CALIFORNIACLIMBER







ALIEN REVOLUTION

The Mother of Modern Cams



WIRE ROPE DRAW

UIAA / CE Rated Life Saftey Product





DEPARTMENTS 8/EDITOR'S NOTE ACCESS /EVENTS /ROUTE OF THE SEASON STAND BY YOUR VAN /REVIEW /BEHIND THE IMAGE GOLDEN STATE GALLERY /LAST LOOK 36/CALIFORNIA CLIMBER: YOUNG CHU **50/MAGIC LINE**

ON THE COVER

Lonnie Kauk making the first redpoint ascent of Magic Line (5.14c), Yosemite Valley. IMAGE + JIM THORNBURG

THIS PAGE

California climber Young Chu sorting gear for an ascent of Zodiac (VI 5.7 A2) in 1988.

WORK SNO EXCUSE



Side zipper computer access

Zippered pouch keeps chalk in your bag, not in your pack

your clothes fresh Magnetic Fidlock™ buckles for easy entry

Laptop sleeve lets you bring the work you can't escape

Daisy chain organizes your gear

24L capacity fits all your kit

Vented shoe pouch keeps

CITY SENDER: AVAILABLE IN BACKPACK AND MESSENGER BAG



CALIFORNIACLIMBER

CALIFORNIACLIMBERMAGAZINE.COM

PUBLISHER

Dean Fleming
ART DIRECTOR

Alton Richardson

SENIOR CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Jerry Dodrill, Jim Thornburg
SENIOR CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Fitz Cahall, James Lucas

CONTRIBUTORS

Beth Rodden, Jerry Dodrill, Young Chu, Kim Pfabe, Tom Moulin , Sabra Purdy, Lonnie Kauk, Jim Thornburg, Travis Shatka, Russ Brechbuehl and Dean Fleming

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

MOST, IF NOTALL 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.

Lonnie Kauk making the first redpoint ascent of *Magic Line* (5.14c), Yosemite Valley.







EDITOR'S NOTE

IN JUNIOR HIGH I SOMEHOW OBTAINED

a bunch of warn-out VHS climbing videos that featured a wealth of cutting edge sport climbing scenes from across the country, but also some sections on climbing in Yosemite. They showed climbers doing huge run-outs on Yosemite's famed big wall free climbs and the top climbers of the day casually free-soloing difficult pitches. To the teenage version of myself, this was "trad" climbing; a game as mental as it was physical - the ultimate embodiment of mastery in rock climbing. In the years to come I pushed myself both mentally and physically on every crack climb I could find. I tried to participate in the act of rock climbing in the best style I thought possible, which at this time, for me and my climbing mentors, meant climbing from the ground to the top placing each piece of gear as we went. Then, in 1996, famous Yosemite climber Ron Kauk made the first free ascent of Magic Line (5.14b), and my world spun upside

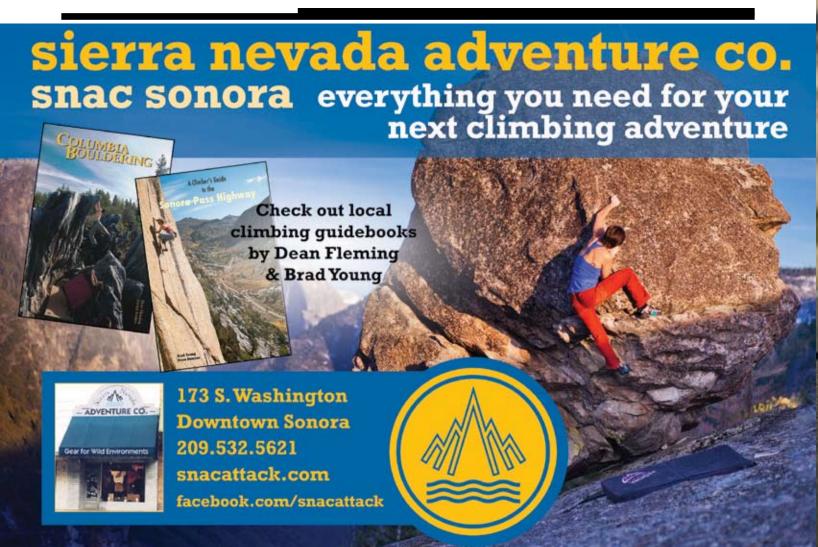
Magic Line is an impossibly thin and absolutely stunning crack positioned dramatically adjacent to Vernal Falls in Yosemite Valley. Regardless of its somewhat unattainable grade, Magic Line should be widely considered among the best single pitch cracks in Yosemite. Kauk's ascent of Magic Line was beyond

groundbreaking – it was the first 5.14 crack in the world and as a testament to its difficulty, sat unrepeated for twenty years.

In the mid 1990s Ron Kauk was among the most capable and experienced free climbers on the planet. From his youth he had learned the skills necessary to climb some of the most technically challenging routes in Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows. In his later travels across the globe he gained new skills and strengths on the steep well-protected sport climbs of Europe and beyond. Many climbers of this era, including myself, believe that the first free ascent of *Magic Line* echoes the absolute culmination of Kauk's experiences and influences; the resolution and confidence to paste feet and miraculously stick to microscopic edges and terrible smears, the muscle memory and movement skills to hold fast in utterly insecure positions, the sheer strength to power lieback for 90 vertical feet. Yet it wasn't just the fact that Kauk physically climbed *Magic Line* that influenced me most, it was the style in which he chose to climb it: first on top-rope, then on lead with pre-placed protection.

I'm ashamed to admit that when I first heard of Kauk's free ascent of *Magic Line* back in 1996 I had the same knee-jerk narrow-minded reaction that a lot of staunch traditional climbers had: that Kauk had somehow "broken the rules" by pre-placing protection for his lead ascent. Ron Kauk is the man who made the first free ascent of *Astroman* (IV 5.11c) in a swami belt – the guy who did the first ascent of *Midnight Lightning* (V8) without spotters or a crash pad. Why did this bold Yosemite free climbing hero choose to climb *Magic Line* (5.14b) on top-rope? Why did he then choose to pre-place protection for his lead ascent?

Although Ron Kauk has left us countless inspiring routes to test our skills, I believe that Kauk's lasting legacy is one of respect – respect for the rock, respect for the environment and respect for one's self. In the mid 1990s small, finger sized cams did exist, but nothing nearly as tiny and high tech as today's modern cams. By not placing bolts or pins or fixing stoppers to create a safe redpoint, Kauk's ascent of *Magic Line* showed respect for the rock and the natural environment. By keeping it safe, Kauk showed respect for his life and his desire to continue climbing and living in good health. Over the years I've come to realize that Ron's free ascent of *Magic Line* was much more than a feat of physical prowess; it was the ultimate display of respect, and to those with the capacity to see beyond the rules, the utter definition of a pure ascent.





EDITOR'S NOTE

In the years that followed I found myself standing at the base of a number of unclimbed and difficult (for me) crack climbs that featured insecure moves and difficult-to-place protection. I'd have thoughts of bashing a pin here, or placing a bolt there, or maybe just slamming a stopper in so hard that it fixed itself. I thought about my mentors and what they'd think of me if I didn't go for it from the ground-up placing all the gear on lead. But then I'd think of Magic Line. I'd remember the photos I'd seen in product advertisements and other glossy pages of climbing magazines of Ron seemingly floating high above Vernal Falls without the weight of a single cam on his harness. I still love climbing from the ground-up into the unknown, and I sometimes prefer that style when it suites me, but to date I've done six or seven first free ascents with the use of pre-placed protection. I've got to admit that these ascents are all high on my short list of profound climbing experiences - mainly because they are times where I can remember feeling safe and strong. I just remember having a lot of fun.

On December 30th 2016, almost exactly twenty years after his father made the first ascent, Ron's son Lonnie Kauk made the second

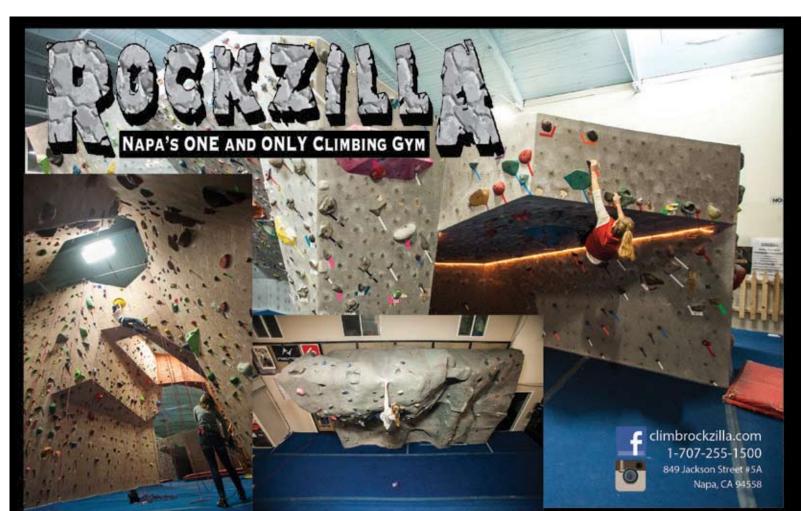
<~~~>

ascent of Magic Line (5.14b). On this day Lonnie climbed the route in the same style as the first free ascent, using pre-placed protection. His father belayed him on the send.

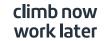
"It was all about connecting with Dad and Yosemite," Lonnie wrote on his Instagram feed after his ascent, "thanks to Dad and Tom Herbert for the mega vibes before and after the send."

The second ascent of Magic Line has been one of the most coveted feats in Yosemite climbing for the past twenty years and any climber would be proud to have accomplished it, but for Lonnie, Magic Line was much more than a gold star on his climbing resume, it was the culmination of a quest to honor his father by repeating Ron's most difficult and striking first ascents in Yosemite Valley and Tuolumne Meadows – routes like Broken Arrow (5.13d) [Tuolumne Meadows], Peace (5.13c) [Tuolumne Meadows], Sacred Fire (5.13a) [Tuolumne Meadows] and Crossroads (5.13d) [Yosemite Valley]

On November 14th 2018 Lonnie Kauk completed the first redpoint ascent of *Magic Line*, placing protection on lead from the ground-up, after which Lonnie has suggested the grade of (5.14c). In this issue of *California Climber* Kim Pfabe tells the complete story of the route *Magic Line*, including the history of this iconic climb's first free ascent, interviews with climbers like Beth Rodden, Carlo Traverse and Tom Moulin who were inspired by this test-piece route and made very close attempts, and an interview with Lonnie Kauk after his free ascents. For more on *Magic Line*, including a wealth of incredible photos by Jim Thornburg, see page 50. —DEAN FLEMING











ACCESS:

WHATTHE **GOVERNMENT** SHUTDOWN MEANS FOR **CLIMBERS**

THE GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN THAT OCCURRED on December 22nd of 2018 and continued into 2019 was a hot topic among climbers and climbing stewardship organizations. Unlike other past government shutdowns, the Trump administration is the first to leave the gates to many public lands open - without a plan for managing the impacts generated by thousands of visitors.

<~~~>

This note from Access Fund published online in early January of 2019 does a great job of explaining how the government shutdown affected climbers across the country:

"The government has been shut down for two weeks, and congressional representatives and the President warn that it may stay closed for much longer. What does it mean for climbers' ability to access and enjoy the 60% of climbing areas located on our federally managed public lands?

