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WINTER 2017
N° 23





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NO. 23
WINTER 2017

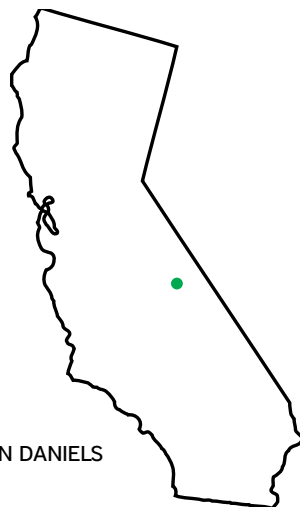
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ON THE COVER
Austen Thibault climbing the
Minotaur (V5) in Columbia.

THIS PAGE
Jared Mills climbing an
unnamed V7 at Bachar
Boulders.
IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING
(BOTH)

Clockwise starting top right: Dan Brayack, Nate Gerhardt, Andy Cross, Alk Berg, Dan Brayack



Be a climber.

Pursue what you love, encourage others as they do the same.



CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

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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.

Daniel Leoni climbing *Cutter* (V3) at Black Sand Beach.



JIM THORNBURG

LA SPORTIVA AMBASSADOR
JONATHAN SIEGRIST



PHOTO: MATT ALBERTS @THIRTIETHPROJECT

C Simmons, Bishop CA. Photo: A Wickstrom

organicclimbing.com

EDITOR'S NOTE

ON A MOONLIT NIGHT IN THE WINTER OF 2003 a few friends and I scrambled through the welded volcanic rocks that jut from the high desert plateaus of the Bishop Tablelands. With a few cans of beer tucked into our pockets, we slithered around enormous blocks, through tight passageways and under overhanging scoops. After what seemed like miles of block hopping, the rock formations ceased at an abrupt cliff edge. Below us a small river valley flowed through the desert landscape where lush vegetation and small stands of trees traced the oxbow outline of the water's path.

Near the cliff's precipice the bright moonlight illuminated a deep cave feature with a small stack of rocks lining the outside edge. An immediate silence fell over the group as we unanimously realized that we might be standing close, too close, to an ancient Native American dwelling site. The part of me that binge-watched the Indian Jones trilogy from age's six to twelve screamed to investigate the site for petroglyphs and charcoal streaks. Thankfully, even at a young age, I realized that the right action does not always align with our desired action. Nothing but the sound of the wind broke our silence as we respectfully retraced our steps back to the road.

<~~~>

In the summer of 2017 companies like Patagonia began to boycott the Outdoor Retailer Trade Show's location in Salt Lake City when the governing bodies of the State of Utah and the Federal Government announced a planned reduction to the protected land that was Bears Ears National Monument; a Monument that housed the famed climbing area Indian Creek and [much more importantly] thousands of Native American sacred sites. Just weeks before the release of this edition of California Climber in December 2017 the administration set the reduction into motion, which spurred a series of lawsuits by outdoor companies, Native American tribes and nations and non-profits like Access Fund. This public land reduction is outside of California, yet it could set a daunting precedent that may affect California's protected lands in future debates.

We can blame a President, but then we would actually need to believe that one person can control an entire Nation; as if Darth Vader just kicked the Death Star into hyper drive and punched the throttle towards the sun. We can shout into social media echo chambers where near-identical avatars of ourselves tell us how brave we are for voicing our opinions to groups of people with identical opinions. But the harsh truth will remain; the fact that the vast majority of blue collar Americas – the folks that work full time without chalk under their fingernails – really don't give a shit about our right to send boulder problems and crack climbs on our seemingly endless vacations.

In this issue of California Climber we feature an interview with California native, all-around bad ass blue collar climber and dirt bike racer Kevin Daniels. Although many of Daniels' words are thought provoking (to say the least) one quote stands out to me personally:

"I've noticed that many climbers today act really entitled," said Daniels. "As if it's their god given right to just climb, drag their dogs all over the god damn place, and just do whatever the fuck they want to do..."

It's a harsh quote, and it may be offensive to some, but it may also evoke some valuable questions in regards to public land battles:

- Why do climbers usually fight to protect public lands only when those lands house climbing areas?
- Are Native American lands and sacred sites only worth protecting when they are found in the same place as dope 5.13 projects?

hampi, india

How do you even prepare for a climbing trip when you know it is going to be hot, humid, and conditions couldn't be further from perfect? You put a smile on your face, don't expect too much, and have as much fun as you can. Half of my trip to India the trip was spent surfing and the final half was spent climbing in the historical area of Hampi. We discovered that the best time to climb was in the morning. This was the coldest part of the day and the rock had not yet been baked by the sun. Climbing in Hampi for nearly a week was a treat. The people, culture, and food all made for an unforgettable experience.

-Paul Robinson

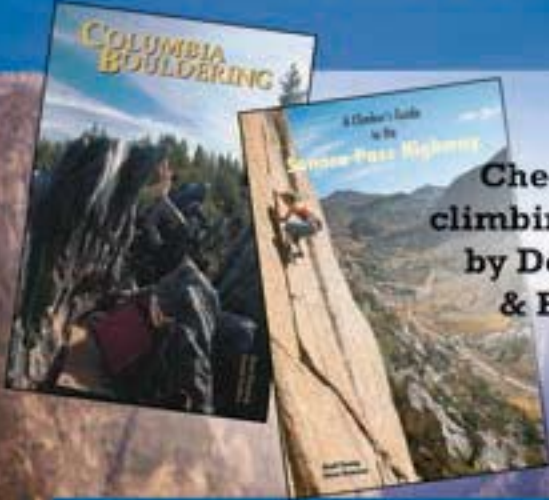


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EDITOR’S NOTE

If we aren’t just a bunch of self-serving beatniks that only care about our right to hang-dog 5.12 splitters, then what does inspire us to preserve public lands?

In the wake of this large public land reduction I find myself asking these questions. I find myself seeking conversations with those that might disagree with me. I listen more and talk less. And I’ve found that it matters little who I’m having a discussion with – whether it’s a girl with dreadlocks and a coexist bumper sticker on her Subaru Outback, or my buddy from High School that pours concrete for a living and likes to shoot his shotgun on the weekends – we usually end up in agreement when it comes to public land preservation and the idea that the few acres that Native Americans have left should be protected in perpetuity.

Perhaps it’s time to step outside of our echo chambers and begin to have potentially uncomfortable conversations. Perhaps we, as climbers, need to fight for public lands even when the land in question does not encompass one of our beloved vacation destinations. It is absolutely time to fight for Native American sacred lands and sites, regardless of where they are located.

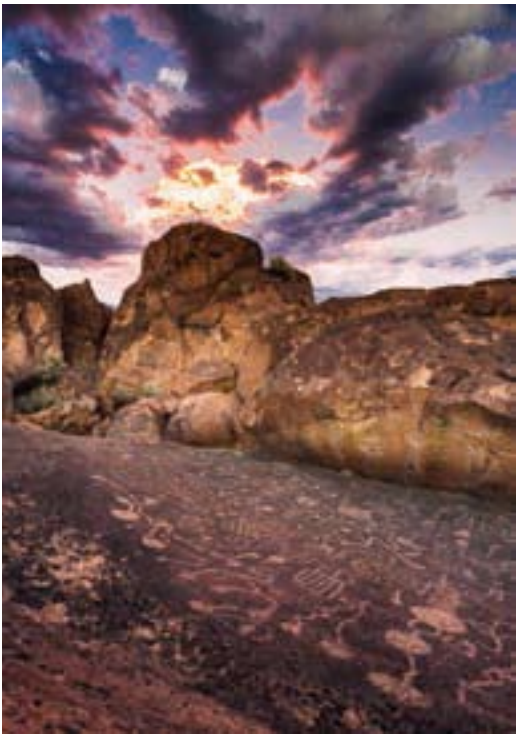
I would encourage all the readers of this magazine to find even a small way to stand up for public lands, now more than ever. Not

just because it might infringe on our ability to climb on cool rocks, but because through climbing we have found a deep respect for the wilderness and we believe that all people have the right to experience protected wild places.

For more harsh realities from Kevin Daniels, see page 32. To aid in the preservation of Bears Ears, please visit the following websites:

- www.accessfund.org
- www.ducttapethenbeer.com/bears-ears-education-center/
- www.bearscoalition.org
- www.bears.patagonia.com

