.

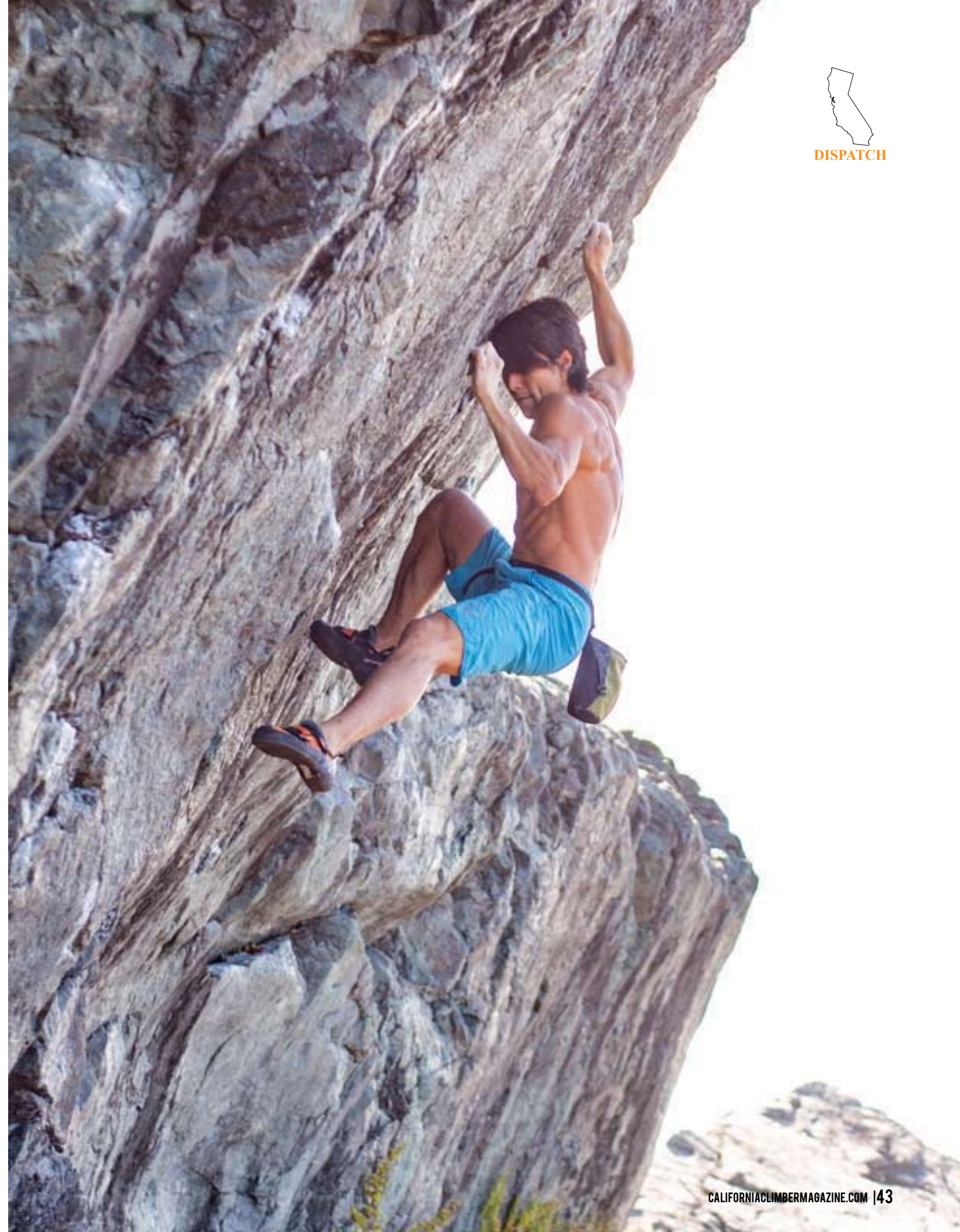
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#### PREVIOUS

Austin Schuler makes his way across one of the most impressive roof features on the California Coast. This un-named traverse checks in around V7 and involves strange dynamic downclimbing moves in both directions.