For now, climbers can still access Yosemite, Joshua Tree, Rocky Mountain, New River Gorge, Obed, Rumney, Red Rock and most of the hundreds of other climbing areas in federally managed public lands.

Although climbers and the American public prefer our public lands open, unfettered access can damage these sensitive lands pretty quickly when they are not supported with emergency services, natural resource protection, law enforcement, bathroom maintenance, and snow plowing. Already, the shutdown has resulted in expensive and measurable damages to our public natural resources.

Across the country, some local climbers and other organizations have rallied to help maintain our public lands during the shutdown. At Joshua Tree National Park, Cliffhanger Guides and Friends of Joshua Tree National Park have teamed up to clean and restock toilets, remove trash and provide visitor information. Climbers are also helping to keep Yosemite National Park clean while the human waste piles up. And a non-profit is helping to keep Zion National Park up and running. However, some warn the well-intended citizens that cleaning pit toilets without the necessary hepatitis vaccinations that are mandatory for federal employees is risky.

Despite the valiant efforts of many volunteers and the Administration's order to keep parks open, if the shutdown drags on we expect to see more national parks close entrance gates and bathrooms because of resource damages, unplowed roads, and illegal activities. The President just rejected a bipartisan deal presented to him by Republican leader McConnell to reopen the government, to the detriment of our public lands and government services. The shutdown has already resulted in hundreds of thousands of federal employees not getting paychecks (some are forced to work without pay), lost revenue for public land gateway communities, restricted access to many of America's public lands and landmarks, and extensive environmental damages to our national parks, forests, and climbing areas.

Access Fund is proud of the climbing community's incredible efforts to steward our public climbing areas and set a good example by following regulations and packing out trash and human waste, despite the current lack of services. However, setting the precedent that volunteers can manage our public lands when the government can't do its job is not a good one. This government shutdown proves that our public lands need appropriate funding, land management, and environmental protections. National parks and forests are not political chips. They are our national heritage and birthright, and we are hoping for a quick resolution to this shutdown."

As mentioned in the note above from Access Fund, many local climbers and climbing organizations have rallied together to raise money for supplies to clean toilets and remove trash during the shutdown. To the south at Joshua Tree National Park, Cliffhanger Guides and Friends of Joshua Tree alongside countless volunteers have worked tirelessly to maintain the park they call

Below is a note from Sabra Purdy, a wildlife biologist and co-founder of Cliffhanger Guides, a climbing guide service that functions in Joshua Tree National Park:

"Clear across the country from Washington, it can feel as though Congress is continuously in crisis, and a shutdown always looms over us. At any moment, we'll have to spring into action to keep things from falling apart. For me and some 40 other volunteers, this now means cleaning up after the tens of thousands of tourists coming to Joshua Tree National Park every day. When government workers are told to stay home, we trek in and do some of what they can't.



DMM's 2019 range of wiregate quickdraws is trad to the bone-featuring satin anodised carabiners with a color-matched Dynatec sling. Available in 12, 18 and 25cm lengths.

Refinement you'll appreciate. Quality you can trust when you need it the most.











We scrub restrooms, restock toilet paper and empty the garbage cans, hoping to keep the chaos at bay. We've been doing this amid the flurry of the holiday period, the busiest time of year for the rock climbing guide service that my husband and I run. It isn't pretty, but we count ourselves lucky that the park's gates are open. In 2018, the Park Service developed a shutdown contingency plan so that parks could be accessed by the public, even without visitor services. If we'd had to cancel all our trips and refund our customers' deposits, we wouldn't have been able to make payroll, and our staff would have taken a huge financial hit.

The last major shutdown, in October 2013, locked everyone out of the park for 16 days. Between that and nearly 1,300 civilian employees of the nearby Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center getting furloughed, the local economy suffered enormously. The motels, restaurants and shops were all empty. Joshua Tree was a ghost town. A shutdown affects not only those directly employed by the government but all the people whose livelihoods depend on federal land: Although October was relatively early in the season, my husband and I still lost about \$5,000 in income. With our schedules suddenly clear, we filled the time with gardening, and getting people to call their congressional representatives and attend our Shut Down the Shutdown rally. (We sang "This Land Is Your Land" in front of the park's locked front gates and put on some silly political theater involving Uncle Sam being attacked by zombie congressmen.)

This time, the shutdown is happening during peak tourist season. It has barely dented the usual traffic – in fact, more people may have come once they figured out there wouldn't be fees or rangers. Cars are lining up to enter and then parking in crazy configurations. No one is staffing the kiosks out front to collect entrance fees. The campgrounds have been completely full. There are people everywhere.

We have a standing 10 a.m. meet-up to organize volunteers to head to the park together. We're driving trailers full of trash out of the park and spending hundreds of dollars on cleaning supplies. With the visitor center closed, a local souvenir shop, Coyote Corner, has other volunteers sitting at a folding table at its storefront to show tourists a map and various points of interest, answering legions of questions. We do this out of love for the park, but also because our livelihoods depend on it. Once conditions go downhill, they will be hard to

Still, there are some gaps we can't fill - namely, enforcing the park rules. We can't manage the camping reservation system, and visitors have been squabbling over campsites.







We don't know how long the contracts for services such as toilet pumping and trash pickup are paid through, or whether the contractors will come at all.

This is a long stretch for Joshua Tree to go without ranger presence. Search-and-rescue coordination has been significantly reduced, although thankfully, the park superintendent can call in support at his discretion, and full law enforcement ranger patrols are back on duty. Mostly we've noticed people camping where they shouldn't or dogs going off leash in the wrong areas. Rumors are flying about much wilder bad behavior - burning pallets, cutting down trees - although I haven't seen that myself. Our main fear is that, with no one to tell them no, visitors will drive vehicles off road, tearing up the land. Meanwhile, Friends of Joshua Tree National Park estimates that the park is losing \$300,000 to \$400,000 a day in camping and entrance fees.

When the government can't get it together, someone needs to keep things running. Around here, we're doers: We don't just sit on our hands. I feel really proud when I see how much our community cares about Joshua Tree and how willing people are to do some pretty gross, dirty work to protect it. But we shouldn't have to. And the excitement to pitch in during the first few days might not last if this drags out for three weeks, or longer, with no resolution on the horizon. This isn't sustainable. Park officials finally closed the campgrounds on New Year's Day, and if this continues, the entire park may totally close to the public.

The Park Service employees we're friendly with aren't getting too political in public, but privately, they worry about when they'll get back to work and how long their savings will last. If they don't get back pay, that's bad, but if they do get back pay, the public will have lost the work they could've gotten done during this period – it's a terrible deal for everyone."

You can help the efforts to keep Joshua Tree clean during this time by donating to Friends of Joshua Tree. To do so please visit friendsofjosh.org and click on the "donate" tab.



HOLLYWOOD BOULDERS LOS ANGELES JUNE 15

BERKELEY IRONWORKS BERKELEY JUNE 21

GREAT WESTERN POWER CO DAKLAND AUG 30

VERDIGO BOULDERS BURBANK SEPT 28

SACRAMENTO PIPEWORKS SACRAMENTO OCT 4

Touchstone Climbing Series events are more than just comps—they're a celebration of everyone who colors outside the lines and makes our community so beautiful. TCS2019 is a celebration of YOU!



























EVENTS

FEBRUARY 02, 2019:

BISHOP CREEK ADOPT-A-CRAG 8:00 a.m. at the Patricia Drive Trailhead, Groups will be delegated to either trash cleanup or graffiti removal at various crags on the peak. We will work with city park rangers to maintain

trails as well. There will be a briefing on Leave No Trace ethics before sending everyone off to work. A break for lunch and some climbing will happen around noon with the last of the work to follow in the afternoon. At sunset, volunteers are welcome to join us at Throop Park for dinner and a raffle. Contract Michael with questions at mgpalmer@ calpoly.edu.

MARCH 8TH - 10TH 2019:

AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB'S ANNUAL BENEFIT DINNER WEEKEND IN SAN FRANCISCO

This year's Send 'n' Social will be hosted at Mission Cliffs, complete with a celebrity climbing comp, libations, clinics, games, and more. On Saturday morning, enjoy presentations from top athletes and thought compelling panels. The 2019 Annual Climbing Awards recognize outstanding achievements in conservation, climbing, and service to the climbing community. All event proceeds benefit the Club's work protecting public lands, education, and chronicling our history-so that our community will thrive for generations to come.

COMPETITIONS

FEBRUARY 22ND: (5pm-10pm) Touchstone Climbing Series, Diablo Rock Gym, Concord

FEBRUARY 23RD: Annual Bigfoot Scramble and USA Collegiate Climbing Circuit, Far North, Arcata

MARCH 2ND: (12pm-5pm) Touchstone Climbing Series, LA Boulders, Los Angeles

MARCH 22ND: (5pm-10pm) Touchstone Climbing Series, The Studio, San Jose

MARCH 30TH: (12pm-5pm) Touchstone Climbing Series, Cliffs of Id, Culver City

APRIL 27TH: (12pm-5pm) Touchstone Climbing Series, Mission Cliffs, San Francisco

MAY 31ST: (5pm-10pm) Touchstone Climbing Series, MetalMark, Fresno

JUNE 15TH: (12pm-5pm) Touchstone Climbing Series, Hollywood Boulders, Los Angeles

JUNE 21ST: (5pm-10pm) Touchstone Climbing Series, Berkeley Ironworks, Berkeley

AUGUST 30TH: (5pm-10pm) Touchstone Climbing Series, Great Western Power Co., Oakland

SEPTEMBER 28TH: (12pm-5pm) Touchstone Climbing Series, Verdigo Boulders, Burbank

OCTOBER 4TH: (5pm-10pm) Touchstone Climbing Series, Sacramento Pipeworks, Sacramento

NOVEMBER 2ND: Battle of the Bay at Dogpatch Boulders, San Francisco

Eas side Sports Mountain Sports Specialists Since 1977

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

INCLUDING:

Mountain Footwear Books and Maps Apparel Tents & Sleeping Bags Accessories

WE RENT:

Climbing shoes Bouldering pads Sleeping bags Backpacks



AERIAL PLUS LINE



Unbelievably versatile

The Oasi's design and system of construction lets the heel sit lower while climbing and is superbly responsive to every situation, relaying detailed information back to the user in any situation.

Distributed by Trango | info@trango.com | trango/tenaya



ROUTE OF THE SEASON WORDS & IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING BETA LENGTH 50' 5.11d PROTECTION LOCATION DESCENT Rappel / Lower Off GUIDEBOOK Fall, Winter Bigfoot Country Rock Climbing, by Eric Chemello and Paul Humphrey Trinidad in Humboldt County and provides the decide instead to pack a small rack of quickdraws to easiest access to quality rock climbing on the mostly solid Tufoni Sandstone and Greenstone the at the aptly named North Rock, which is Moonstone Beach parking lot and hosts two very While some folks will opt to bring a full perplexed by the slippery crimps, be sure to take rack of cams to North Rock to try the deceivingly a look to the west and drink in the view of one of pumpy North Crack (5.10c) – a 40-foot long off-hand crack in a dihedral that overhangs a 20 WINTER 2018/19

From Humble Beginnings...







STAND BY YOUR VAN



"RARI"

Russ, Travis and Their 2004 GMC Safari AWD

CCMAG: How did you come up with the name "Rari"?