—DEAN FLEMING



TOUCHSTONE
CLIMBING

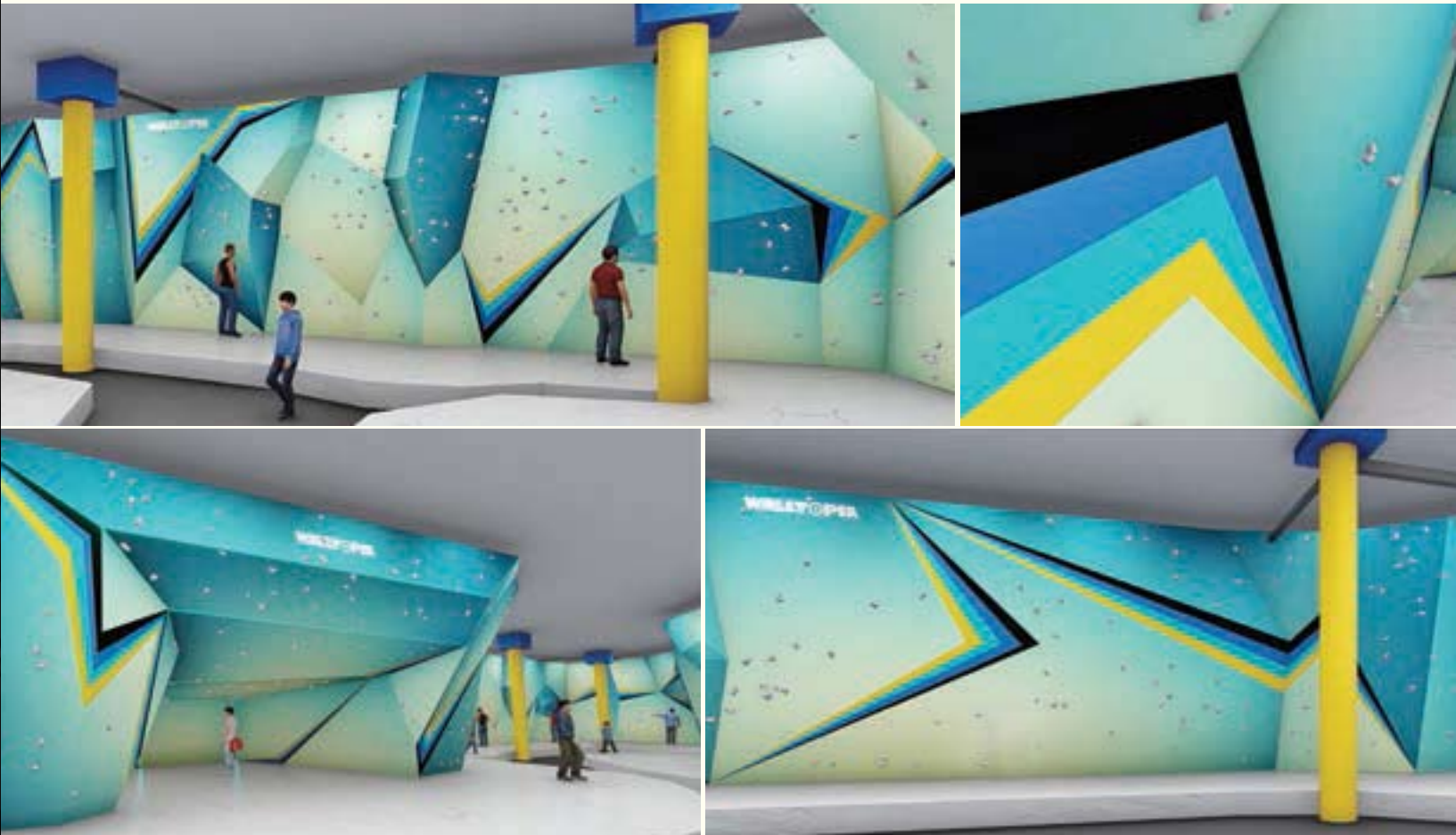
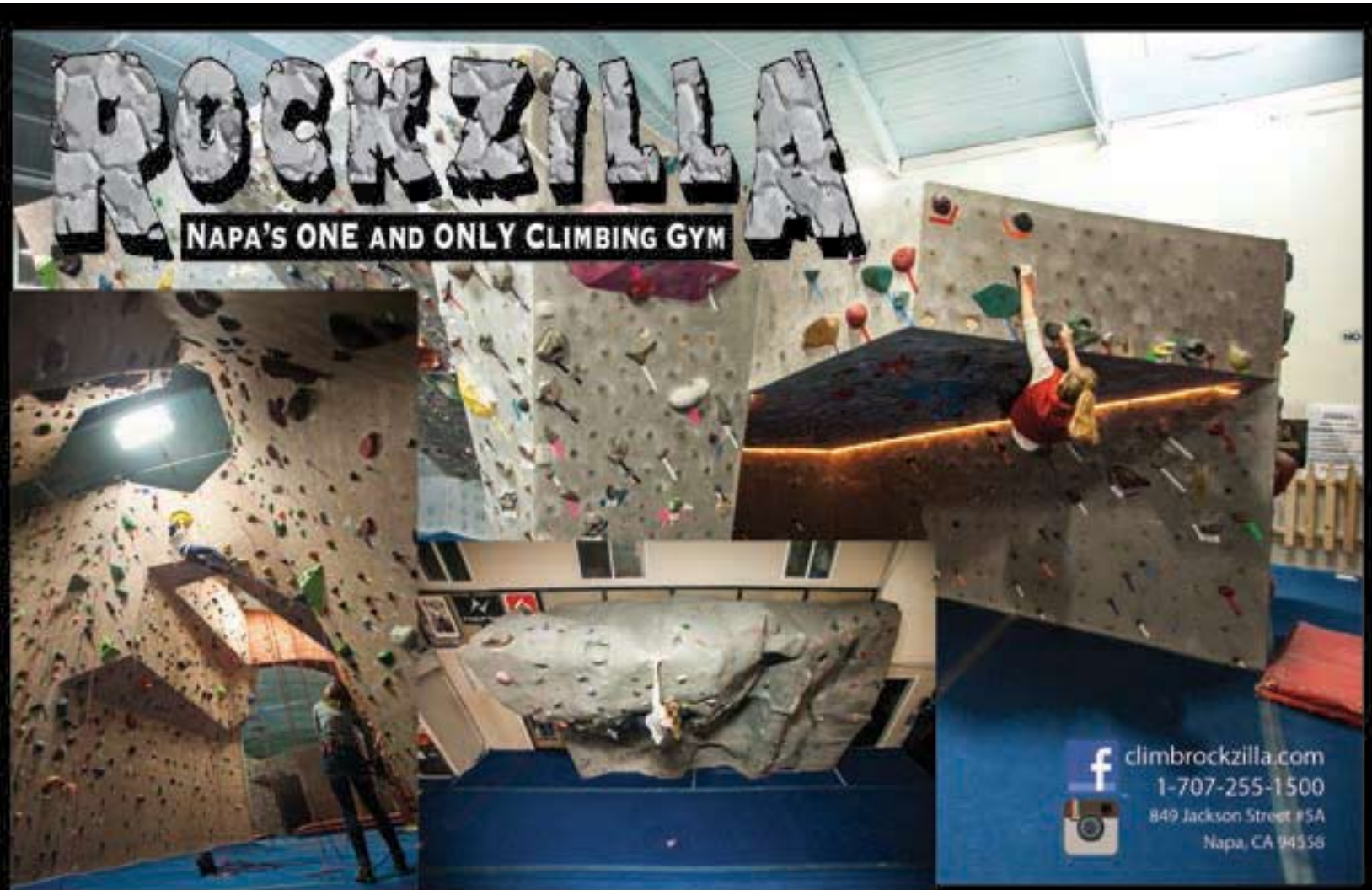
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THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE:
THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF LOCAL CLIMBING ORGANIZATIONS AND CLIMBING ACCESS

WHEN A LOCAL CLIMBING ACCESS ISSUE OCCURS, the first and best line of defense is almost always the local climbers who are familiar with the area and the issues. That is why a critical piece of the Access Fund’s work is encouraging, organizing, and empowering local climbers to join together into local climbing organizations.

Today, the Access Fund works with 117 local climbing advocacy organizations across the country. Over the past decade, Access Fund has worked to grow this network by nearly 70%—ensuring that when an access issue occurs in your backyard, there’s a qualified group of advocates there to help.

Local climbing organizations (LCOs) play a critical role in protecting America’s climbing. California has several impressive LCOs that work closely with Access Fund to tackle local access issues, steward their climbing areas, build relationships with landowners and managers, and educate and inspire their local climbing community.

THE PLAYERS:

There are numerous powerhouse LCOsand affiliate partners to the Access Fund in California, each of these LCOs add strength and a voice to our climbing community and focus their attention on climbing resources in their area.

Bay Area Climbers Coalition (BACC)

MISSION: The Bay Area Climbers Coalition is a volunteer-run 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization focused on preserving access to our local outdoor areas by actively fostering positive relationships with land managers, hosting stewardship events, and providing educational programming for the climbing community.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

- BACC Fixed Anchor Replacement Team went to work Rebolting at Castle Rock State Park
- Numerous volunteer adopt-a-crag events throughout the Bay area
- Co-hosted the Annual Access Fund Climber Advocate Summit in Oakland

Climbing Resource Advocates for Greater Sacramento (CRAGS)

MISSION: CRAGS works hard to protect and expand access to local crags, and serve as guardians of the environment and champions for wildlife. CRAGS focuses on education and outreach to represent the climbing community and are diplomats and activists for climbing.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Ongoing access, policy and stewardship work at Sugarloaf, Lovers Leap, Phantom Spires, Donner Summit, Cave Valley (Auburn Quarry), Rocklin Boulders
- Secured long term climbing access to Auburn Quarry and Rocklin Boulders
- Worked with Access Fund and Eldorado National Forest to execute a long term trail work plan at Lovers Leap

ALLIED CLIMBERS OF SAN DIEGO (ACSD)

MISSION: The Allied Climbers of San Diego (ACSD) is an environmentally responsible membership-based climbers’ advocacy organization dedicated to promoting and maintaining access to climbing and outdoor recreation. We are a California 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation which acts as a collective voice for balanced access rights of outdoor enthusiasts in and surrounding the San Diego region.

Project Highlights:

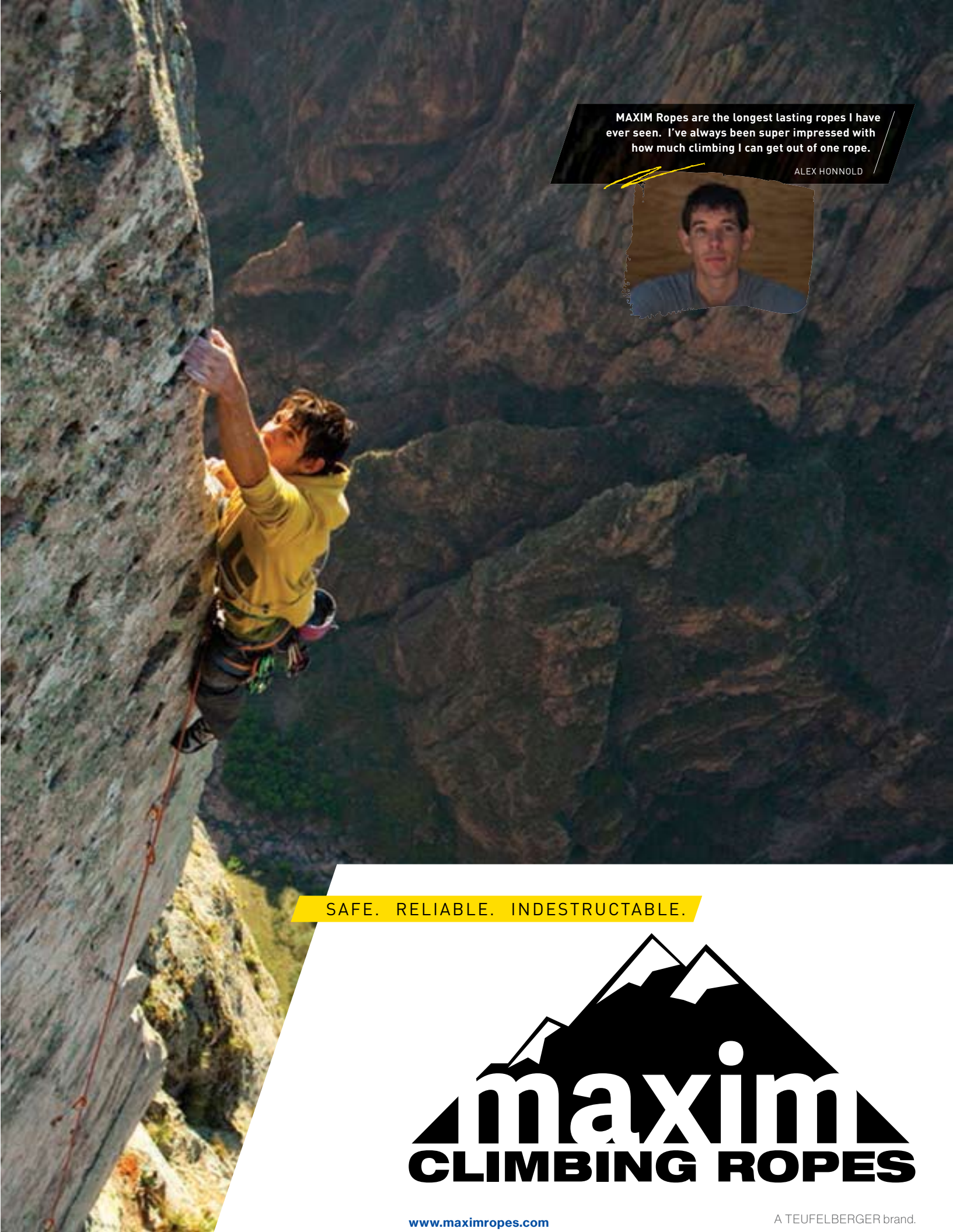
- Ongoing stewardship and graffiti removal throughout San Diego climbing areas
- Support policy work for climbing and trails in California State Parks
- Community education, bolt replacement and raptor management support

Friends of Joshua Tree (FOJT)

MISSION: Friends of Joshua Tree is a non-profit organization dedicated, to preserving the historical tradition of climbing in Joshua Tree National Park. Friends of Joshua Tree advocates, communicates, and encourages ethical and environmentally sound climbing practices, and works to shape park policy on climbing and climbing-related issues. Toward that end, Friends of Joshua Tree acts as the liaison between the climbing community and the National Park service.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Hosts the annual Climb Smart Festival
- Works with the National Park Service to establish and maintain trails in the Park
- Funding partner for Joshua Tree Search and Rescue
- Serves as National Park liaison for climbers to ensure long term climbing access



MAXIM Ropes are the longest lasting ropes I have ever seen. I’ve always been super impressed with how much climbing I can get out of one rope.