#### RIGHT

Matt DeShazo working his way up an un-named V6/7 on the largest boulder at Ossagon. This problem features slightly overhanging incut crimps on a bullet-hard, smooth wall.



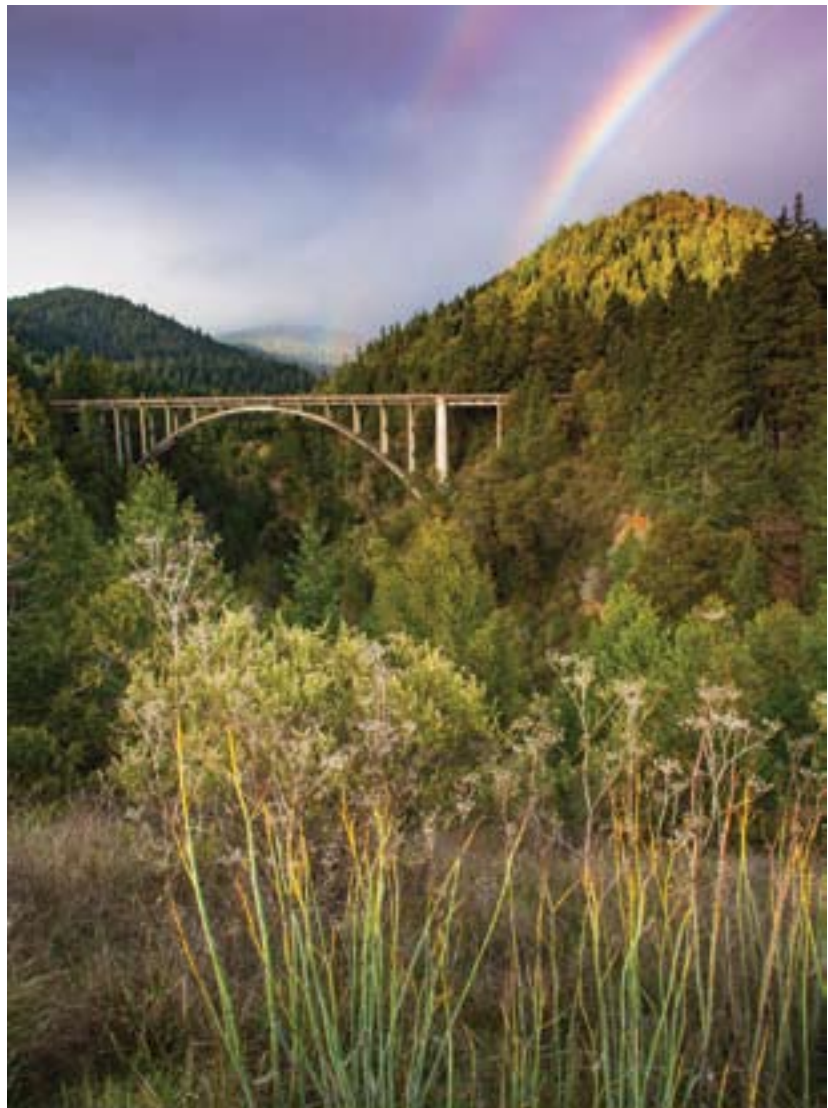




DISPATCH







The city of Arcata stands alongside a few adjacent communities surrounding Humboldt Bay that together make up the cultural heart of Humboldt County. The once-booming silver mining town of Eureka has since been developed into a modern municipality with malls, fast food restaurants and other eyesores, yet the Victorian-style homes with late 1800s architecture can still be found here. Just across the Somoa Bridge is the Arcata Spit, home to a once-booming logging operation and a few solitary homes whose residents enjoy easy access to sand dunes and intimidating surf.

The now-booming college town of Arcata sits on the northern side of Arcata Bay and is known for a culture of eccentricity and overall strangeness. To the delight of some, and to the dismay of others, downtown Arcata has recently civilized itself with fancy amenities like wine bars and expensive restaurants. Yet the outlying areas of Arcata still manage to foster an odd mix of farming and island cultures; a place that somehow feels a little like Iowa and a little like Hawaii all at once.