Russ: "I wanted something that bridged the gap between the wealthiest Americans & the dirtiest Americans. Like Gucci Mane and Kid Rock. It didn't work... actually, Safari just rhymes nicely with Ferrari. "Rari" is like a Great White Buffalo mixed with a prancing horse, those Italians had her pegged all wrong. I wanted to ornament her with Ferrari emblems but they cost a small fortune on eBay. I scored one for \$20 once, but it turned out to be a "glossy photograph" of a Ferrari emblem. If you know anyone looking for that, I have one for sale. Contact Alpenglow Gear Co. for more info."

Where did you find her and how much did she cost you?

Russ: "I'm not really comfortable answering that question. If one of those aforementioned rappers finally comes up with the scratch to buy her, I don't want them getting any funny ideas about what she's worth. Let's just say I got a smoking deal, and the guy I bought her from has been beating himself up ever since."

How's the gas mileage?

Russ: "Anywhere from 12-19 MPG on the highway and in town. She also averages about a quart of oil every five tanks."

Have you done any modifications?

Russ: "Just the standard climber conversions, bed, solar power, storage, roof racks, snake skin handles... I eventually want to add a small body-lift to get bigger tires. Most climbers don't want a lowered van; however, it was pretty cheap to do. I just loaded up my climbing gear, lumber for the bed and cabinets, threw in another grown man with all his stuff to really flatten the leaf springs and boom—a three-inch low rider all-wheel drive van! It pairs well with the rap music thumping out of my tattered speakers."

How does it do off-road?

Russ: "The Great White Buffalo, "Rari" feels like a stampede riding down washboard roads but she also prances with style. That drop kit really cleans the road-kill – and its tax-free, folks. We don't eat everything she snags, but it's not uncommon. Throw that road-kill on the engine block and dinner's practically ready!"

Have you ever been stuck?

Both: "One time we had a code red at the La Brea Tar Pits and nearly became the first fully intact "great white buffalo" fossil remains."

What was your favorite trip so far?

Both: "We have never taken psychedelics inside of "Rari."

Travis, how did you end up living in Russ's Van?

Travis: "When I was 29 years young my mom wanted a new family. She divorced my dad and I had to grow up. I sold my van to raise money for the shop. Vincent Van Gogh had to go and a new chapter started. My life would soon be consumed by shop talk and tourism. I love it."

How long do you think you can last living together like this?

Both: "Probably until one of us strikes it big enough to buy a Sprinter." $\label{eq:continuous}$

Do you guys write your names on your pee bottles?

Both: "We made a vow to share everything while inside of "Rari." $\,$

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Russ: "Rari" is sensitive, if you see her on the road don't stare...she's different."











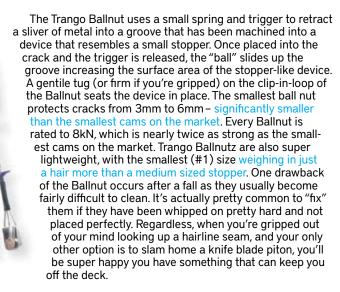
Featuring an industry first 3D molded toe box, the Haywire delivers an unbelievable amount of comfort to performance ratio. This award-winner defies conventional rock shoe logic by giving you that ultra-sensitive feel while maintaining a supportive toe-box.



TRANGO BALL NUTZ

{\$39.95} —

Yosemite Valley's *Y Crack* is an often overlooked but none-the-less stunning 5.10 splitter near the Devil's Bathtub, just around the corner from the starting pitch of the popular Royal Arches route. From a distance, Y Crack appears to be a perfect finger-sized crack for its entirety, yet when standing at the base and gazing up at the feature, one will notice that the first 20 feet of the fissure is microscopic – about the size you could barely slip a car key into. While most cracks this size in the Valley have had pitons smashed into them to the point where they now accept small (or sometimes large) stoppers, this particular part of this specific climb has, for some reason, escaped this treatment. Y Crack is the climb that sold me on Trango Ballnutz, and I've kept at least one (the smallest size #1) on my rack of stoppers since the day I first climbed it. Over the following decade or longer, I've placed the #1 Ballnut at least 100 times, and every time I place the piece it feels like a saving grace.

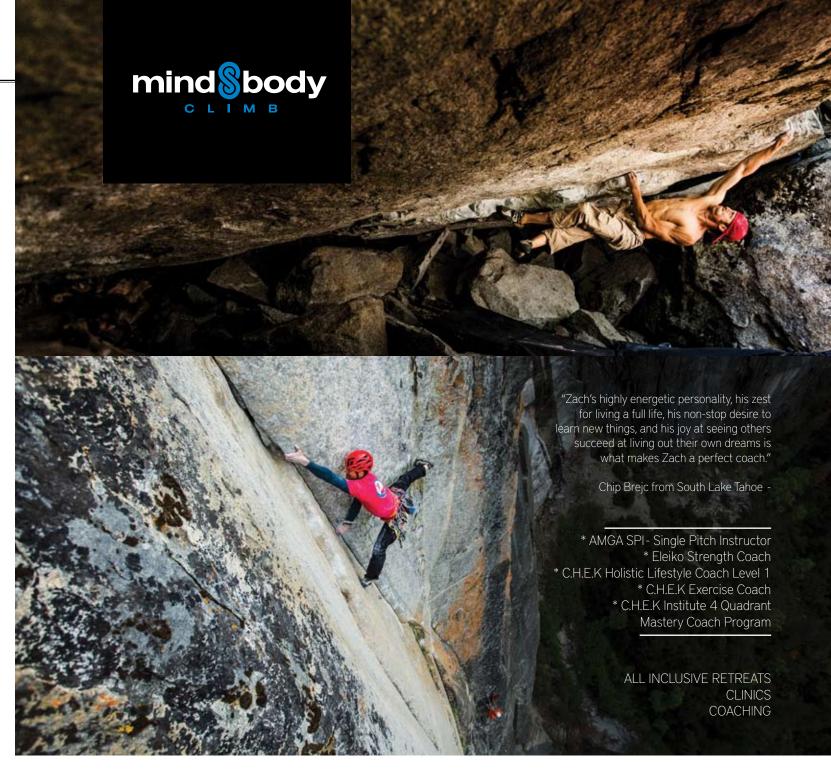




{ \$239 }

This year we spent about six months testing Mad Rock's new Duo Pad – a crash pad designed with a harness system that allows boulderers to carry two pads (or more) with ease. In testing we found this system to function quite brilliantly, with a very minimal amount of time and fuss needed to quickly strap an additional pad to the outside of the Duo. Because the Duo is meant to haul two or more pads at a single time, Mad Rock outfitted the suspension of the pad with a variable fit system to dial in the perfect shoulder strap positions for individual climbers, load lifters for stabilizing weight and an EVA molded waist belt. Although the Duo can carry a second pad of any brand, if two Mad Rock brand pads are on the scene the Duo features Mad Rock's simple yet brilliant Velcro attachment system (or continuous flooring system) which eliminates dangerous seams between multiple pads. Mad Rock rounded out the Duo Pad with stretch pockets, daisy chains for easy clipping of shoes, chalk bags and water bottles, wea resistant materials and a cool flip-out welcome mat to wipe the dirt off your shoes.







Join us for an All Inclusive Climbing Retreat to: WATERVAL BOVEN, SOUTH AFRICA September 8-15, 2019

Coaching: One on One Instruction Video Analysis Improve Technique Increase Confidence

Itinerary: 7 Nights Lodging All Meals Included Yoga & Tai Chi Mountain Biking

Kruger Park

Zach Fletcher mindbodyclimb@gmail.com 530.314.3195

LA SPORTIVATO PRO

{ \$190 }

was created to provide powerful, technical edging and crack climbing prowess. Since the TC Pro's inception the shoe has been used by a host of climbing's most talented athletes to accomplish some of the most difficult climbing feats in recent history – most notably, when Alex Honnold forgot to take a rope up Freerider on El Capitan and when Lonnie Kauk redpointed Magic Line (5.14c). It should be noted that all of the above feats took place in arguably the most technical climbing area on Earth:

California's Yosemite Valley.

According to La Sportiva, "This game changing, mid-height edging machine will take you out of a technical thin hands to fat fingers crack and out on to the smallest dime edges you can find." While this is a pretty specific statement, after a year or more of testing we've found it to be guite accurate. In fact, it may be an understatement. While many other reviews of the TC Pro have claimed that it is not the World's best shoe for thin cracks and smearing, when the shoes are properly broken in the TC Pro is actually a fantastic boot for

both applications. In testing we found that the sheer support of the

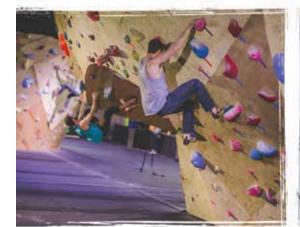
Designed in collaboration with La Sportiva climbing athlete Tommy Caldwell who famously used this namesake shoe to send the Dawn Wall on El Capitan in Yosemite Valley, the TC Pro smears for longer periods. Just walk up and look at Magic Line and you'll see what I'm talking about. As expected, the TC Pro absolutely excels at all cracks wider than 1.5" and is quite possibly the best shoe for edging our testers have used. Thin padding in the ankle and above the toes protects you in the cracks and the patented P3® platform delivers sensitive yet powerful edging abilities. The flat fit is perfect for comfortable crack climbing and the ventilated tongue and lateral rand perforations promote air-flow. The TC Pro is freaking expensive, but if you're going to climb in Yosemite, or other granite areas, this shoe is simply

METOLIUS ASTRO NUT

With a similar design to the innovative Metolius Curve Nut, the Astro Nut has been manufactured with the cable swaged into the head to provide a lighter and less bulky stopper. The heads of the Astro Nuts and Curve Nuts are machined with a vertical curve, which has proven to provide stable placements in otherwise funky sections of cracks. While this design does not perfectly suite placements in pin scars, it does work quite well in this application. Mostly, the curve design seems super secure in irregular rock where traditional stoppers would sit on small crystals or other irregularities rendering weak placements. irregularities rendering weak placements. Another application where the curve design of the Astro and Curve Nuts excel is when finding placements in parallel sided cracks. Here, the curve design allows for a consistent three-point contact which is quite secure. Made of silicon bronze for maximum bite and strength, the Astro Nuts are designed for micro placements where some minor deformation of the metal is useful for the devices to "bite" into the rock and increase holding power. Astro Nuts have color-coded anodized collars that make identification easy.