ALEX HONNOLD



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Friends of Pinnacles

Mission: Established in 1995, Friends of Pinnacles is an organization of rock climbers dedicated to preserving the natural resources at Pinnacles National Park, and climber’s access to those resources. Friends of Pinnacles will work cooperatively with the National Park Service, nonaffiliated climbers, other interest groups, and the public to:

- Reduce impact and rehabilitate high-use areas at the Pinnacles
- Provide for effective and appropriate management of climbing activities
- Provide for construction and maintenance of trails and facilities used by climbers
- Develop and distribute educational materials
- Generally promote the Leave No Trace (LNT) ethic of outdoor recreation

Friends of Pinnacles is a nonpartisan group which any climber may join without a requisite membership fee.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Leads re-bolting efforts at Pinnacles
- Support National Park in trail maintenance and stewardship projects
- Educate and communicate with climbers regarding regulations and seasonal closures

Southern California Mountaineers Association (SCMA)

MISSION: Southern California Mountaineers Association unites skilled climbers throughout the region to provide safe climbing partners and organized trips yearlong. In the SCMA, you can meet up with old friends or find new peers of tested and proven climbing knowledge and ability, giving you the confidence to branch out and climb at new crags with new climbing partners.The SCMA was founded in 1986, evolving from the rock climbing section of the Sierra Club since 1930’s – making it one of the oldest climbing clubs in the nation. New members are required to either pass a comprehensive evaluation climb that tests both their skill and safety techniques, or enroll in the club’s Rock Climbing Safety Course and then pass a series of evaluation climbs. SCMA has partnered with Access Fund to provide stewardship and access support to climbing areas in southern California.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Leading local efforts to reopen Big Rock at Lake Perris
- Supports the Climb Smart festival
- Unites climbers in southern California and plans climbing trips throughout the year for members

Yosemite Climbing Association (YCA)

Mission: Yosemite Climbing Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and protecting Yosemite’s rich climbing heritage and making it available for public viewing and interpretation. Ken Yager, President of Yosemite Climbing Association, and many other dedicated Valley Climbers have amassed several thousand artifacts that are now ready for public viewing and interpretation.Yosemite Valley climbing has had a huge impact and worldwide influence on the international climbing community. Many techniques and tools used on remote peaks around the world were first developed in the Valley. For a long time Yosemite has been a training ground for climbers and people have come from all corners of the globe to test their skills. Sadly, most of these visiting climbers have a better understanding of Yosemite Valley climbing history than American climbers do. We would like to change that!

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Organizes Yosemite Facelift every year with the National Park Service
- Educates climbers and visitors on the history of climbing in the Valley
- Supports local climbing policy work

Idyllwild Climber’s Alliance

MISSION: Our alliance is a grass roots organization of climbers dedicated to preserving the climbing areas of Idyllwild, to improving access to the crags and to educate those who use the area about the issues affecting our climbing past present and future. We do service projects (clean-ups and trail work), climb, reach out to other climbers offering them fun and education, and always have a good time around the campfire afterwards.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Ongoing stewardship work to Idyllwild crags
- Hosts annual Idyllwild Climbers Festival

Southern Sierra Climbers Association

MISSION: Securing and maintaining access to climbing areas in the Southern Sierra and unifying climbers into an effective, responsible, and service oriented community.

Bishop Area Climbers Coalition

MISSION: As the Bishop Area Climbers Coalition, we believe we have the responsibility to care for the places we love and the people we share them with. By providing a unified voice, we highlight the contributions of rock climbers to our community and share in the stewardship of the areas in which we climb. By engaging with land managers, land-owners and other community groups, we provide an important resource to keep our activities sustainable, and promote responsible use of the land.



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ACCESS

Access Fund Support for LCOs

- ACCESS FUND SUPPORTS THESE LOCAL GROUPS WITH:
- Grants for start-up expenses, stewardship work, climber education, research, and more
 - On-demand assistance with local access issues and land manager negotiations
 - Consulting on political, legal, and regulatory issues with federal, state, and local entities
 - Loans to quickly buy climbing areas when there is an imminent threat
 - Best in class advocacy tools to help make local climbers voices’ heard
 - Education conferences that convene the climbing advocacy community to learn from each other and increase effectiveness
 - Conservation Team visits to help mitigate climber impacts and collaborate on strategies for more sustainable climbing areas.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

Whether you are new to town, a lifelong local or just passing through on a climbing trip check and see what LCO is near you. There are many ways you can get involved and support access projects in your area or when you are on a climbing trip. Many LCOs regularly host volunteer stewardship projects and fun events at your local gym or crag. You can also take it to the next level and get involved as a board member!

Look up you closest LCO here: <https://www.accessfund.org/meet-the-access-fund/our-network/local-climbing-organizations>

Sign up for volunteer events in your area: <https://www.accessfund.org/news-and-events/event-calendar>

Want to start an LCO in your area? Visit: <https://www.accessfund.org/learn/for-advocates/running-an-lco>

ABOUT THE ACCESS FUND:

Access Fund is a national advocacy organization whose mission keeps climbing areas open and conserves the climbing environment. A 501(c)(3) non-profit supporting and representing over 6.8 million climbers nationwide in all forms of climbing—rock climbing, ice climbing, mountaineering, and bouldering—the Access Fund is a US climbing organization with over 15,000 members and over 117 affiliates. The Access Fund provides climbing management expertise, stewardship, project specific funding, and educational outreach. For more information about the Access Fund, visit www.accessfund.org.

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Ben Pope, 2005

BETA

ROUTE The Minotaur		GRADE V5	LENGTH 18'
ROCK TYPE Marble	STYLE Boulder	PROTECTION Crashpads	
LOCATION Columbia	APPROACH ~15 mins	DESCENT Walk-off	
SEASON Winter	GUIDEBOOK Columbia Bouldering, by Dean Fleming & Daniel Forbes		

DESCRIPTION

In 1852 Mexican miners discovered a chunk of gold about the size of a grown man's fist in the marble rocks that surround what is now a Historic State Park in Columbia, California. In the following years the miners used high pressure jets of water to carve the marble rocks in an effort to extract the gold, a method known as hydro mining. This process has sculpted the rocks in Columbia, forming some of the most unusual and thought-provoking rock features in California.

Rising steeply above a rugged landing formed by a historic mining tailings pile, the

horned spire that is the *Minotaur* overhangs just enough so that a penny dropped from the apex of the boulder would land directly on a jagged rock spire and then roll into a 20 foot deep pit. The smooth marble found on the overhanging belly of this boulder has brilliant hues of blue, ivory and orange, yet it also rounds and rolls across the face, forcing climbers into precarious layback positions on slippery side-pulls. When going for the top-out on this boulder, make sure you have a good stack of pads and some friends spotting you atop the steep rock that crowds the landing zone.

Trevor Carter on the Labyrinth classic, *The Minotaur*, (V5).



San Juan Mountain Guides operates in some of the most demanding and extreme ice and alpine terrain the world. From daily guiding in the Ouray Ice Park, to ascents of classic ice lines such as the Talisman and Ames Ice Hose - BlueWater Ropes provide us with amazing versatility, durability, and longevity for all of our guiding. BlueWater's commitment to quality is second to none, and is the reason we feature their ropes on all of our programs.



NATE DISSER OWNER | DIRECTOR | GUIDE SAN JUAN MOUNTAIN GUIDES LLC

Photo of Nate Disser climbing by Brett Wohlman

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“CASPER”

Gena Wood and her 2013 Ford Transit Connect

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

GW: I found it on Anchorage Craigslist after having a quarter-life crisis about how I would get back to the lower 48. I had to convince the people at the dealership that they should give an unemployed homeless person a loan, and then I paid way too much.

Why did you name him Casper?

Because he came to me after multiple vans died and I finally wasn't worried about this one breaking down, so he seemed like a friendly ghost. I went through two vans before I found this one – A Honda Odyssey named Homer and a Toyota Previa that broke down before it even got a name. RIP. I also named him Casper because he looks like a proper work van and so hopefully I can go unnoticed while stealth camping.

How does Casper do off road?

Horrible, no cliffs of insanity for Casper.

What do you have in your van that no one else has?

Three books about mushroom hunting.

What was your best trip so far in Casper?

It was pretty nice to get home from Alaska. I guess you could call that a trip.

Have you done any modifications?

I just threw a bed in the back, made a little kitchen and built a bookshelf to store all my mushroom hunting books. I guess the good thing about buying a massively overpriced vehicle is the fact that you don't really have to do too much work to it.

Where is the best place you've slept so far?

Two weeks in Indian Creek, or at the Liard hot springs in Northern British Columbia.

What's the best thing about Casper?

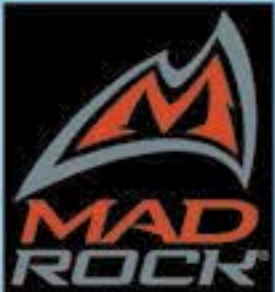
It's the most reliable vehicle I've ever had. The gas mileage is good too, about 25mpg.

What's the worst thing?

It's an automatic transmission and I would much rather have a manual transmission. Also, the reliability comes at a cost – it was really, really expensive. I've recently resorted to full-time dumpster diving to pay for Casper. Actually, he's for sale. Make me an offer.

REMORA
All Around Performance Slipper

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



Defined by Passion
MadRock.Com

MAD ROCK DRONE

{ \$129 }

In the world of high performance climbing shoes, fit is everything. If you have square, boxy feet or slim, narrow feet and you've tried to wear certain high performance shoes, you've certainly been disappointed to find parts of the shoe to be un-conforming - the heel cup might be too baggy or the toe box might be a little too tight. This is why climbing shoe companies have historically offered men's and women's versions of their most popular shoes. Yet in reality the shape of a person's foot seldom has anything to do with their gender or gender identity, as many men have narrow or slim feet and many women have boxy or high volume feet. Until recently, whether you identified as a man or women or other, if you had slim or narrow feet you were forced to wear a shoe covered in hot pink or purple accents and flower patterns. And let's face it; even the most girly girls usually don't want that shit on their feet when they're crushing V14. Thankfully Mad Rock has come to the rescue with their new non-gender specific High Volume and Low Volume Drone.

With a downturned and twisted profile for added power and precision, a pointed toe box, stretchy and breathable tongue, 3d expandable molded heel for a versatile fit made with climbing grade rubber, Science Friction 3.0 rubber sole and arch flex, the new Drone is Mad Rock's best performing shoe for steep, powerful climbing. The high volume version offers a wider toe box, a bigger heel cup and a boxier profile. The low volume version offers the opposite. Both versions are vegan friendly and reasonably priced.



HIPPYTREE PILSNER JACKET

{ \$110 }



It took us about three days in the desert to figure out why HippyTree decided to call this coat the Pilsner Jacket. Somewhere near Joshua Tree, nearing sunset, we decided to walk out to a cluster of rocks to do a little evening scrambling. Per-usual, we all starting stuffing cans of cheap beer into our pockets for the walk. And you guessed it; the dual front lower pockets of the Pilsner Jacket have been crafted with top openings that have each been perfectly tailored to snugly hold cans of beer. While no further review of this jacket is necessary, we'll give it anyways.

Although not quite as burly as your work jacket, the heavy weight canvas outer with corduroy collar on the Pilsner Jacket does resist abrasion quite well and can withstand at least a year of heavy scrambling through rough desert monzogranite. The yarn dyed flannel lining isn't super warm, but with appropriate layering makes for a very comfortable and casual mid-weight jacket. The dual chest pockets are stylish and functional, but the front lower pockets with top and side openings are definitely the highlight. Two interior chest pockets hold your wallet or phone close. The Pilsner is finished with engraved buttons, satin lined sleeves and 100% cotton exterior with 50% cotton 50% polyester lining.