To the north, Humboldt County is a safe haven for unconventional climbers and surfers, boasting a paramount number of high quality beach-side boulders and crags and

equal potential for new discoveries and first ascents in wild and remote settings. Although a boom of development has recently occurred, both in town and out on the cliffs and boulders, solitude, scenery, excellent summer climbing temperatures and high quality routes on a wide variety of rock types still accurately describes the climbing in Humboldt County.

A number of moderate, safe and easily accessible crags and bouldering areas exist in the area, but to say that climbing in Humboldt County is primarily adventurous is an understatement. Changing tides, loose rock, poison oak and rusted hardware are just a few of the challenges Humboldt County climbers face. Bouldering here is usually pretty mellow, but the sand level at all of the beaches changes frequently with the tides which drastically alters the nature of the climbs. Many of the beach-side bouldering areas still maintain a policy of un-named and un-graded problems.

<~~~~>

Our heavy packs and overstuffed crash pads jostled and bobbed as we weaved our way through the dark second-growth spruce woods and alder groves that line

#### PREVIOUS

Ari Maiello approaches the Ossagon Rocks via the Ossagon Trail at Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park.

#### THIS PAGE

A rainbow forms over an abandoned bridge just south of Humboldt County on Highway 101.

#### RIGHT

Nathaniel Potter takes a lap on a very tall and balancey V3 arête on the tallest boulder at Ossagon.











the first section of the well-worn path to the Ossagon rocks. Between 1880 and the early 1900s, logging denuded thousands of acres of what were once old-growth redwoods in Humboldt County, including some of Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park and the upper portion of the Ossagon Trail. In 1918 alarmed conservationists established the Save the Redwoods League to protect California's redwood groves. By 1920 the League and the State of California purchased thousands of acres adjoining Prairie Creek to form the State Park.

As we continued to make our way down the four-mile-long Ossagon Trail we began to hear the sounds of crashing waves on the beach far below us. Soon the forest opened up into a grove of massive old growth redwood trees, some over 15-feet in diameter. These few remaining old growth stands were protected by the State's annexation of the territory in 1920.

Standing below the ancient trees, one can almost imagine what life in the region must have been like long before the gold mining operations of the 1850s and the logging operations of the early 1900s. Communities like the Yurok, who traditionally lived near the Klamath River

and along the coastline of the Pacific Ocean, primarily inhabited the land that is now known as Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park. Yurok villages, numbering no less than fifty, were located from Little River in the south, to the Wilson Creek Basin which runs into False Klamath Cove in the north.

As we descended closer to the ocean the giant redwood stands that shadow the steep mountain ranges began to thin. Here, more spruce trees and red alder woods led to the beach and the marsh below. Crossing a small footbridge over a deep channel, we headed towards the Ossagon Rocks, a collection of large gray boulders with a distinctive arrowhead-shaped spire at their center. Walking around the giant blocks, we'd stop and put a little chalk on some neat looking holds, do some moves, maybe go to the top of a boulder, and then move on to the next interesting feature. Eventually we'd shuffle over to the next gigantic block.

<~~~~>

#### PREVIOUS

Sunset over Arch Beach, Humboldt County.

#### THIS PAGE

Ryan Camera makes a few desperate moves on an un-named V6; one of the few short and dynamic problems at Ossagon.

#### RIGHT

Julia McKenzie climbs a stunning overhanging arête (un-named V5) on the north side of the largest rock at Ossagon.

#### NEXT

Julia McKenzie gets high above a friendly group of spotters on another of Ossagon's show stopping moderate highballs. This west-facing problem evolves big moves out a massive jug rail to a committing topout.











#### LEFT TOP

Austin Schuler traverses under the big roof on an un-named V7.

#### LEFT BOTTOM

Julia McKenzie stops to gaze up at one of the massive old growth Redwood trees on the Ossagon Trail.

#### THIS PAGE

Julia McKenzie makes her way across a technical and balancey traverse (un-named V4) on the east face of the smaller rock at Ossagon. on the Ossagon Trail.







**LEFT**

Ethan Pringle messes around on a really, really tall thing just north of Ossagon Beach.