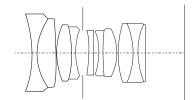








BEHIND THE LENS



WORDS & IMAGE + DEAN FLEMING

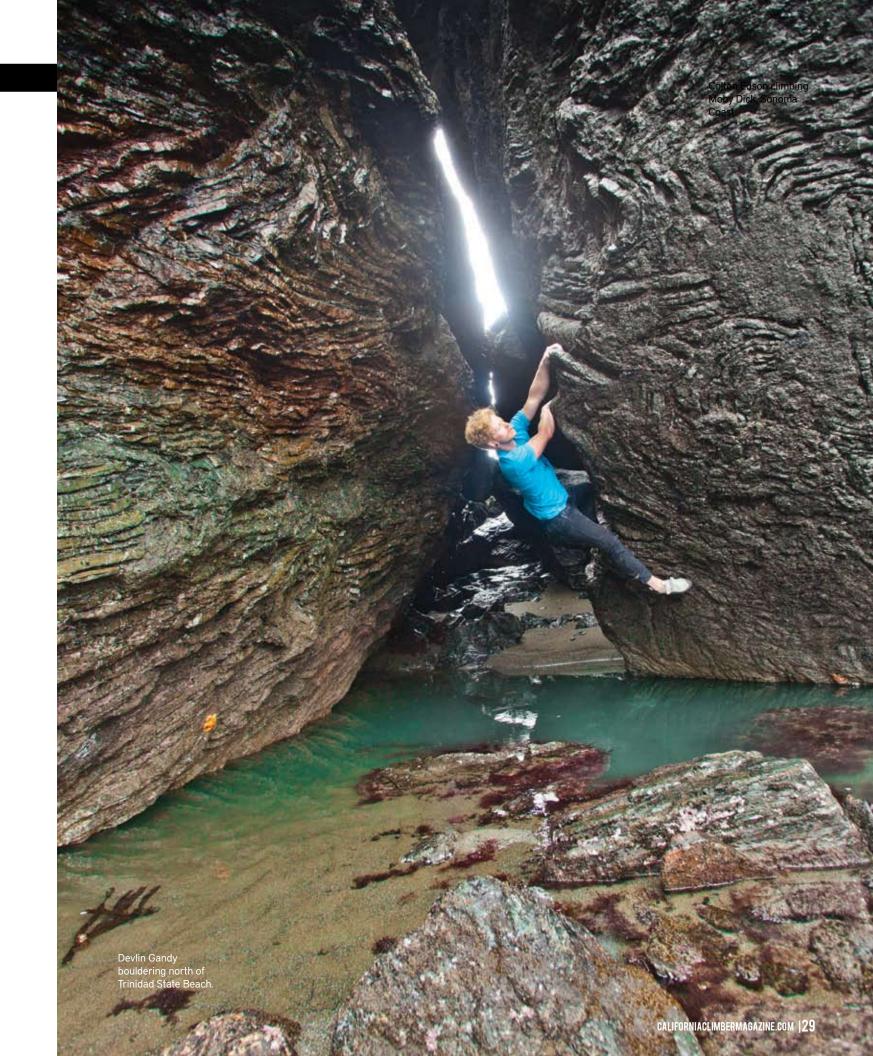
IN THE SUMMER OF 2013, I moved into a house with two friends in the small college town of Arcata, California. After driving along the beaches north of Arcata near the even smaller town of Trinidad, I immediately became obsessed with this section of California's coastline. Not only because of the sheer beauty of the seashore, but also because this portion of California's coast is littered with a seemingly endless abundance of climbable boulders. In my small room I strung together extension cords and cables to run multiple computer monitors which constantly blipped and beeped with tide reports, three dimensional topographic seashore maps and Google Earth images. The walls were lined with maps and tide charts. When my friends began referring to the room as The Command Center, I knew I had too much time on my hands.

One day my roommate Dennis mentioned that he had recently met this guy named Colby, and that Colby had a small aluminum boat. He suggested that we take the little boat out fishing near Trinidad one day. "Yeah yeah sure, let's take the fishing gear," I said hastily. I then enthusiastically briefed them on the real mission: to secure the boat, launch it, and then proceed with a full scale reconnaissance of the coastline north of Trinidad.

Sunny days are rare on the northern California Coast, but we wore shorts and t-shirts as the small aluminum fishing boat crashed through the waves that blasted against the western cliffs of Trinidad Head. The water surrounding the spires of rock in the southern Trinidad Bay was a deep turquoise blue color. Birds squawked and dove for fish as we pointed the boat northbound towards a section of coastline that we had not yet explored – an area between the Trinidad fishing pier and a long beach called College Cove. Here the road that follows the coast north deviates from the waters' edge and thick forested areas obscure any view of the seashore. This boat ride would be the first time any of us had more than glimpsed at this part of the coast.

We timed our reconnaissance mission so that we arrived along the un-explored coastal waters north of Trinidad at high tide in an effort to float as close as possible to the rocks we hoped existed along the beaches. Colby steered the boat around a large island topped with redwood trees as the boat coasted into a shallow bay, then finally around a massive buttress of angular gray rock. What lay beyond this buttress was unlike anything we had imagined – not exactly the seaside Buttermilk Boulders I had been dreaming of, but a sight no less spectacular. Here giant redwood burls the size of two-car garages lay atop a gorgeous cobblestone beach. To the north, 50-foot tall spires dove out of the ocean creating odd geometrical shapes. Near the center of the beach a massive rock archway towered from the sand and bent into the crashing waves. To the south we gazed into a large jumble of rocks with aqua blue tide pools at their bases.

Over the next few weeks we finally found a way to approach the beach from land without trespassing, but even still, it was near-impossible to traverse the coast or climb the rocks while the waves brutally smashed into them. When the tide charts read a negative tide, my friend Devlin and I finally made a successful approach to the rocks and the tide pools below. The rock itself was really unusual, and although a bit damp in spots, it was incredibly climber-friendly with large bands of positive horizontal holds. We had about five minutes to make this photo, as the tide encroached and the growing waves threatened to smash us off the rocks.









Order at www.belaggles.com belaying goggles





CLIFFHANGERS

JOSHUA TREE, C.A.



GOVERNMENT SHITDOWN WWW.CLIFFHANGERGUIDES.COM







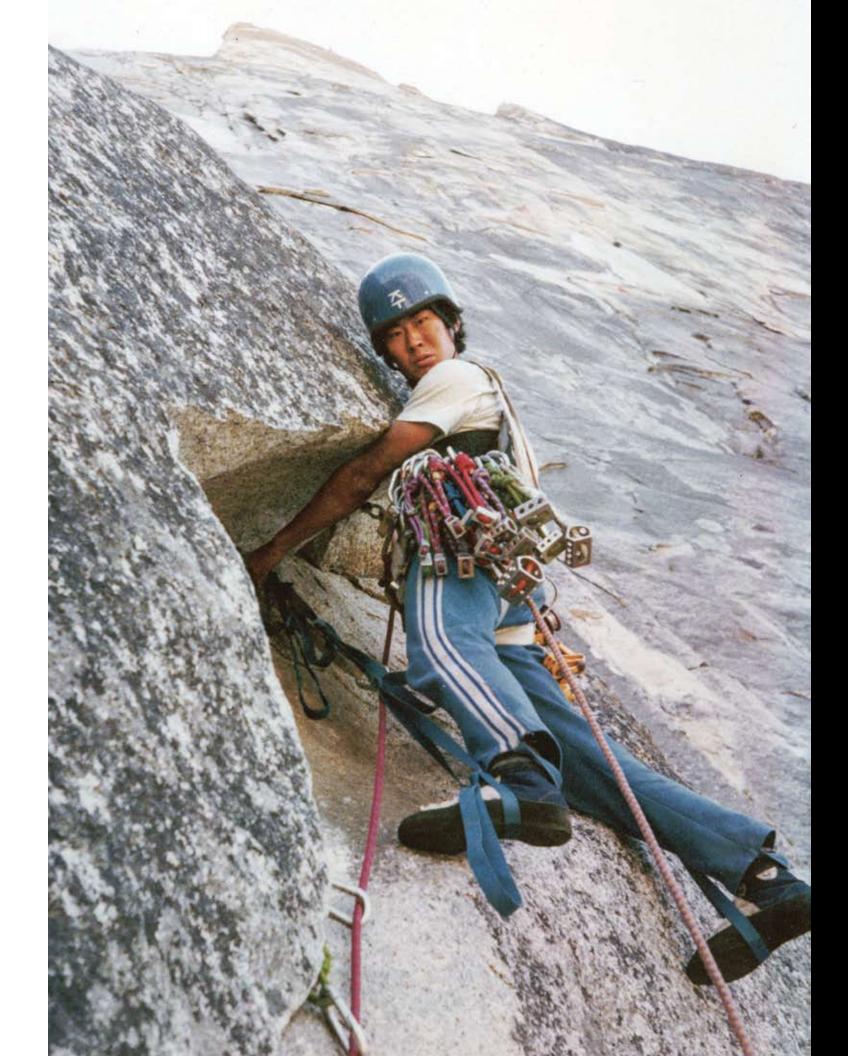
Young Chu during the first Korean ascent of the Northwest Face of Half Dome (VI 5.9 A1) in 1979.

CALIFORNIA CLIMBER: YOUNG

AS CALIFORNIANS WHEN WE THINK ABOUT CLIMBING Despite the challenges of learning to climb in Vietnam-era Korea, IN THE 1970S WE TYPICALLY PICTURE THE SMOOTH GRANITE CLIFFS OF YOSEMITE VALLEY WHERE MYTHICAL FIGURES OF OUR GOLDEN AGE PUSHED THE STANDARDS OF TECHNICAL CLIMBING ON THE VALLEY'S SHEER SUNNY FACES. WE IMAGINE THESE LEGENDARY CLIMBERS NOT ONLY DURING THEIR GROUNDBREAKING ASCENTS, BUT ALSO LOUNGING ALONG THE BANKS OF THE MERCED RIVER, SMOKING POT IN THEIR FREE-OF-RENT TENT CITIES AND VOLKSWAGEN BUSES, SNATCHING TRAYS OF FREE FOOD FROM THE LODGE, FLIRTING WITH ATTRACTIVE TOURISTS - A VERITABLE GARDEN OF EDEN WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN THE YOSEMITE VALLEY OF THE 1970S. YET AS CLIMBING ADVANCED AND GAINED POPULARITY ACROSS THE GLOBE, THERE WERE FEW BRAVE ENOUGH TO PUSH THE STANDARDS OF CLIMBING WITH FAR LESS FREE TIME AND ACCESS TO SOLID ROCK AND SAFE CLIMBING EQUIPMENT. WITH MOST CITIZENS HAVING ALMOST NO ACCESS TO MODERN CLIMBING EQUIPMENT, ENTERING THE SPORT OF ROCK CLIMBING IN EARLY 1970S KOREA WAS DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS. IT WAS HERE THAT A FLEDGLING CLIMBER AND MOUNTAINEER BY THE NAME OF YOUNG CHU GAINED NOT ONLY THE TECHNICAL AND PHYSICAL PREREQUISITES OF CLIMBING, BUT ALSO, BY WAY OF NECESSITY, THE CREATIVITY AND VISION TO DESIGN AND CONSTRUCT HOME-MADE CLIMBING GEAR FOR HIMSELF AND HIS PARTNERS.

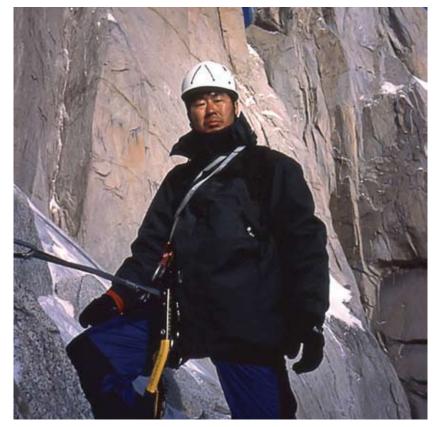
or perhaps because of it, Young Chu went on to become the first Korean in history to climb some of the World's most intimidating faces. After moving to California in the late 1970's, Chu quickly made ascents of almost all of Yosemite's major formations, becoming the first Korean to climb the *Northwest Face of Half Dome* in 1979 and the first Korean to climb The Nose in 1980. After these historic ascents, Chu topped out more difficult Yosemite climbs like Triple Direct, Zenyatta Mendatta and Zodiac on El Capitan. In his over 50-year climbing career Chu has traveled the Globe to Switzerland, Pakistan, Patagonia, Alaska and beyond to climb some of the World's most daunting formations, including the North Face of the Eiger, Nameless Tower, Great Trango Tower, Mt. McKinley and Cerro

During his climbing exploits in California and across the Globe, Chu continued to dream up new ideas for climbing gear and his passion for creating climbing gear continued to grow. In 1986 Chu started the company Nelson Sports which gained a foothold by designing and manufacturing climbing shoes and other types of outdoor gear for well-regarded climbing companies like Five Ten. Chu later went on to found his own brand of climbing gear called Mad Rock, where he continues to create climbing gear and shoes. Chu also continues his passion for climbing to this day, and has completed recent ascents of difficult routes including an ascent of *The Nose* just three years ago in 2015. This past summer Chu completed a difficult 18-pitch ice climb on the Moose's Tooth in Alaska called Ham and Eggs. The following interview with Young Chu was conducted over the phone in October of 2018.