METOLIUS ENVIRO HANGER

{ \$4.50 }

Two years ago we stood at the base of a near-vertical slope of desert sand about to watch the famed King of the Hammers motorcycle race outside of Joshua Tree, California; a desert dirt bike race where riders are forced to tackle some of the gnarliest terrain in North America. When the buzzer sounded, a tightly packed group of over 100 riders opened their throttles and slammed into the pristine desert hillside. Boulders were flying down the slope as chaparral and cactus and desert flowers were pulverized under the spinning tires of the bikes. Riders lost control and sent their machines flying down the hillside. Amidst the mayhem, I couldn't help but wonder; "if this kind of destruction is acceptable in these sports, why are we still fighting over climbing impacts like bolt placement and replacement?" The answer: because two wrongs don't make a right, and we can always do better.



Generally speaking, the placement of protection bolts for rock climbing has seldom been proven to significantly impact cliff side ecosystems; in fact, the placement of anchor bolts that allow climbers to lower or rappel can usually prevent major erosion by reducing the number of climbers that scramble atop the delicate environments found at the tops of cliffs. Yet aesthetically speaking, bolts do have a very significant visual impact and can easily detract from a person's wilderness experience. When applicable, reducing the number of bolts placed in wilderness areas is a great step in the right direction. Yet when bolts are needed for protection or anchors, camouflaged bolts are another fantastic option. For this application, Metolius offers powder coated stainless steel bolt hangers made in two different colors to blend in with rock surfaces; gray and tan. While these bolts are not designed for use in marine environments, we found them to work and blend perfectly during most inland applications on a wide variety of rock types.

PETZL MICRO TRAXION

{ \$119.95 }



The progress-capture pulley (or wall-hauler) has been in use since the mid-1980s and has proven to be an incredibly effective tool for hauling bags up routes. On difficult and long multi-pitch free climbs or short overnight walls, a progress-capture pulley is insanely convenient for hauling small bags, yet until the past decade the only models in existence were large and bulky, designed to handle huge loads while hauling on multi-day walls. In the early 2000s Petzl designed a wall-hauler that fits this use in both functionality and in regards to size and weight, the Micro Traxion, a smaller version of their already reduced Mini Traxion, and significantly smaller than the original Traxion progress-capture pulley.

The Petzl Micro Traxion is a lightweight (85g), compact progress-capture pulley that is exceptionally efficient (91%) thanks to its sealed ball bearings. The cam can also be locked in the open position so the device can be used as a simple pulley, which we found very convenient when lowering loads (using the pulley as a re-direct with a belay device) or zipping over the downhill portions of tyrolean traverses. The best thing about the Micro Traxion is its size and weight, which in testing we found to be very convenient (we actually brought the device with us on shorter routes where hauling a bag is not a huge part of the experience). We also found the Micro Traxion to function well when attached to the back of the leader's harness and threaded with the haul line for the purpose of hauling up a few extra pieces of gear during slow aid pitches. The worst thing about the Micro Traxion is its price tag; a whopping \$119.95 for a piece of gear you might use a few times per-year.

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Ultralight Master Cams



Sizes 00-8



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www.metoliusclimbing.com





GOLDEN STATE GALLERY



PREVIOUS PAGE

CLIMBER Kyle Queener
ROUTE *Unknown*, Table Lands
PHOTOGRAPHER Dean Fleming

ABOVE

Jeremiah Kahmoson pulls a set of nuts out of the ashes of his garage after the Tubbs Fire incinerated his neighborhood in Santa Rosa's Coffey Park. Fourteen miles away, the same fire burned the popular volcanic sport crags of Mt. St. Helena in Robert Louis Stevenson State Park. In October, wildfires in Napa and Sonoma Counties destroyed 9,000 structures and killed more than 48 people.
PHOTOGRAPHER Jerry Dodrill

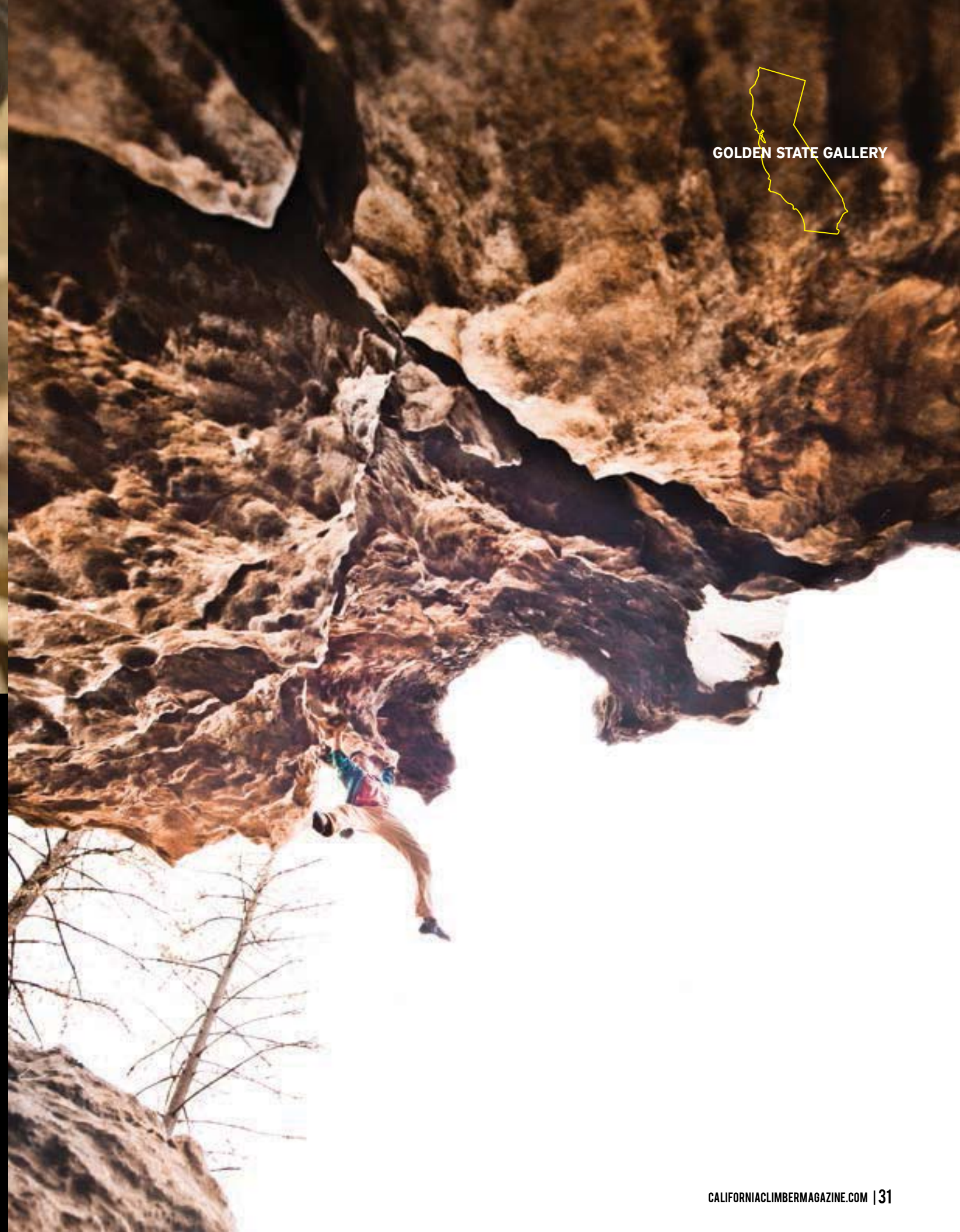
RIGHT

CLIMBER Richard Miranda
ROUTE *Falkenstein Flake* (V2), Columbia
PHOTOGRAPHER Dean Fleming

NEXT SPREAD

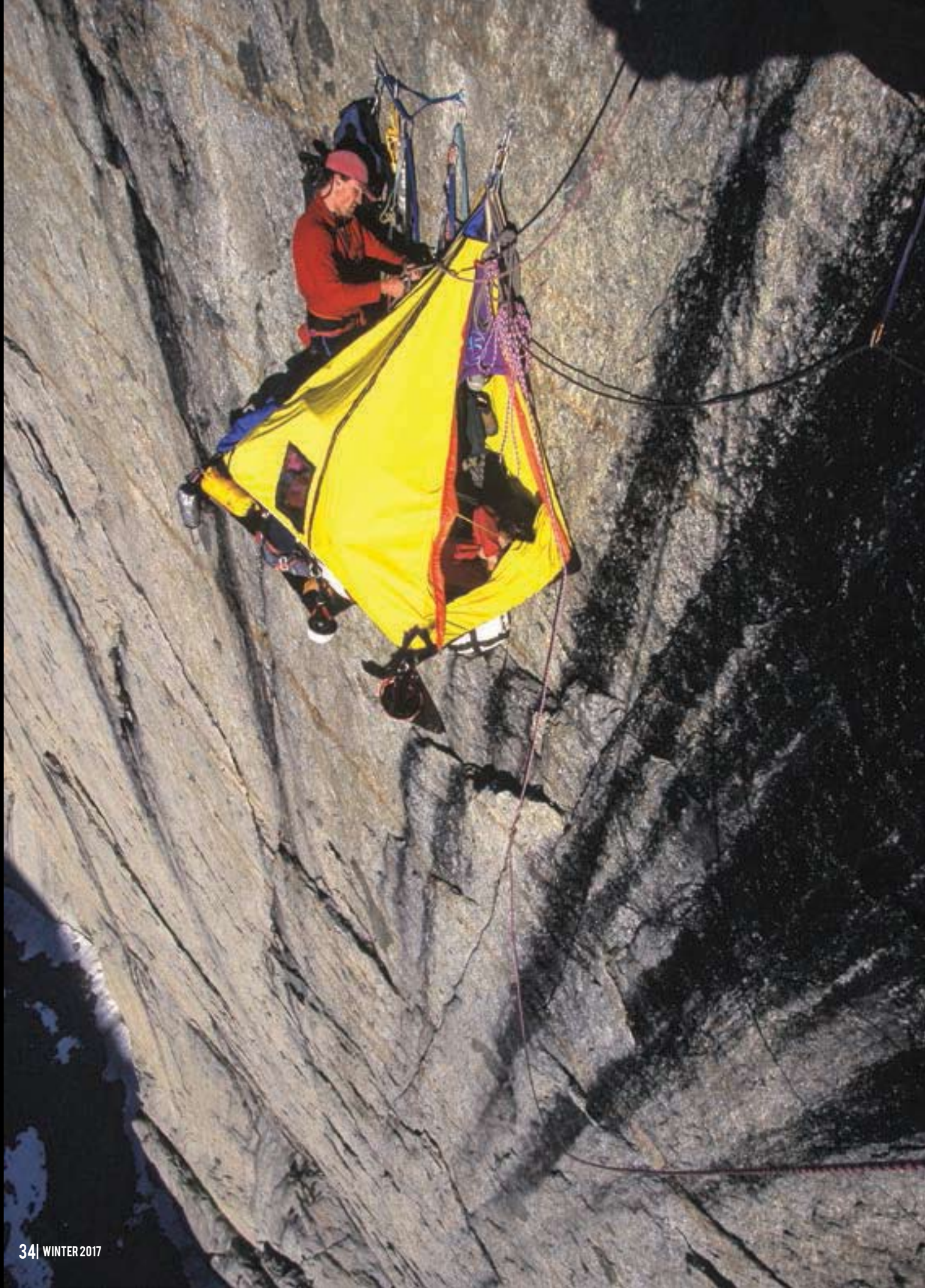
CLIMBER Ethan Pringle
ROUTE *Great White* (5.12b/c), Promontory
PHOTOGRAPHER Jim Thornburg

GOLDEN STATE GALLERY





GOLDEN STATE GALLERY



Kevin Daniels during the first ascent of *Grendel* (VI 5.10 A4) on the southeast face of Mount Proboscis in the Canadian Yukon with Chris Righter, Greg Epperson and Chris Kalous. The route follows a thin seam between Yukon Tears and the Original Route. The team climbed over eight days, capsule-style, drilling only eight rivets. The team attempted a second new route but got shut down by 16 consecutive days of snow and rain.