**THIS PAGE**

Sunset at Arch Beach, Humboldt County.

There are only five rocks at Ossagon. Seriously, just five, really, big, rocks. But they're all pretty damn incredible. Some problems are short but require fun movement or dynamic sequences. There are a few traverses and a couple of excellent moderates. Other problems are as tall and striking and proud as anything, anywhere, including an absolutely insane double digit project that soars out the largest 45 degree roof I've ever seen.

After climbing a small percentage of the possible problems at Ossagon, we lounged in the sun, kicking sand around with our bare feet and looking at cool driftwood sticks. We tried to cross a big marsh, and then we tried to

run around a huge rock that faces the powerful shore-break to access Carruthers Cove to the north. Soon the sun began to fade into the west over the ocean. We packed up our junk and made our way back to the spruce trees and red alder woods that mark the trail. We passed through the arms of the ancient redwood trees in the silence of twilight. As we piled on top of each other and wrestled our crash pads into the damp Toyota van, a thick blanket of fog covered the forest.





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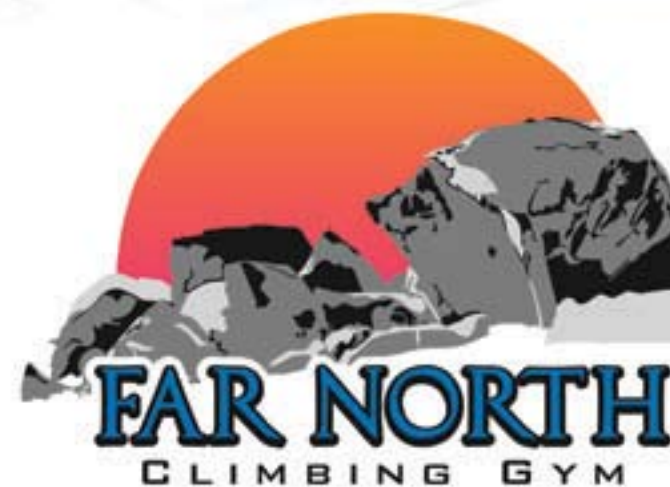
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This form is a tool to solicit commitment from your climbing partners. Use in place of text message streams containing incomplete and/or vague information. You may distribute to multiple parties at once to “shop” for partners.

Proposed Climbing Trip		
Dates:	Departure location:	Departure time:
Location (include cliffs/walls of interest):		
Round trip mileage:	Estimated cost of gas:	
Weather Report		
<input type="checkbox"/> Sending temps (no other options available at this time)		
Transportation		
<input type="checkbox"/> I can provide transportation, # of seats available: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> I expect gas money		
<input type="checkbox"/> Need a ride, will chip in for gasoline <input type="checkbox"/> I want a ride, but I refuse pay for gas because I always drive		
<input type="checkbox"/> I'll meet you there. I need alone time and my podcast is getting to the good part.		
Goals		
<input type="checkbox"/> Projecting. Estimated attempts per day: _____ Duration of each attempt: _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Fitness laps <input type="checkbox"/> "I'm just happy to get out!" <input type="checkbox"/> Ladies' trip!		
List routes of interest: _____		
Additional Contributions		
<input type="checkbox"/> Expert stick-clipper <input type="checkbox"/> Punctual and prepared <input type="checkbox"/> Psych is high <input type="checkbox"/> My playlist slaps		
<input type="checkbox"/> Rope-gun <input type="checkbox"/> Photography <input type="checkbox"/> Soft catches		
<input type="checkbox"/> My snacks are fire. Provide examples: _____		
Disclosures		
<input type="checkbox"/> I will be high and/or buzzed <input type="checkbox"/> I own a sketch rope that makes people cringe		
<input type="checkbox"/> Someone will need to clean my draws at the end of the day <input type="checkbox"/> Real talk I'll prolly be hungover and bail		
For Official Friend Use Only		
<input type="checkbox"/> Your climbing plans are convenient and consistent with my own and I approve this trip.		
<input type="checkbox"/> Will consider your plans with the following modifications (attach additional pages if necessary): _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Find someone else. Reason undefined.		
Signature:		Date:

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