TOP

Young Chu celebrating his 60th birthday in 2015 by climbing the *Nose* (VI 5.9 A1) on El Capitan in a snowstorm.

BOTTOM LEFT

Chu atop the *Nose* (VI 5.9 A1) after making the first Korean Ascent in 1980.

BOTTOM RIGHT

Chu on Cerro Torre in 1999.

"I GOT THE WEBBING FROM AUTOMOBILE PARTS AND THE BUCKLES FROM THE U.S. ARMY SURPLUS SHOP. AT THAT TIME I WAS HAND SEWING, BUT I WAS BREAKING MORE THAN 20 NEEDLES JUST TO MAKE ONE HARNESS."

I STARTED CLIMBING IN 1970 IN HIGH SCHOOL.

There was a high school climbing club and somehow I was forced to join this club. The senior members were looking to recruit new members and so I really was forced to enter. I studied hiking when I was 10 years old in 1965. My dad bought me a backpack and hiking shoes and he told me "Son, from now on you are old enough to go hiking with me." I was really excited so every weekend I would go hiking with my father in Korea. At this time my mom also joined us for hiking. During the hiking we saw some rock climbers and I asked my dad "What are they doing?" He said, "They are rock climbing, don't you ever try that, that's too dangerous." But I kept looking at those guys and it looked really cool. When I started high school the climbing club tried to recruit me but I told them that I had to study and that I didn't have time for this. But they forced me to join, so somehow I became a member. After that, every weekend I would go rock climbing. And it was fascinating, so I became an addict, like I still am today.

THE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE CLIMBING CLUB WERE A FEW YEARS OLDER THAN US, AND IT WAS REALLY LIKE MILITARY TRAINING.

There were strict rules and harsh punishments. But after three years I became really good at rock climbing so I had a climbing partner and we were competing against each other. At this time my mentor was Dr. Cho, a medical student at the college. He was kind of like the God Father of our climbing club. We learned a lot from him and tried to copy him.

WHEN WE STARTED TRYING THE HARDER ROUTES WE REALIZED THAT WE NEEDED BETTER EQUIPMENT AND BETTER SHOES.

At this time we were wearing Korean G.I. boots, which were very slippery. So we went to the surplus store and tried to look for U.S. G.I. boots. The U.S. G.I. boots weren't that good, but we found these really strange boots used by the U.S. Special Forces that had really sticky soles. So we said "Wow, we hit the jackpot!" We cut the top of the boots to make them really short and went climbing in them. We couldn't believe the stickiness of the rubber. We couldn't afford climbing shoes because they were way too expensive. Then we needed harnesses, so I went to a climbing shop to look at the harnesses, and then I came home and made one for myself. I got the webbing from automobile parts and the buckles from the U.S. Army surplus shop. At that time I was hand sewing, but I was breaking more than 20 needles just to make one harness. So I thought, "This is not good, I need a sewing machine." My Mother had a sewing machine, but she never let me use it because she thought I would break the machine. At the time you had to turn the wheel of the sewing machine with one hand and then guide the material with the other hand. When my mom was not home I kind of stole her sewing machine and made my harness. She still doesn't know that I used her sewing machine.

THEN THERE WAS THIS GUY WHO HAD A REALLY NICE BACKPACK MADE IN FRANCE.

So I asked him if I could take a close look at it, and he let me look at it, and then I went home and I made the same backpack with my mom's sewing machine. The following weekend I went out climbing and all of my friends said "Wow! What a nice backpack you have." So then I made a few more for my climbing buddies. We also needed helmets, so I went back to the Army surplus store and found the liners that the G.I. wore inside the metal helmets. I took that and used a heat knife to cut it the way I wanted it and then spray painted it red colors. It looked pretty good, so eventually I had to make a few more helmets for my friends also. And that's how I got into making climbing gear; I had to make my own gear just to go climbing with my friends. For some reason I was really good at making these, and so my friends kept asking me to make more and more, now I'm doing this as a full-time occupation.

"AND AT THIS TIME IN KOREA PEOPLE ROCK CLIMBING DID NOT USE PROTECTION. SO YOU WOULD LEAD THE WHOLE PITCH WITH NO PROTECTION, AND ANY FALL WOULD BE THE FULL PITCH."

Chu on Zodiac (VI 5.7 A2) on El Capitan in 1988.



And at this time in Korea people rock climbing did not use protection. So you would lead the whole pitch with no protection, and any fall would be the full pitch. There were a lot of accidents; every Monday morning you would open the newspaper and see that someone had died while rock climbing. It became one of the most dangerous sports in Korea because we didn't have any protection; first because we had no money to buy it, but second because there was a trend of people just tying the rope around their waists and going for the whole pitch. If you fall on the first pitch in this style it can easily be a fatal fall. My parents became really worried that I was going to die rock climbing, so they decided to move to a place where there are no rocks. So they searched all over the world and found a little island called Hawaii. They studied the island closely to make sure there was no rock climbing, and then decided to move there.

WHEN I BECAME 19 YEARS OLD I IMMIGRATED TO HAWAII AND STARTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII.

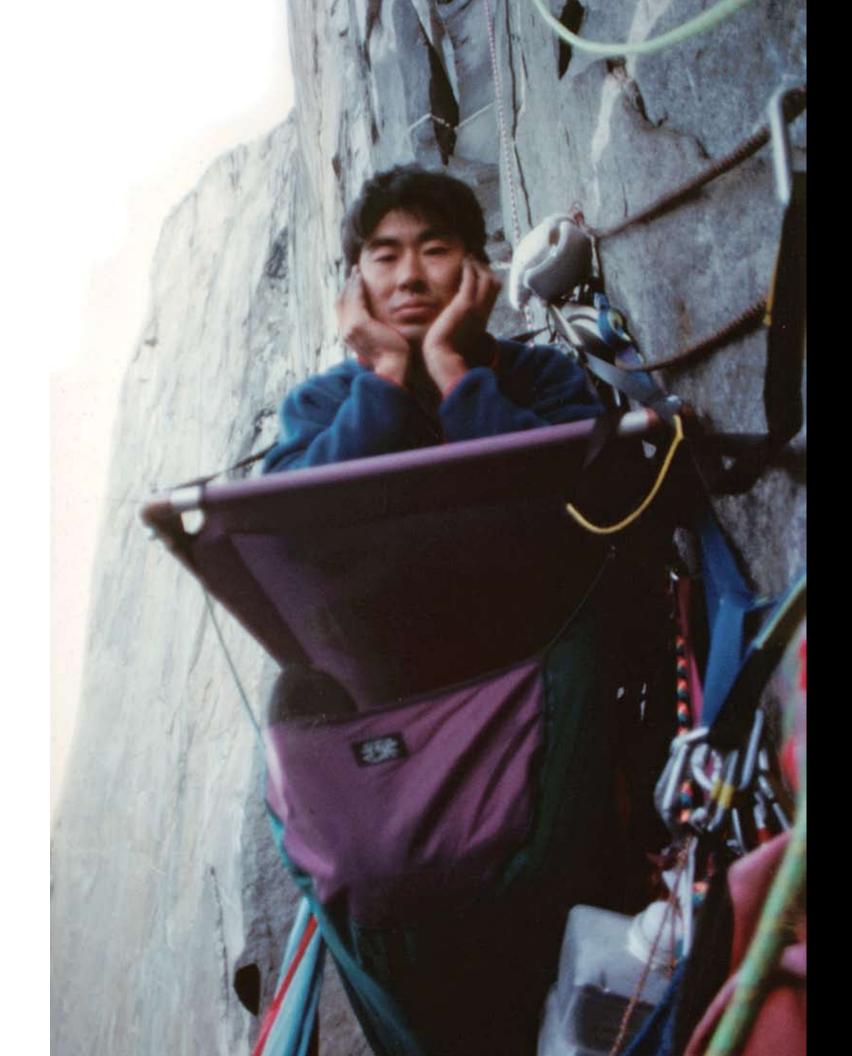
But it was truly boring going to school where there was no climbing. So I decided to get into other things like scuba diving and surfing, but there wasn't anything as exciting as rock climbing. I was hiking around a lot of the islands, and I found a couple little rock cliffs that were kind of loose but still a little doable. I had no partner so I went to the surplus store bought some cheap rope and started putting up some routes. I probably put the first bolt in Hawaii in 1975. But I only put the one bolt. I tried to put a piton but whenever I did the whole piece of rock would break off. Then the Fire Department showed up and they were shouting at me, "Young man you better come down right now or I'm going to have you arrested!" So that was the end of my climbing career in Hawaii. I moved to California and stayed in Yosemite for two and a half years.

IN YOSEMITE I MET ONE OTHER KOREAN CLIMBER NAMED SANG CHOI WHO WAS THE LEADER OF THE UC BERKELEY CLIMBING CLUB. AND WE WERE DOING A LOT OF CLIMBING THERE.

I met a lot of American climbers in Camp 4 and we became really good buddies climbing together in Yosemite. That is how I really became familiar with the Yosemite style of climbing, and that really helped me to climb big walls. I climbed most of the walls there, and I became the first Korean to climb *The Nose* (1980) and the first Korean to climb the *Northwest Face* of Half Dome (1979). I felt really comfortable climbing big walls, so after the Nose I climbed a few others like *Triple Direct, Zenyatta Mendatta* and *Zodiac*. Then I thought, "You know, maybe I should climb some other styles of climbing," so I went to Switzerland and climbed the *North Face* of the Eiger and then I flew to Pakistan and climbed Nameless Tower and Great Trango Tower. During those climbing years I had a lot of ideas about climbing gear.

IN 1986 I WAS CLIMBING VERY SERIOUSLY, AND THEN MY WIFE TOLD ME, "HONEY, I THINK I'M PREGNANT."

And I thought, "Oh my god... I need to start making some money!" And all I knew was how to climb, so I thought I would start making some climbing gear. In 1986 I started the company Nelson Sports and we started by making some chalk bags and mountain biking bags. One day my buyer asked me if I could make some bicycle shoes, and at the same time I was making chalk bags for Charles Cole at Five Ten. One day Charles Cole came to me and said he needed someone who can produce climbing shoes as quick as possible because he was having problems with his supplier in Italy. So he asked me, "How quickly can you start making climbing shoes?" and I said, "Three months." So he gave me three months to start producing Five Ten climbing shoes. And so that's how I got into making climbing shoes; because of Charles Cole. I made a lot of mistakes, but I learned a lot from my mistakes too.





Chu leading on Zenyatta Mondatta (VI 5.7 A4) on El Capitan in 1999.