CALIFORNIA
CLIMBER:

KEVIN DANIELS

INTERVIEW + DEAN FLEMING // IMAGES + GREG EPPERSON

Balancing a small glass of whiskey in his right hand, with crutches under his arms for balance, Kevin used his good leg to kick open two large French doors. He then crutched swiftly from a brick patio through the doorway and into his home in Bishop, California. Smoke from chicken legs frying on the grill outside drifted into the living room as Kevin rummaged through a tool drawer in the kitchen. “Does anyone have a pair of pliers on them?” he asked. Someone did. Moments later Kevin had removed an enormous brace from his knee to reveal a series of three-inch long incisions held together with surgical staples. Kevin downed the last of his whiskey, grabbed the pliers with steady hands, and then, without hesitation, began ripping the staples from his knee.

<~~~>

In his over thirty-year career as a traditional climber, California native Kevin Daniels has established and repeated some of the boldest blue-collar rock climbs in North America. Daniels grew up climbing in Joshua Tree where a stout and prolific tradition of bold, often scarcely protected climbing has prevailed since the early 1950s. Daniels has since honored the style of the traditional ascent; establishing routes from the ground up into unknown and potentially unsafe terrain. Through his careers as a climber, dirt bike racer and business owner, Daniels has always believed in honesty, respect and a sense of self-reliability that often seems lost in today’s climbing culture. Daniels holds himself and others to high standards in both business and athletics, which has resulted in a number of injuries and infamous conflicts.

In 2013 Daniels was forced to take a break from climbing while rehabbing from his 17th major surgery to replace a missing ACL in his knee. Although climbing has always been a passion for Daniels, after 30-years of climbing and working in the industry, Daniels became more and more tired, jaded and disillusioned with the sport. As the sport and the industry have entered the mainstream in recent years, Daniels has sought new adventures and a sense of freedom by rekindling his childhood passion for dirt bike racing. Over the past five years Daniels has taken his love of riding to Mexico, where he competes in the SCORE Ironman Class (riding the whole race) in the World famous Baja 250, Baja 500 and Baja 1000 races. In 2015 Daniels won the Ironman Class Championship and has stood on the podium many times.

The following interview was conducted at Daniels’ home office in Bishop, California where he runs Fixe Hardware and Kevin Daniels Publishing, about a month before he drove south to race the 2017 Baja 1000.



Daniels climbing *Freaky Deaky* on Chimney Spire, Chimney Rocks, Sequoia National Park.

“MY DAD WAS A DESERT RACER, AND THAT’S KIND OF HOW I GOT INTO RIDING MOTORCYCLES AS A KID.

I wanted to be a dirt bike racer and that’s all that I knew. But one day he said that we could not afford to do it, so we sold all the bikes and that was the end of that. My parents did not structure their lives around entertaining me. But the same year one of my good friends Tim, his dad, took us out to Joshua Tree. I was in seventh grade. We stayed at Ryan Campground and I think the first route we did was the *Black Tide* (5.7). And then it was on, that was all I wanted to do. I was a rock climber. So I went as much as I could with those guys, but I didn’t know anyone else that climbed. Then we moved to Huntington Beach and I met a guy named Chris the first year of High School, who was a surfer and interested in climbing and he had a car. So we started to go to Joshua Tree and Idyllwild. At that point we really didn’t have any mentors. We kind of just made it up. We had some really legitimate close calls.”

“I REMEMBER ONE TIME WE WERE CLIMBING AT SPORTS CHALLENGE ROCK, AND THERE WERE A BUNCH OF DUDES CLIMBING THE BEAVER, AND WE WERE WATCHING THEM.

Chris went up and set up a toprope on Clean and Jerk. We were hanging all over it and falling, we couldn’t even really get started. Then a woman came over and asked if she could climb on our rope. She made it to the top and then started cursing and yelling at us and then just dropped our rope down. All of the sudden the rope just came falling down. She downclimbed off the back because all Joshua Tree climbers at the time were soloists. Anchors did not really exist and soloing was required to set up top ropes and get off formations. The caliber and quality of climbers was much higher. She then started yelling at us, telling us that we were going to kill ourselves and that we could have killed her. She left and went and told the other guys. One of them came over and said “hey you guys really need to get some instruction or something. But when you set up top ropes, you need to run the rope through carabiners; you can’t run the rope through the slings.”

I WANTED TO BE A DIRT BIKE RACER AND THAT’S ALL THAT I KNEW.

“THE FIRST PEOPLE THAT I MET OUT THERE WERE DAVE MAYVILL AND TODD GORDON.

Dave was probably the first one to really take me climbing. I always worked in construction, but every Friday night we would get in the car to go climbing somewhere. Then I met a guy named Herb Leger. Herb was the first person to ever put a hand drill in my hands when we went and did some new routes in the Sierra. Herb was probably one of my first mentors that got me psyched on doing new routes. Through Herb I met a lot of the guys who were doing routes in the Kern Canyon and at the Needles, and I started climbing at the Needles as much as I could.

The person that really inspired me the most was Ron Carson; he’s probably the best climber that I’ve ever climbed with. Those guys at that time thought that how they were climbing was the most important thing. It wasn’t as much about what they were climbing, but how they did it. It was super interesting to me, because those guys were super aesthetic and super bold. So that was what climbing became to me. And when I would travel I would always look for those historic routes that would inspire me. And for about 30 years that’s all that I wanted to do.”

Daniels on the first ascent of the highball, *Act of Contrition* (V3 R) in Joshua Tree.

“THE FIRST PLACE THAT I STARTED REALLY PUTTING UP GOOD ROUTES WAS AT QUEEN MOUNTAIN IN JOSHUA TREE.

For a few seasons I would just go up there with my girlfriend Beth and a few other people and just do new routes on new rock. That is how I developed an eye for new routes. I would still go to specific places to climb specific routes, but the whole walk there and the whole walk out I was looking for obvious lines. At that time there were still lots of legitimate lines like obvious cracks that needed to be there. I didn’t necessarily do a lot of face climbing unless there were enough features to hook or find stances. The whole Valhalla area in Kern Canyon was also really good and really fun. Then I started bouldering a little bit and I remembered all these boulders that I had seen in Joshua tree while scouring for new routes. My friend Eric Jackson got me into bouldering one season and I was like “fuck dude, I know where all these boulders are.” It was really fun to re-visit all these areas with that in mind.”

“WHEN MT. CHARLESTON WAS FIRST DEVELOPED I WENT UP THERE A BUNCH BECAUSE I KIND OF DECIDED THAT I WANTED TO TRY TO CLIMB A 5.13.

That was fun but it got pretty boring. I thought that if I put enough time and energy in, then I’m going to climb this thing, and then I guess I could climb a 5.13b, then a 5.13c and so on. I quickly lost interest. I realized that it was much more about discipline and fitness and repetition, but I was much more interested in the mental aspect of climbing and being creative. I wanted to see how little I could get by on and how controlled I could keep my state of mind.”

“There was a time when people developing climbs never considered if routes were safe or unsafe or runout or whatever; because there were just not very many people climbing and no one really cared. And we never really thought that anyone would repeat these routes, so we never really gave a shit if the bolts were in the right place or not. I would just look up and say “that’s a cool feature,” and I knew if I could get to that feature then I could get a piece of gear or place a bolt or whatever. I wasn’t looking at a cliff and thinking “how many routes can we get on this cliff?” It was just about connecting features and never giving a shit about what anyone else thought or if anyone else would climb them. It was just about who I was with and what we could do. We also just didn’t want to stop and place bolts because it’s a pain in the ass. I only had so much time, so the fewer bolts we placed the more routes we could do.”

“And you know it’s interesting now to hear people talk about all these so-called unsafe routes that need to be upgraded and retro-bolted, but I don’t hear about a bunch of fucking people dying all the time. I don’t see the bodies piling up at the base. Until I really see a bunch of people with broken legs and people really suffering, I’m going to call bullshit on all of it.”

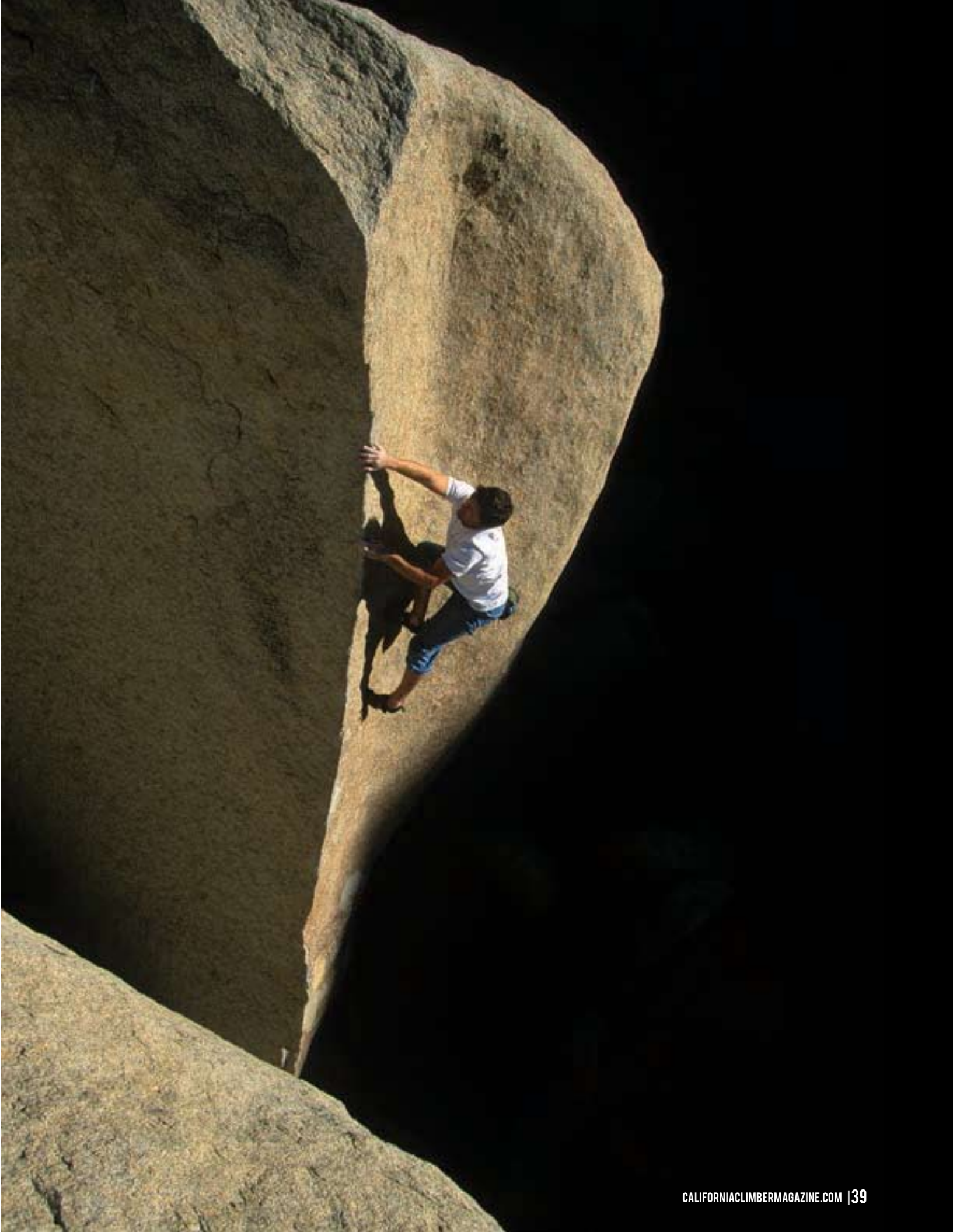
I PRETTY MUCH JUST SAY “HEY, FUCK YOU.” AT LEAST FIVE TIMES A WEEK, I TELL PEOPLE JUST TO FUCK OFF.