"IN 1986 I WAS CLIMBING VERY SERIOUSLY, AND THEN MY WIFE TOLD ME, "HONEY, I THINK I'M PREGNANT."
AND I THOUGHT, "OH MY GOD... I NEED TO START MAKING SOME MONEY!"

WHEN I STARTED MAKING CLIMBING SHOES I NOTICED THAT THE LASTS FOR SHOES DID NOT LOOK LIKE YOUR FOOT, BECAUSE THEY MADE THE LASTS FOR THE OTHER PARTS OF PRODUCTION.

The last has a very clear edge line that we call a feather line, and the feather line helps the pattern maker make a pattern for the upper, but that line did not look very natural to me. What I did was pour silicone over my foot and I made a cast of my foot. But your foot cannot be used for production because you want your foot to be slightly curled in and you need it to be a little pointier. So I made some modifications and made the last which became very popular. That last is very natural; even today I kind of like the last, and it's been copied by many, many climbing shoe companies.

IN 1978 A KOREAN TEAM WAS ABLE TO CLIMB EVEREST FOR THE FIRST KOREAN ASCENT.

One member of this team named Kole made the summit. And so Kole became like Hillary in Korea – a national hero. His goal was to do the 5 Summits, so the next year he went to climb Mt. McKinley. I was picked up as one of the team members for this expedition. We tried to climb the western ridge, and near the summit we had an accident. We had two rope teams, but one of the rope teams fell down 3,000 feet. Mr. Kole was killed during this fall. All the alpine climbers, when they scale a mountain, they never think about their own death. They think that it will be difficult, but they always think that they will come home alive. I think that way and all of my friends think that way. The problem is, once in a while, that doesn't work, and there's an accident. That was the first time that I realized that these things can actually happen to me.

I GOT SO DEPRESSED BY THAT ACCIDENT THAT I DECIDED TO QUITE CLIMBING AND I WENT BACK TO MY PARENT'S HOUSE IN HAWAII

But during school I kept thinking about EI Cap. And at night I was dreaming about climbing EI Cap. So I said, "OK, one more big wall and that's it." So I went to Yosemite and climbed Triple Direct, but that was like opening Pandora's Box, because after that nothing could stop me from climbing. For some reason after doing more big routes on EI Cap I was able to regain my confidence for alpine climbing as well. I really had no fear after that. And I'm still climbing today. This year I climbed a route called Ham and Eggs, an 18-pitch ice climb on the Moose's Tooth in Alaska. Three years ago in 2015 I climbed the Nose again with my climbing partner Hojin, who has been my climbing partner for 50 years. We met in 1975 and so we went to climb the Nose as our 50th anniversary. Having a partner for 50 years is really, really nice.

I ALWAYS THINK THAT SINCE ROCK CLIMBING IS SUCH A SMALL MARKET, EVEN THOUGH PEOPLE HAVE REALLY GOOD IDEAS, THERE'S NOT REALLY ENOUGH TIME OR MONEY TO DEVELOP REALLY BRILLIANT IDEAS.

I've met a lot of climbers and a lot of people with really good ideas, but because it's such a small market they often don't materialize. When I was climbing in the 1970s there was a shoe called the EB, and it was really good, but then Boreal came out with a shoe called the Fire, and the Fire had really sticky rubber, so everyone was using it. But that was in the 1970s. If you compare these to modern climbing shoes, they really haven't evolved that much, they are much better, but they really haven't changed that much. My goal is to come up with something completely different. Now I'm trying to use compression molding to try to come up with a truly three dimensional shape. I think compression molding is the future of climbing shoes, and hopefully by next year I can make a truly 21st Century climbing shoe.





ГОР

Young at Shoulder Camp on Cerro Torre in 1999.

воттом

A helicopter trying to land through strong wind while Young and team assist in rescuing an injured Argentine climber on Fitzroy in 1999. "THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT I REALLY FELT THE REALITY OF ALPINE CLIMBING. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT I REALIZED THAT THESE THINGS CAN ACTUALLY HAPPEN TO ME."

I WAS CLIMBING IN PATAGONIA AND WE MADE AN ATTEMPT TO CLIMB CERRO TORRE BUT THERE WAS A BIG STORM SO WE COULDN'T FINISH THE ROUTE, AND WE HAD TO SPEND THE NIGHT ON THE SHOULDER WITHOUT MUCH SLEEPING GEAR.

So my partner Hojin told me that he could not survive another night, and he said that even though it was windy and storming that we needed to continue rappelling the route. We had already done one bivy and it was too cold for him and he was sure he would not survive another night. But I told him that it was too windy and that if we tried to rappel that our ropes would get tangled and that we were going to die for sure. The only chance that we have is to spend the night and wait for the winds to calm down. So we had a debate - he wanted to go down and I tried to convince him that going down was suicide. Somehow he listened to me, and we decided to spend another night. He had made some special bivy gear, and his sleeping bag was about the size of a baseball. I had a better sleeping bag, so I told him, "OK, I'll trade you sleeping bags." In the middle of the night I was shivering and I was looking at this guy and he was sleeping cozy. I started doing bicycle kicks to stay warm and he looked at me and said "are you going to do this all night long?" That's my buddy Hojin...

WHEN I WAS STARTING TO CLIMB THE NORTH FACE OF THE EIGER MY BUDDY AND I HAD A BIG WORRY ABOUT A BIG STORM THAT WAS COMING IN THE NEXT TWO DAYS – IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE BIGGEST STORM IN EUROPE IN SIX YEARS.

But we heard about a guy who climbed the Eiger in eight hours. So we thought that even if we climbed three times slower than this guy we could still do the climb in 24 hours. Even at that pace we would still have a chance to come down before the storm hits. We were in pretty good shape, we had been training a lot, so we decided to just simul-climb the route. We thought we'd do it in about 20 hours and then still have plenty of time to go down. So we started climbing the North Face, but the problem with the North Face of the Eiger is that it's such a broad area, you really don't know which way to go. And you can go every which way, left, right or center, but eventually if you're on the wrong route it dead-ends. All we had was a little post card with a red line drawn on it where the route was. We got lost about three or four times and had to rappel back to the base again. We lost half of a day before we even started the correct route. By the time we made the summit the storm was in full scale. We couldn't see anything. I couldn't see five feet in front of me.

46| WINTER2018/19 CALIFORNIACLIMBERMAGAZINE.COM | 47

"WE COILED THE ROPE, THEN WE SHOOK HANDS, AND SAID GOODBYE TO EACH OTHER. WE BOTH THOUGHT THAT WE WERE GOING TO DIE, SO WE JUST SAID, "GOOD LUCK," AND STARTED DOWN."

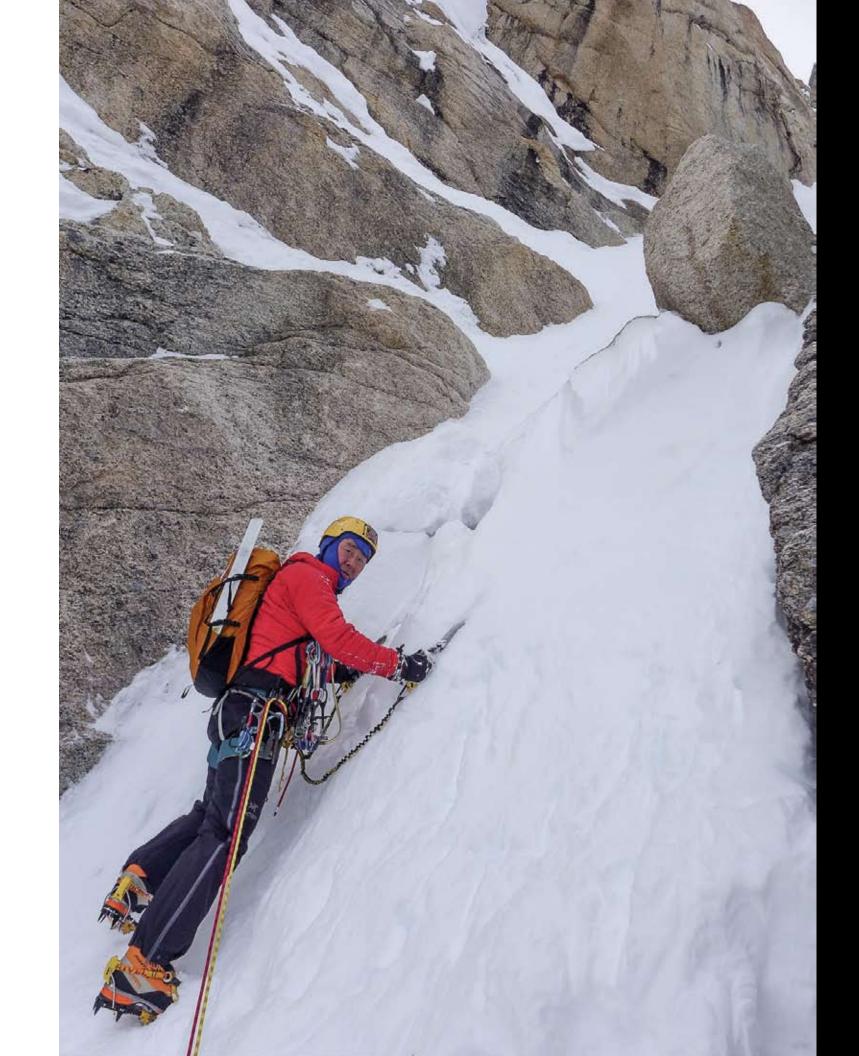
Chu leading a pitch high on *Ham* & *Eggs* (5.9 WI4 M4, 18p) on the Moose's Tooth in the Alaska Range in the summer of 2018.



That forced us to rappel, but we had brought very minimal gear because we had simul-climbed the route. The Eiger is about 60 pitches and we only belayed 5 or 6 pitches briefly. After ten of fifteen rappels we were out of gear, which forced us to downclimb a snow covered slab. I fell a few times and my partner fell a few times, but somehow we were able to stop each other by belaying each other and survived. But we got to a point where we thought that if we continued this way we were going to die for sure. And also the wind was getting worse so we decided to ask for a rescue. Rescue was very expensive, but we got rescue insurance before the climb for \$40, so we thought "Sure, let's call the helicopter." We took our red jackets and started swinging them and screaming for help, but we realized that nobody could see us because of the storm, and they could not hear us because of the wind. And even if somebody did, the helicopter could not fly because of the storm. So we started joking with each other, "Man, we just wasted a bunch of money on rescue insurance!"

AT THIS TIME WE THOUGHT THAT WE WERE PROBABLY GOING TO DIE IN A COUPLE OF HOURS DUE TO HYPOTHERMIA.

My partner was already in pretty bad shape, and I was in pretty bad shape. So at that moment we decide to solo climb down. We coiled the rope, then we shook hands, and said goodbye to each other. We both thought that we were going to die, so we just said, "Good luck," and started down. Somehow both my partner and I were able to downclimb all the way to the bottom. I was sure he was going to die, and he actually ended up falling 75 feet but he landed on a ledge and survived. It was a miracle that we both survived, and met at the bottom. When we met there was a train coming by at that moment and we thought, "Wow, we are lucky! Let's catch the train." When we jumped into the train it was a very noisy train, with lots of people talking and making noise, then suddenly the whole train was silent – because two crazy Korean climbers had jumped into the train and started hugging each other and crying. We looked around and noticed that the whole train was full of elderly Japanese women just looking at us like we were insane.