“I GREW UP CLIMBING IN JOSHUA TREE, WHERE THE GEAR IS EITHER GOOD AND YOU CAN GO FOR IT, OR YOU KNEW YOU COULDN’T FALL, SO YOU DIDN’T FALL, OR YOU DOWN-CLIMBED.

Those were the parameters of the adventure. It was really simple, and none of that stuff that enters a lot of climbers’ minds today ever entered our minds. It was just a luxury to go climbing. We weren’t under any kind of microscope, there weren’t a lot of bushes being killed, no one cared we were there, and there were no land issues, no dogs, no anything. We just went out and did what we wanted. Kind of like what I do now on my motorcycle. Now I kind of complain or this or that, but really I think that I was extremely lucky to have a luxury that most climbers today do not have. I’m sure their climbing experience is just as good, it’s just different. But I do think that is a big part of the reason I transitioned from climbing into different sports.”

“I HAD A LOT OF WORK DONE TO SHOULDERS AND STUFF, AND THEN A COUPLE YEARS AGO I HAD A MAJOR ACL SURGERY TO REPLACE AN ACL THAT I HAD REMOVED AS A KID.

But the graph didn’t take, so after six months they did another surgery with another doctor. During the rehab the doctor told me that I really needed to stop climbing for a number of months. So Mike, the doctor, suggested that I get a trail bike to go explore. The next day I went out and bought a bike, and it was the first time that I had been back on a motorcycle in about 30 years. Six months later I was in Baja getting ready to race the Baja 500. Pre-running the race course that year I fell on some whoops and broke my clavicle. But the next season I went back and got second place. It was an unexpected turn of events in my life, but I hadn’t been psyched on climbing in a number of years, so it was a nice alternative with different people, new stuff to learn and new challenges.”





“IN MY OPINION CLIMBING IS REALLY CONTROLLED, STATIC, AND A CONSTANT DECISION MAKING PROCESS.

But with speed it's a little bit of a crap shoot. You can't ride a motorcycle for 500 or 1,000 miles without crashing. And I think that part is very rewarding to me. And that was also the part about traditional climbing that really appealed to me. You're not always sure what's around the corner and you're never really sure what is going to happen.”

“I CONSIDER MYSELF TO BE A 5.10 CLIMBER. BUT TO ME THAT MEANS THAT I CAN GO TO ANY AREA IN THE WORLD AND CLIMB ANY KIND OF 5.10 YOU PUT IN FRONT OF ME.

I am a climber. I climb rock, ice, mixed routes, slabs, walls, mountains and boulders. The onsite is the objective. No information, no Youtube, just skill and commitment. I believe Clint Eastwood said “A man's got to know his limitations.”

“I REALLY BELIEVE THAT THERE IS A RIGHT WAY AND A WRONG WAY TO DO THINGS, AND THAT IS MY MORAL COMPASS.

As the industry has grown and gone the direction that everything does, I've just become more and more jaded and disillusioned with all of it. And I've worked hard enough that I really don't have to give a fuck anymore. And so that's interesting, because people will call me on a daily basis and they just start complaining over the phone before they even introduce themselves or say “hi, how's it going?” I think in a way I'm a really half-assed business man, because I really don't give a fuck about it. Folks want Amazon, where the customer is always right because Amazon has no soul and money is God. At my companies people work, climb, ride, laugh, smile and make mistakes.”

“I make stuff that saves peoples' lives. And I'll have people calling me up after sending me a cam that's just fucking jacked and totally complaining and telling me that the company sucks and that the product is defective. But I know exactly what they have done to the cam because I've fucked up every kind of cam that exists. I talk to climbers on a weekly basis that do not own or use passive protection. And you'd think that they would realize that this thing just saved their lives? I would just look at the cam and say, “damn, for \$50 I just did something that is completely self-serving, and put myself in a situation where I should have died, but I didn't die.”

PREVIOUS

Daniels making the first ascent of *Thermopylae*, Chimney Rock Spire, Sequoia National Park.

RIGHT

Daniels inching through a rarely repeated Bill Russell offwidth boulder problem in the Druid Stones, near Bishop.

NEXT PAGE

Daniels racing the 2017 Baja 1000.

IMAGE + ART EUGENIO

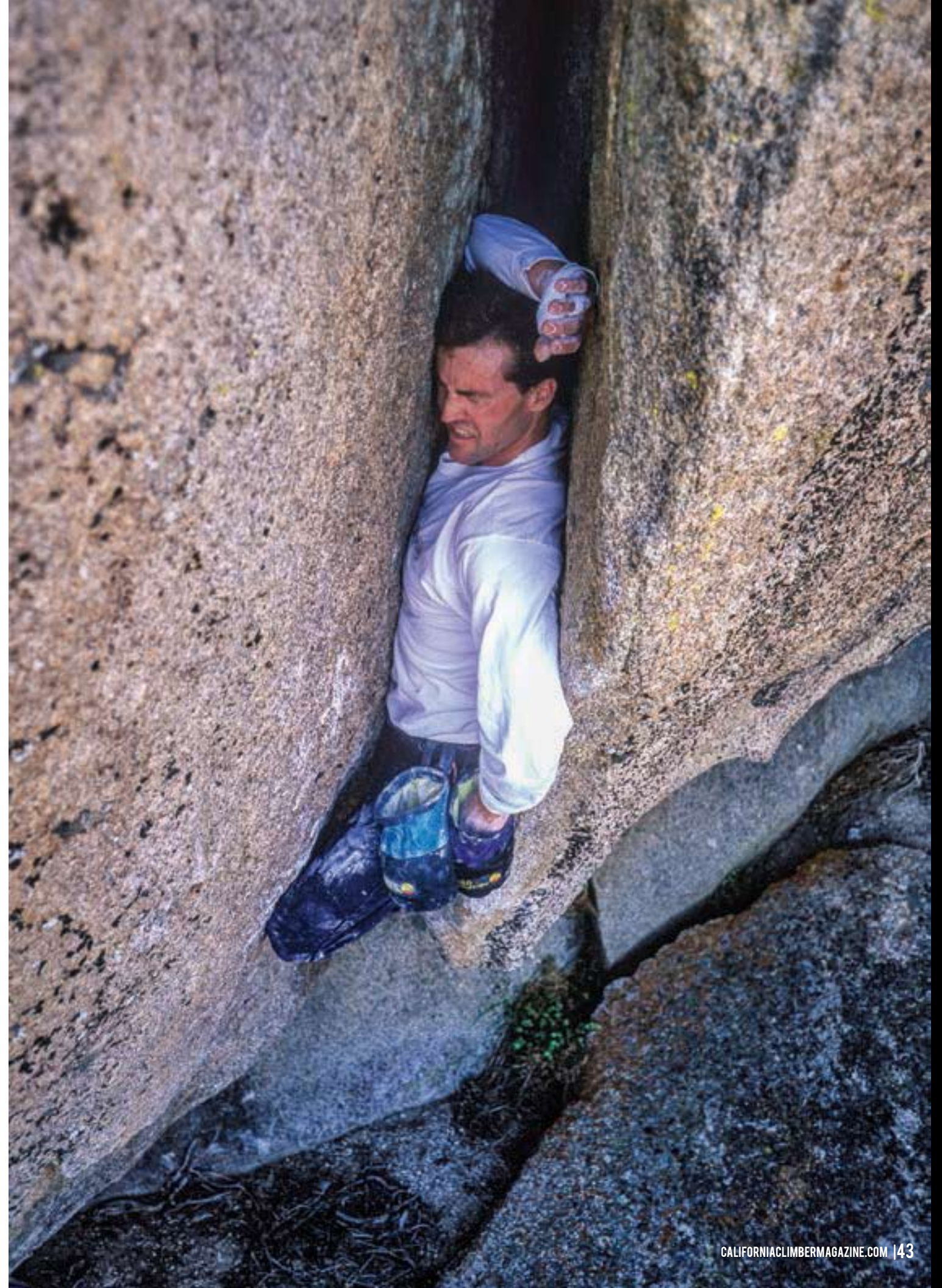
IT WAS AN OFF-HAND COMMENT THAT I NEVER THOUGHT ANYTHING OF, UNTIL UNDER-COVER AGENTS RAIDED MY SHOP IN SANTA ANNA.

“DEEP DOWN INSIDE I DO CARE.

Over the past 26 years through Climb-It Holds, Cassin USA, Fixe Hardware and K Daniels Publishing I have given away more gear to the re-bolting efforts and the ASCA, per-the amount of money that my business makes, than anyone else in the industry. And sometimes I tell these people that if they had just called me and introduced themselves and been kind and honest with their story, I probably would have just given them a free cam. But I constantly get in these little moral conflicts with people who are not honest and I pretty much just say “hey, fuck you.” At least five times a week, I tell people just to fuck off.”

“AND I JUST DON'T FUCKING CARE ANYMORE.

And I don't care what they do, or what they say on the internet or whatever. I'll even tell them “this is where I live and if you really want to take this up with me, roll on by.” I drove to Colorado one time from Bishop because I was so pissed off that I was going to kick this guy's ass. But I do remember driving and thinking “woah, this might be a little out of hand, I might need a lifestyle change.” It does seem like a bit of a black hole, and sometimes it's just time for a person to move on and do something else with their lives. It's a fucking tidal wave, and you can only stay on the outside for so long.”





“BUT FROM THE BEGINNING, I REALLY DIDN’T CARE WHAT PEOPLE THOUGHT.

I was pretty confrontational and somewhat angry too. At the Outdoor Retailer trade show I remember trying hard to get a good location for our [Climb-It Holds & Fixe Hardware] booth in the climbing section. But after a number of years I still had a really shitty location. And the producers always had reasons for it. But then a new company (Franklin Holds) came in and got a prime location right in the middle of the show. I remember calling my sales agents for the trade show and saying “hey, what the fuck is with this booth in the center of the show?” She gave me a bunch of bullshit, so I said something like “what do I have to do to get a good spot for my booth? Do I have to blow this place up?” It was an off-hand comment that I never thought anything of, until about a month later when under-cover agents including the Bomb Squad and bomb dogs raided my shop in Santa Anna.”

“THERE WERE ABOUT THREE OR FOUR PEOPLE WORKING THAT DAY WHEN THE AGENTS CAME IN WITH DOGS AND GUNS DRAWN.

In about five seconds there were eight to ten agents in the warehouse. They had us all separated when an agent said that a pipe bomb had gone off in an alley near the Warren Miller headquarters, and Warren Miller owned the Outdoor Retailer trade show. When they interviewed people at Warren Miller, my agent had told them that I had threatened to blow the place up. They also had a search warrant for my parents’ house, so they dragged us all over to my parents place. I remember my mom opening the door in a bath robe and then offering the agents cups of coffee. I was banned from the OR shows and had to attend under false names for years.”

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“I NEVER WANTED TO BE A DIRTBAG.

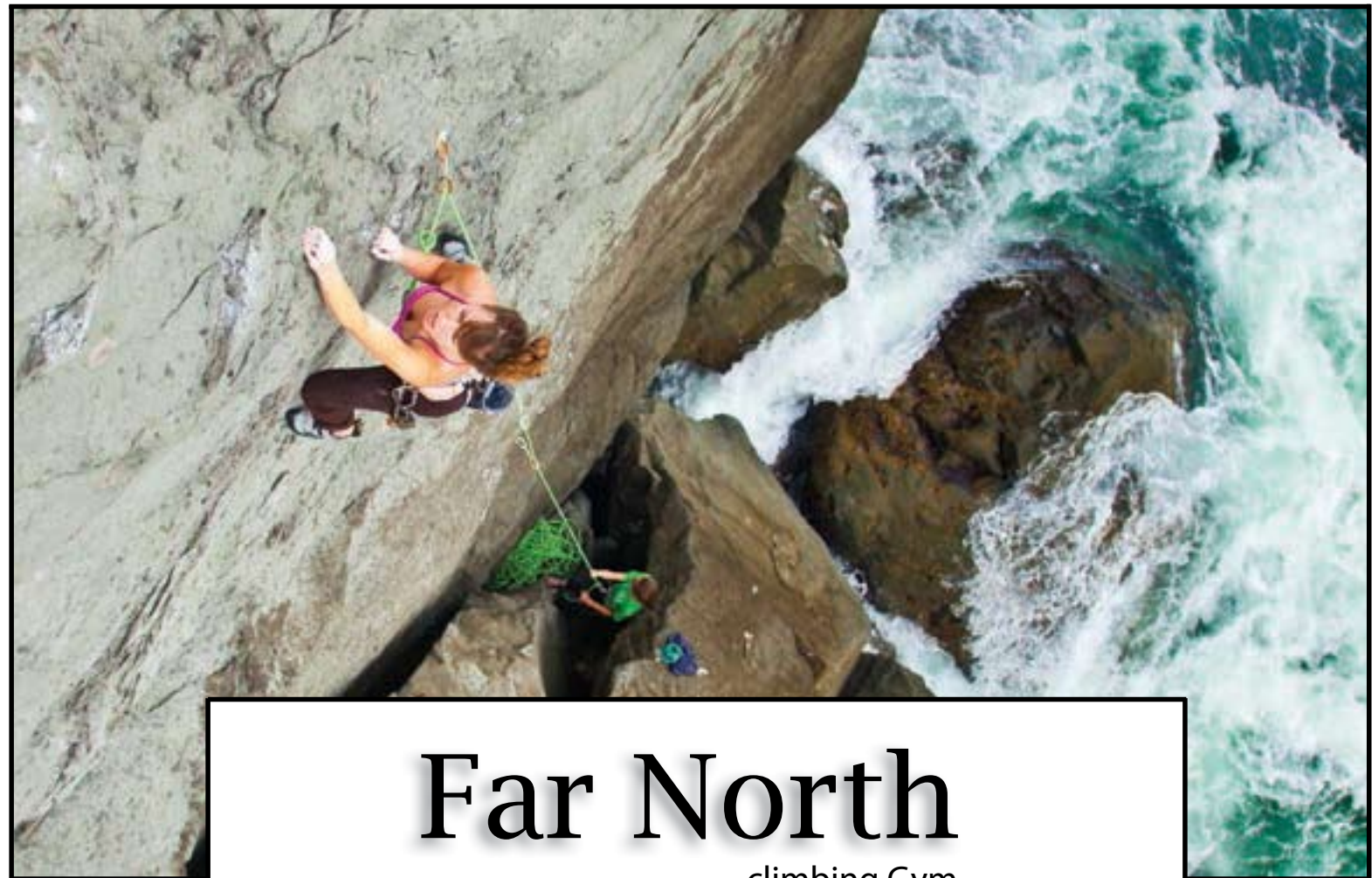
I’ve always worked. It was never my goal to live in my car or to call myself a dirtbag, or figure out how to work part time and get health care and unemployment for half the year on some government program. That’s not what those programs are for. And so I look at that mentality today and I wonder why the fuck anyone would want to live like that? I see no honor in it at all. It’s become something that I really don’t understand. And I’ve noticed that many climbers today act really entitled, as if it’s their god given right to just climb and drag their dogs all over the god damn place and just do whatever the fuck they want to do.”

“I DIDN’T REALLY REALIZE IT UNTIL I STARTED HANGING OUT WITH MY DIRT BIKE FRIENDS.

These guys are really blue collar, working 40 or 50 hours a week and they have families. Maybe once every few months they are lucky enough to be able to go out and ride their dirt bikes. And it’s just a breath of fresh air. They don’t ever ask for anything for free and they never complain about anything. They are just grateful that they get to go out and do stuff.”

“NOW I JUST GO OUT THERE RIDING WITH MY BUDDIES AND NO ONE CARES BUT US.

No one is out there to tell us what to do or where to go. All the tracks get washed away and no one knows that we were there. We just take care of each other and go have adventures...”



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Gabriella Nobrega climbing at a secluded Panther Beach near Santa Cruz.

IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG

The Happy Boulders parking lot a few days before Thanksgiving 2017.

IMAGE + PIPER MICHELLE

OUTLIERS

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



600 CARS AT THE HAPPY BOULDERS.

Plastic bags filled with shit and left in place. Trails ignored and fragile desert trampled. Kooks slamming from highballs and breaking their legs. Land managers wondering what to do about resources that are being destroyed.

These are the inevitable results of an outdoor activity that is exploding in popularity. What’s the answer? I don’t know. But desperate times call for desperate measures.

We could try to come up with a brain-reprogramming scheme. For instance, if you find yourself on a Christmas Break Saturday in a conga-line at *The Iron Man Traverse*, or, as in the case of my personal awakening, if your Sprinter Van’s 7-point u-turn has caused gridlock in the upper Buttermilks parking lot, you could try this simple mantra, repeated seven times in a calm but resolute voice: “I am a douchebag who should immediately go somewhere else, far, far away”

It sounds simplistic, but it worked for me. After I got my ridiculous van turned around, I headed straight out of Bishop, drove 20 minutes up to the Dreamers and spent the day bouldering in the sun, just me, my girlfriend Kim, a cool breeze and some sagebrush. It reminded me of bouldering in the Buttermilks 30 years ago....ahhh. We even camped there, met another nice couple who we shared spots and pads with the next day. And most importantly, all four of us left no trace.

Need more examples? Ok, let’s say you find yourself on a Spring Break Sunday, driving up and down the parking lot at the Happies, or Castle Rock, or Camp 4, for more than 30 minutes trying to snag a parking spot before one of the 20 other cars doing the same thing gets

there first. In this case you could use a variation of the above mantra, such as “I am a fucking idiot, and even though I deserve this little slice of hell, I am going to spare the 60 people at Midnight Lightning from having a 61st loser in the cue. Instead I will immediately go somewhere else, far, far away.”

Now, it might sometimes be difficult to ascertain (and therefore avoid) scenarios like the ones described above. Here are some warning signs that will help you in choosing a socially responsible climbing destination. If your Facebook feed is blowing up with status updates like “Yo climbing buds! Who’s in for a New Years trip to the Milks? Let’s camp and party at the Pit New Years Eve, YEAH!!!!” That’s a red flag. Or if you hear the words Joshua Tree more than 20 times at your local gym the week before Thanksgiving, clue-in that it will be ridiculously crowded there. In cases where you recognize and heed these warning signs, you can chant a preemptive mantra like “I will not contribute to kook overload, I will not contribute to kook overload, instead of contributing to kook overload I will go to one of the many other good bouldering areas in California.”

Now, the toughest part of all this is that the alternative area you choose to go to won’t be as good as the above mentioned areas. Besides being great places to see and be seen, the popular areas are popular for a reason. Which brings us, finally, to the point of this story, namely, that there are lots of fun, un-crowded spots in California where you can boulder, relax and get a little peace and nature with your V6, if you’re into that sort of thing. We’ve deliberately chosen spots that are far, far off the regular circuit, and there are 100s of other spots like these, some more accessible, some less.



LEFT
Buddy Marshburn has figured out the proper holds and sequence for the burly highball *Hell Awaits* (V3) at Putah Creek.

CENTER
Amna Shiekh climbs the remote, dynamic and smooth *Best of the Bay* (V5) at Black Sand Beach.

RIGHT
Daniel Leoni climbing *Brick Buster* (V4) at Black Sand Beach.

ALL IMAGES + JIM THORNBURG



PUTAH CREEK

THE QUIET FOOTHILLS ON THE SOUTHEASTERN EDGE of the Mayacamas Mountains are the tranquil home of dozens of basalt boulders. The most popular area is alongside Putah Creek, where you can find at least three excellent boulders, a dozen powerful problems and traverses on blocky and sometimes slick black rock on the banks of a year-round stream. Winter conditions here can be perfect, as the slick nature of the rock tends to be much too hot in summer, late spring and early fall.



BLACK SAND BEACH

BOULDERING ON THESE SECLUDED BEACHES is always fresh due to the changing sand heights and lack of chalk (the waves wash it off daily). Two zones, Hidden Cove and last Cove, each feature cirques of overhanging rock. NOTE: Most of the bouldering at Black Sand Beach is only accessible during times of low tide and swell. You'll need to do a serious amount of research before visiting if you want to climb on the best problems WARNING: you are likely to see naked people (mostly guys) here. Information about both Putah Creek and Black Sand Beach can be found in *Bay Area Rock* by Jim Thornburg.

Ryan Camera climbing an unnamed (V3) highball somewhere in the Bishop Tablelands.
IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING

THE TABLELANDS

WHEN THINKING OF THE EASTERN SIERRA TABLELANDS it's nearly impossible not to think about the popular Happy Boulders and Sad Boulders, yet many do not realize that the welded volcanic tuff rock found in this region actually spreads for nearly 100 square miles from the eruption site at the Long Valley Caldera near Mammoth Mountain, all the way down to the Sherwin Plateau, through the Owens River Gorge and into the Bishop Basin. These areas are well documented in books like *Mammoth Bouldering* by Charlie Barrett.





SOUTH FORK TUOLUMNE RIVER AND THE MERCED RIVER CANYON



THE RIVERS THAT FLOW through popular areas like Tuolumne Meadows and Yosemite Valley are well-known for hosting hundreds of quality granite boulders. Yet when freezing temperatures hit Yosemite National Park in the winter months, these zones are buried in snow and ice or finger-numbingly cold. Yet beyond the busy National Park these river canyons (and the rocks that line them) keep flowing to the west and northwest towards the Pacific. Outside of Yosemite in both the South Fork Tuolumne River Canyon and the Merced River Canyon hundreds of quality blocks can still be found. These problems are not currently found in any guidebooks. Use your nose and Google Earth to locate some blocks.

LEFT
Kai Defty climbing an unnamed (V4) in the South Fork Tuolumne River Canyon north-west of Yosemite National Park.

TOP
Megan Mascarenas climbing *The Blessing* (V4) in the Merced River Canyon west of Yosemite National Park.

RIGHT
Megan Mascarenas climbing *Great Blue Heron* (V4R) in the Merced River Canyon west of Yosemite National Park.

ALL IMAGES + DEAN FLEMING





PANTHER BEACH

THIS REMOTE BEACH just north of Santa Cruz features bouldering along the bottom of a 200-yard cliff of exquisitely sculpted soft sandstone. Panther is the perfect place to climb barefoot and make up your own problems. The rock is softer and sandier the higher you go, so jump off before you get too high. It's nice to have a crash pad at Panther, but only to use as a place to wipe off your feet before you start climbing. The sand is much softer than a pad when you fall off. Make sure to bring a towel to clean your feet, a picnic and a skim board. NOTE: The problems found at Panther Beach can be completely buried in sand, and seasonal swells and tides do effect the climbing here. Consider yourself lucky if you find it in perfect conditions. Pick up the guidebook *Bay Area Rock* by Jim Thornburg for more details.

TOP

Jim Thornburg climbing at Panther Beach.

LEFT

Gabriella Nobrega climbing at Panther Beach.

RIGHT

Gabriella Nobrega Climbing at Panther Beach.

ALL IMAGES + JIM THORNBURG





BACHAR BOULDERS.