CALIFORNIA CLIMBER

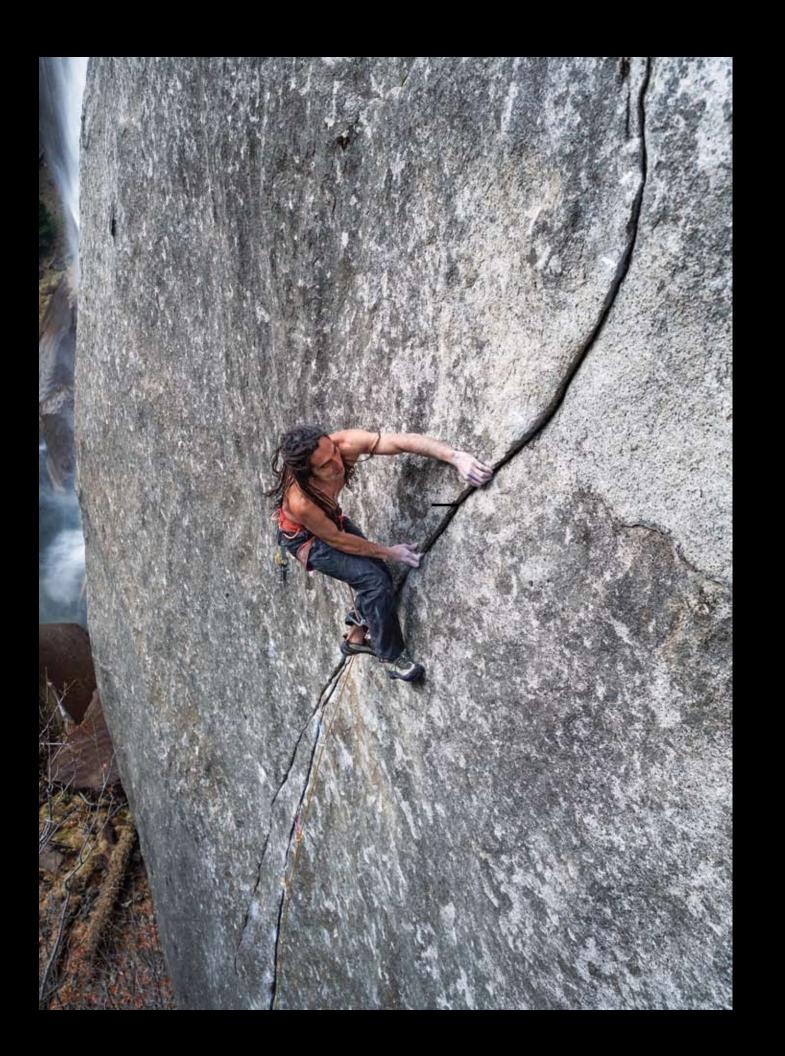
PRINTED IN THE USA SINCE ISSUE #1

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



- To donate use the Paypal address climb108@yahoo.com -
 - To subscribe visit californiaclimbermagazine.com -



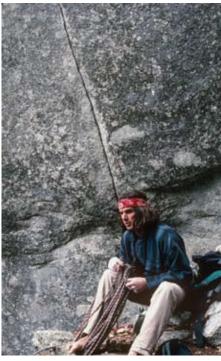


MAGIC LINE

WORDS + KIM PFABE / IMAGES + JIM THORNBURG

THE BASE OF VERNAL FALLS IN YOSEMITE VALLEY IS A POWERFUL PLACE. IN THE SPRING, AN ICY RIVER PLUNGES FROM A NARROW CHANNEL, DROPS 200-FEET AND IMPACTS THE ROCKS BELOW WITH A FORCE THAT CREATES ITS OWN WIND. THE RESULTING GUSTS SPRAY A SOAKING MIST DOWNSTREAM FOR HUNDREDS OF YARDS. 100-FEET TO THE RIGHT OF THE BOOMING FALLS, ON A DARK, BLANK WALL, A PHANTOM CRACK SPLITS THE GRANITE LIKE A STRAY RIBBON PLACED BY THE BREEZE. FOR MOST OF ITS 100-FOOT HEIGHT, THE CRACK IS TOO THIN FOR FINGERTIPS, YET IS OFFSET WITH ONE EDGE OF THE CRACK JUTTING AN INCH BEYOND THE OTHER. AN OPTIMISTIC PERSON COULD IMAGINE THAT WITH ENOUGH STRENGTH SOMEONE COULD CLING TO THE EDGE IN A TENUOUS LIEBACK POSITION AND MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, PULL BOTH FEET OFF THE GROUND AND ONTO MICROSCOPIC FOOTHOLDS.





PREVIOUS PAGE

Lonnie Kauk powering through the final crux of *Magic Line*. These moves are technical and powerful, but Lonnie also felt like there was another force blocking his passage. "It was like there was a spirit there, and every time I got there it wouldn't let me pass," said Lonnie.

THIS PAGE, LEFT

Like father, like son; Lonnie Kauk (left in 2016) and Ron Kauk (right in 1996) shoeing up for *Magic Line*.

OPPOSITE PAGE

Lonnie Kauk styling through the lower crux moves of *Magic Line*; an insecure bulge with bad feet.

It was 1974 when legendary California climber Ron Kauk moved to Yosemite at the age of 17. A year later, Kauk, along with friends John Bachar (age 18) and John Long (age 22), made the first free ascent of the 1,200-foot *East Face* of Washington Column. The ascent marked the first time a bonafide big wall had been climbed free. The trio named their climb *Astroman* (5.11c), and with this one brilliant climb, the three youngsters ushered in the modern era of Yosemite climbing.

Three years later in 1978 Kauk and Bachar teamed up again, this time with their friend John "Yabo" Yablonski. Yabo, in a druginduced state of awareness, had noticed a wild sequence of potential moves up the 20-foot high overhanging east face of the massive Columbia Boulder in Camp 4. When Kauk eventually topped the terrifying mantle at the lip of the boulder (there were no pads in 1978) he had once again expanded the horizon of Yosemite climbing with the first ascent of Midnight Lightning (V8).

For the next twenty years Kauk would continue to push standards in Yosemite. In 1984 he notched another benchmark when he climbed Thriller, Yosemite's first V10. Later in the 1980s, Kauk traveled abroad to Europe where he climbed routes as hard as 5.14. Back in Yosemite, he established Crossroads (5.13d/14a) in 1990 and Peace (5.13c) in 1995. It was during this time that Kauk began to attempt a free ascent of the thin crack to the right of Vernal Falls. After several seasons Kauk was able to manage what no one had before - a no-falls ascent on top-rope. Soon after, he began attempts to lead the line with the gear preplaced, and in 1996, after a long battle, he sent and christened the route Magic Line, rating it a conservative 5.14b.

For many years after the first free ascent of *Magic Line* the route went untried. Its reputation was fearsome precisely because of how long it had taken Ron - his mastery of thin granite climbing was literally written in stone on his Camp 4 boulder problems; routes like *Thriller* (V10) and *Kauk Slab* (V8) that sit on the main trail through the boulders and were seen by every passerby and often attempted with a "why not" attitude that left most scratching their heads at how to even get off the ground.

A year went by, then two, then five. It was a long time for a hard, beautiful king line in the center of the climbing universe to go unrepeated. Rumors arose that footholds had broken off, rendering the climb nearly impossible. In 2002, California climber Beth Rodden made a brief visit to *Magic Line*, but found the route wet and dauntingly difficult. In 2008, after making the first free ascent of another Yosemite test-piece route *Meltdown* (5.14c) she found her way to *Magic Line* again.

"I had seen pictures and heard of the beautiful route," said Rodden. "Ron Kauk had always been a climbing idol of mine, growing up in the gym with posters of him in Yosemite. But I wasn't the climber that I needed to be in 2002 and it was wet from the waterfall, so I put it on the back burner for many more years. I started working on it again in the fall of 2008. I had established *Meltdown* the previous spring (another Ron Kauk project) and I also was going through a divorce and needed something positive to focus on. It's a beautiful line that is thought provoking and technical - my favorite type of climbing."

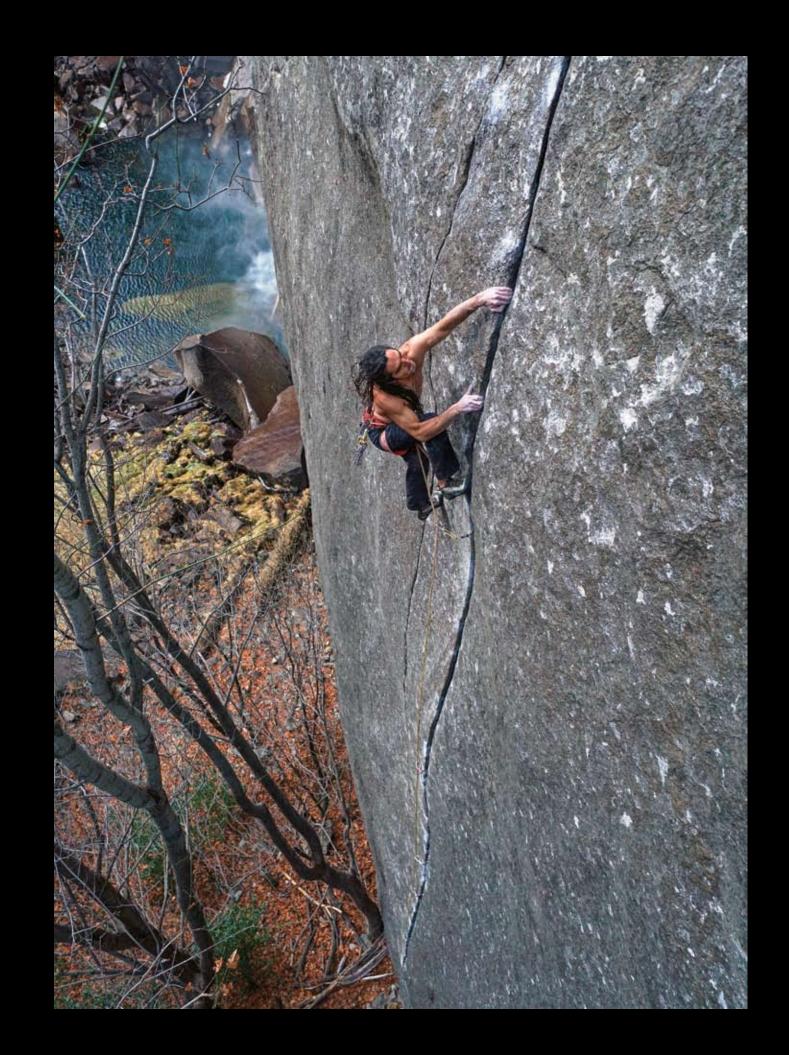
In the spring of 2009, she felt ready and was making steady progress until she was stopped by a labrum injury. She was back in the fall of 2009, but her best attempt ended with a fall at the final crux as her toes went numb from the cold. In late 2009 Rodden suffered a finger injury that ended her efforts on *Magic Line*.

"Magic Line taught me so much about what is important," added Rodden, "how to find self worth outside of climbing projects. I think if I had had the wherewithal and understanding and compassion to see that climbing didn't make me who I was; I would have probably done the route. But I hadn't reached that point yet. It took many years of injury, patience and becoming a mom to realize that climbing is a wonderful thing no matter what level you are at, and to have a healthy relationship with it again."