WORDS + DEAN FLEMING // IMAGES + KYLE QUEENER & DEAN FLEMING

BACHAR BOULDERS.

PREVIOUS

Ranae Scott climbing *Problem H* (V3).

IMAGE + KYLE QUEENER

LEFT

Jared Mills climbing an unnamed (V7).

IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING

Tall Jeffrey Pines stretched upward to a starry sky as a small fire burned in a small fire pit at a small dirt pullout near one of the smallest true cliff bands in the Eastern Sierra. It was the weekend before the Thanksgiving holiday and a few miles to the south Bishop's dirt parking areas were jam packed with Sprinter vans and Subaru's. Yet here, above the Owens Grade and the Sherwin Plateau, it would only seem that these rocks and this landscape looked and felt as they did when

John Bachar and Dave Yerian roamed these same forest service routes in the late 1970s and early 1980s in search of new cliffs and boulders to scramble.

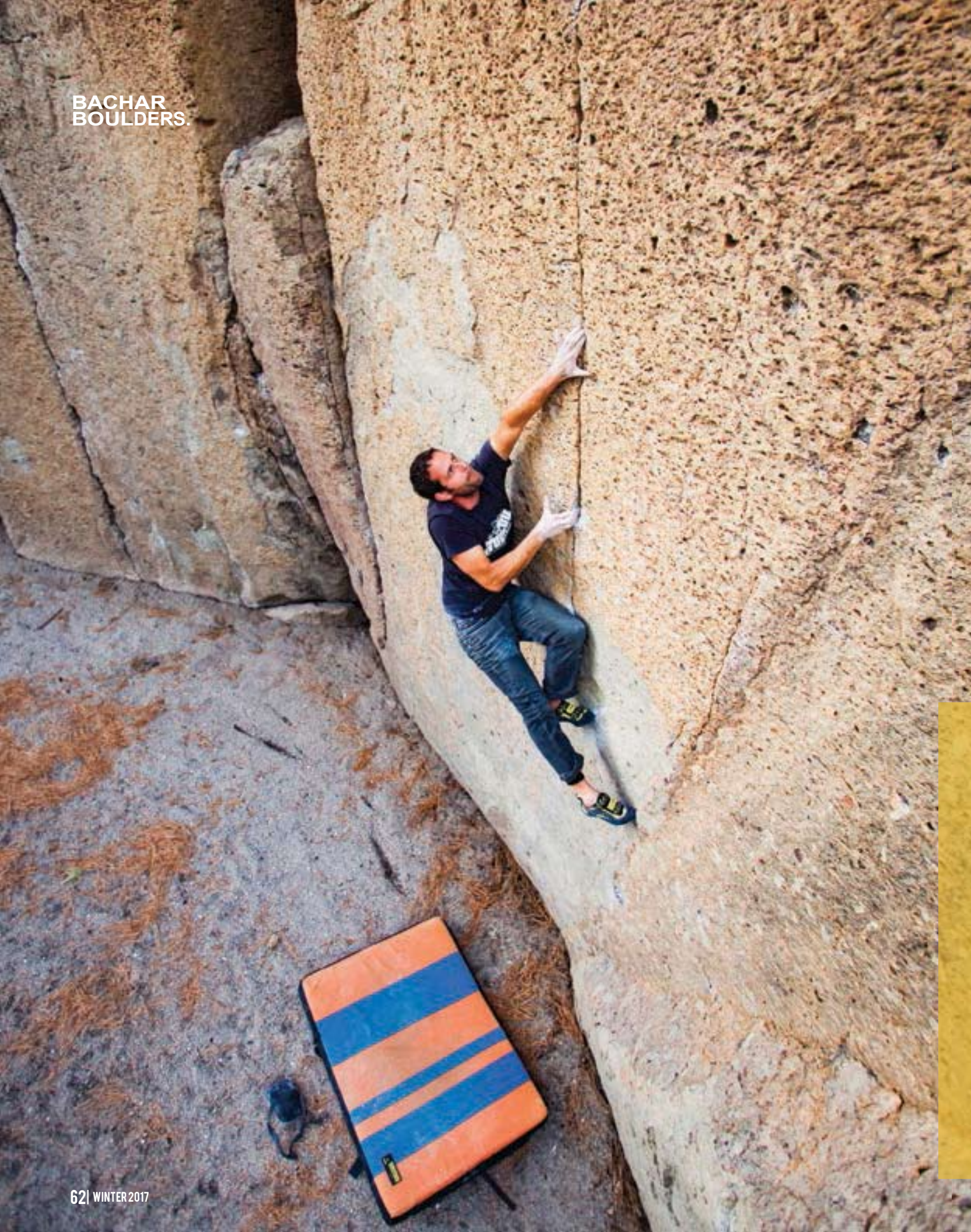
A large handful of characters are responsible for the climbing that is now established in the Mammoth region, yet Yerian and Bachar were perhaps the most prolific Mammoth bouldering first ascensionists of their time, discovering, cleaning and climbing (without crash pads) some of the most classic highball boulders of the region. The quality of the volcanic stone found in the Mammoth region cannot be compared to the quintessentially perfect monzogranite found at the nearby Butter-milks (what can be?), yet if each of the problems at Mammoth's Bachar Boulders were located at the Happy or Sad boulders, they would no doubt be considered absolute classics for their grades. In fact, unlike the

sometimes monotonous pocket-pulling that is often found among the most solid features in the Bishop Tablelands, some of the climbing at Bachar Boulders could be considered much more interesting, complex and sometimes even cryptic.

So how does a cliff band that is the perfect height for bouldering, with perfect stone, perfect features and perfect landings, fall so far to the wayside, essentially forgotten by all but area locals for over a decade? Bishop's famous destinations are the only logical answer; with countless well-regarded boulder problems that drag hundreds, if not thousands, of climbers to grease off their starting holds each season. The vortex is in fact so strong that it seems as though any other boulders near its periphery are destined to be ejected into the unknown, labeled as irrelevant, or "old school." Yet no matter how you spin it, it's good news.

For those of us that enjoy the social elements of climbing; those that don't mind searching for places to park, stepping over piles of dogs and crash pads, or the echoing sounds of bros mansplaining beta their much more confident and skilled female climbing partners, the classics are still there for us, just waiting to be logged and downgraded in our 8a.nu accounts. And for those of us that enjoy exploration, a sense of wilderness and quality bouldering, places like the Bachar Boulders are here too; just a few miles up the road, where the tall Jeffrey Pines soar above the sage.

BACHAR
BOULDERS.



PREVIOUS SPREAD

Greg White climbing *Like a Virgin* (V3).

THIS PAGE

Carl McDonald climbing *JB's Seam* (V4).

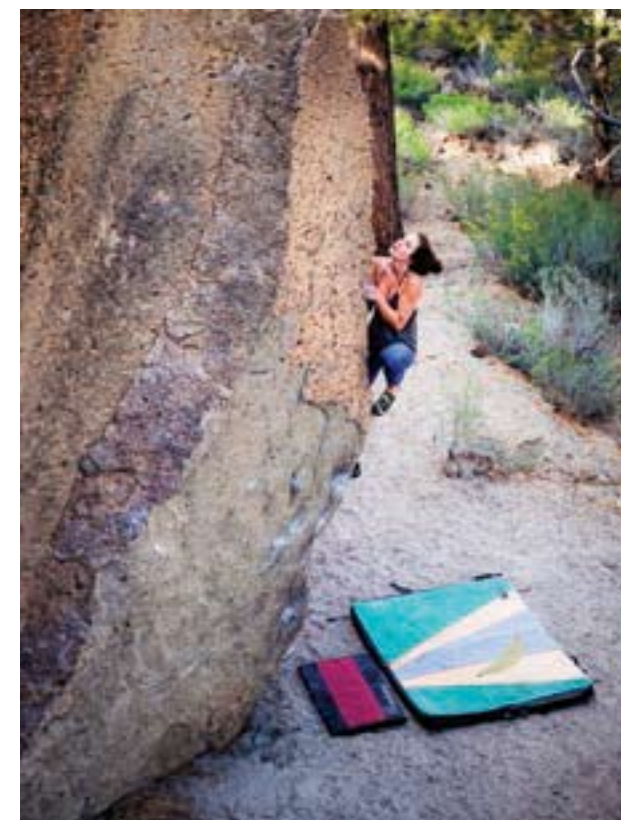
OPPOSITE PAGE TOP

Trevor Seck climbing *Problem F* (V2).

OPPOSITE PAGE TOP

Eva Lovelace climbing *Problem G* (V2).

ALL IMAGES + KYLE QUEENER





ABOVE

Trevor Seck climbing the Triangle Boulder (V2).

IMAGE + KYLE QUEENER

RIHT

Kyle Queener climbing *Like a Virgin* (V3).

IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING

NEXT PAGE

Eva Lovlace climbing an unnamed (V0).

IMAGE + KYLE QUEENER



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GETTING THERE

From the June Lake Junction Store on Highway 395 drive north on Highway 395 for less than 0.1 mile to a dirt road on the east side of 395. Follow this road for less than 0.1 mile then turn left. At 0.2 miles turn right, then at 0.4 miles turn left. At 0.5 miles stay right on the main road, then at 0.7 miles stay right again. At 0.8 miles park at the end of this road. The boulders are obvious from the parking area.

WHERE TO STAY

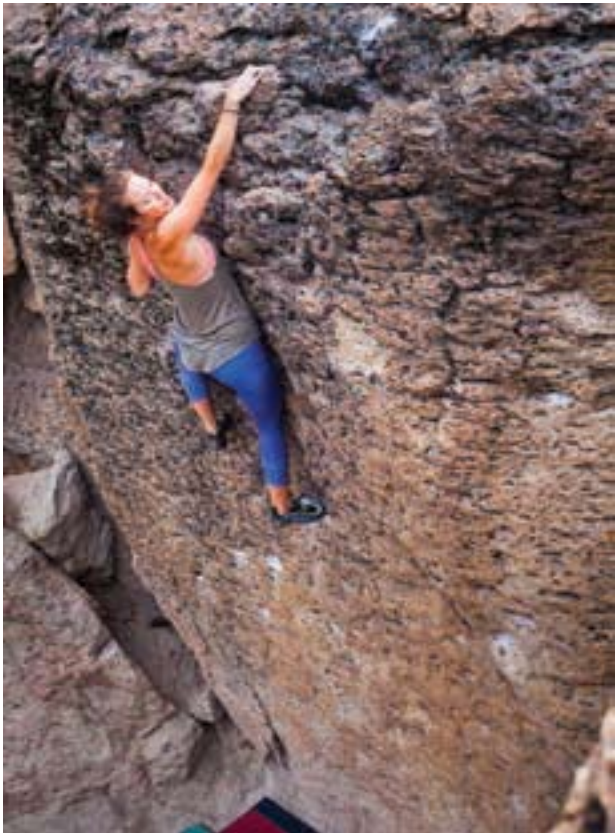
Free camping abounds near the bouldering. Please do not stay more than the allotted 14 day period and please obey all fire restrictions. Pack out your trash and your poopies.

GUIDEBOOK

Mammoth Bouldering by Charlie Barrett

FIVE
STAR
PROBLEMS.

- Problem #20 (as listed in Mammoth Bouldering) (V3)
- Right Side of The Triangle Boulder (V2)
- Like a Virgin (V3)
- JB's Seam (V5)
- The Dyno (V8)



Climb Responsibly in the Desert

The desert climbing environment is uniquely fragile and full of life—and it demands specific minimum impact practices.



Avoid walking on microbiotic soil crusts, which play a critical ecological role in the desert.



Soil in the desert lacks the micro-organisms to biodegrade human waste. Use a toilet or pack it out.



Wait 24-48 hours before climbing on sandstone after it rains to avoid damaging the rock.



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



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