Another climber to make a strong bid on the route was Tom Moulin, a vastly talented underground crusher from Las Vegas who spent two seasons attempting the route. On one of his best attempts, Tom climbed up to just below the crux and placed two small slider-nuts. He then down-climbed to the ground, took a long rest and then fired through the crux only to slip on a much easier move higher up. His fall ripped both nuts and the resulting ground fall was only partially slowed by a lower piece of gear. As it happened, Tom had brought his parents that day to show them what he'd been up to.

"It was pretty hard to downplay that fall," said Moulin, "especially with my leg swelling up. But I had to trv."

In the fall of 2016 Carlo Traversi, a strong climber who has bouldered V15 and recently made the second ascent of Beth Rodden's *Meltdown* (5.14c), fell a couple feet from the finish jug (the last hard move) on his fifth day on the route. And so *Magic Line* continued to elude.





MAGIC LINE

TOP LEFT

Lonnie Kauk sinks into one of the few actual finger locks on the entire

TOP RIGHT

Ron Kauk moving out of the lower crux of *Magic Line* in 1996. Before the invention of micro-cams, Ron had to protect a part of the lower crux with equalized small stoppers and sliding nuts.

воттом

Ron hiking the Mist Trail to the base of *Magic Line* in 1996.

While Ron was working on Magic Line, his son Lonnie, then 14, was a budding star in the world of snowboarding – climbing was barely on his radar. Lonnie recalls seeing his dad climb Magic Line in a Masters of Stone video

"I remember when I watched the video and saw dad liebacking up *Magic Line*, and for some reason I was like man, I think I'm going to be able to lieback," said Lonnie.

Lonnie started climbing four years later at the age of 19. His first day out climbing, Ron took him to Tuolumne Meadows. At Puppy Dome they encountered Chris Sharma working on the first ascent of *Thunderbird* (V11). Later that day Lonnie took an up-close look at the problem, completely baffled at how it could be possible. He was nevertheless intrigued, and the seed was planted. The following year he was able to climb his fathers' famous boulder problem *Midnight Lightning* (V8). After his ascent Lonnie recalled his dad meeting him on top of the Columbia Boulder.

"It was getting dark and dad climbed up the tree to sit with me on top," said Lonnie. "He said 'man that was pretty good son' and I was just like wow- he said I was pretty good. After that I was just flying. That was the first time I felt like a part of the tribe."

Lonnie spent the following years repeating many of his father's iconic routes including Peace (5.13c), Thriller (V10) and Broken Arrow (5.13d). In 2011 after completing Crossroads (5.13d, FA Ron Kauk, 1990) he felt Magic Line was the next step on his path. But that year a government shutdown closed Yosemite and Lonnie found himself in Bishop climbing in the Owens River Gorge, the stomping ground of his other childhood hero, John Bachar who died in 2009 while soloing in nearby Mammoth Lakes. Bachar had been a big influence on Lonnie's life, and John's circuit of hard solos in Owens like Ripoff (5.12b) and Flashflood (5.12b) had always been on Lonnie's radar.

"Going to Bishop and following John Bachar's trail honored the fact that I was connected to him in the beginning when I first started climbing," said Lonnie. "He was pretty much my dad's best friend back when it was cool. It was honoring them both, which set up my mold. Once I felt fulfilled in that mission I was like alright, now it's time for Magic Line."

hen I first walked up to Magic Line I thought oh yeah, this looks doable," said Lonnie. "But then when I tried to pull on I was like what? How did he even do this? It felt so incredibly hard!"

After several sessions on top-rope Lonnie had worked out many of the moves, but he had no gear to protect the crack, and scant experience with gear placement as he had only been trad climbing a couple of times prior. He was faced with learning to place gear (that he didn't yet have) on one of the hardest cracks in the world. Then a small miracle arrived.

"My brother found a rack of cams a friend had left at his house, and so all of the sudden this magical rack appeared," said Lonnie. "It was a lot of tiny cams, basically the exact rack I needed for 90% of *Magic Line*. But I didn't even know where I was supposed to put this stuff! I knew I had to clip here or there, because there are only a few spots I can clip, but none of the gear was thin enough to protect the crux. I wondered if they even made cams that thin. So finally I was like; 'Dad, you got to help me man!"

Together Ron and Lonnie went to the climbing shop in Yosemite where Ron bought the key tiny pieces needed to protect the crux, including a Black Diamond triple zero C3. Yet even with the miracle rack of cams from his brother's house and his father's contribution, the process of leading the climb with preplaced gear was initially overwhelming for Lonnie.

"It was intimidating to climb a blank face with a crack and your protection for the crux is a #000, then add the booming waterfall... it's all really intimidating," said Lonnie. "Eventually I began to learn the vibration of the place and got in sync with it, and then all of a sudden I started to feel more calm and confident about the moves."

by the middle of December 2016, almost exactly 20 years after his father had made the first free ascent, Lonnie had made it to the upper crux (V9) of *Magic Line* three times, only to fall tantalizingly close to the top.

"I remember being at the bottom and saying to my dad, 'Man, I've been there three freaking times now' and he said, 'Yeah man that's freakin badass.' It was one of those moments. I thought; wow he actually said "that was badass." I was like 'thank you, I appreciate this tremendously."

Lonnie's troubles at the final crux were in line with the struggles Rodden and Traversi had faced there. The move is technical and powerful, but Lonnie also felt like there was another force blocking his passage.

"It was like there was a spirit there, and every time I got there it wouldn't let me pass," said Lonnie.

Finally, Lonnie took the step of burning sage in that spot and asking for passage. By the end of December Lonnie was ready. On December 30th 2016 Lonnie Kauk tied into the sharp end while his father Ron and friend Tom Herbert, another legendary figure of hard Yosemite climbing, looked on.

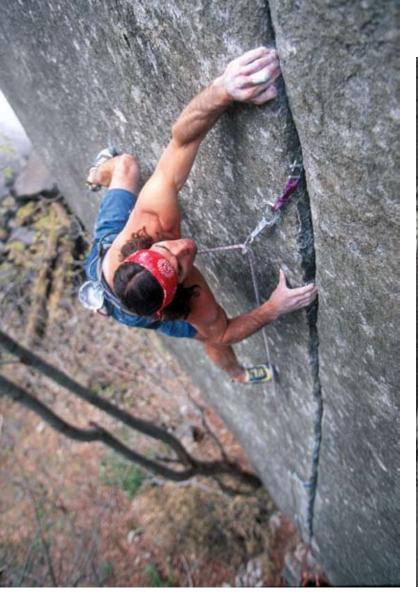
"I had my TC Pros at the base; I had my lead line on and was ready to go," said Lonnie. "As I'm sitting there at the base I took a look up at both of them- they were just standing there with their arms crossed, just looking down at me. I swear to god, it was just like this feeling of "Is the kid going to do it?" Something said don't focus on them, focus on you, focus on the climb, don't take on anything. Your dad said you're a badass."

Lonnie started to climb, making it past the lower crux, a bulge with bad feet, and up to the rest. Resting for ten minutes or more, he calmed his mind. Finally, he fired up and went, making it to the last piece of gear. Feeling strong Lonnie began the crux, only to make a crucial mistake.











TOP LEFT

A photo that defies physics: Ron Kauk pasting feet and miraculously sticking to the insecure lower crux of *Magic Line* in 1996.

TOP RIGHT

From this vantage the offset nature of the crack makes *Magic Line* appear as though it could be 5.11. Lonnie Kauk, who has now redpointed the route three separate times, absolutely floats this portion of the route as if it's 5.10.

"I didn't flip my foot over the rope, and if you don't flip your foot over the rope, the rope gets caught behind your leg for the rest of the ride," said Lonnie. "Because of all the soloing I've done, I just went into that mode. I was just like please, please keep me safe. I bumped my foot but the rope was still caught behind my leg. Then I just went for it by the skin of my knee, at the end I went right hand a little bit, left hand a little bit, and then I was like oh my god oh my god, my hand was on the jug! I was like no way we did it, we made it as close as you can get to falling, but we did it."

As emotional as the send felt, Lonnie was even more impacted upon returning to the ground to be greeted by his misty-eyed father.

In the fall of 2018 Lonnie decided to try
Magic Line again, this time placing all the
protection on lead for a redpoint ascent. Lonnie's
decision to redpoint Magic Line was a bold one
considering his lack of experience with placing
gear. Prior to Magic Line, Lonnie was nearexclusively experienced with bouldering, sport
climbing and free-soloing.

With Lonnie's sights on redpointing Magic Line, he had to discover creative ways to pause and carefully place intricate and sometimes blind gear from extremely tenuous positions.

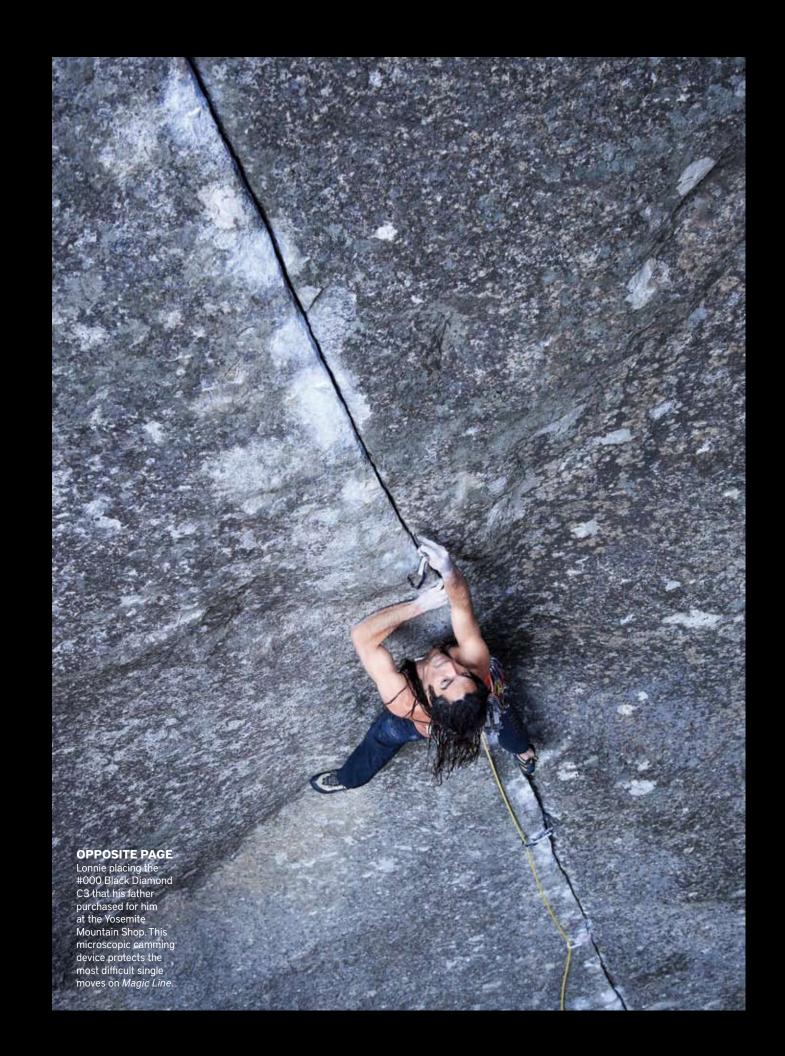
"Sometimes I'd put the gear in blind, and then lean in to take a peek... is it good? Please let it be good!"

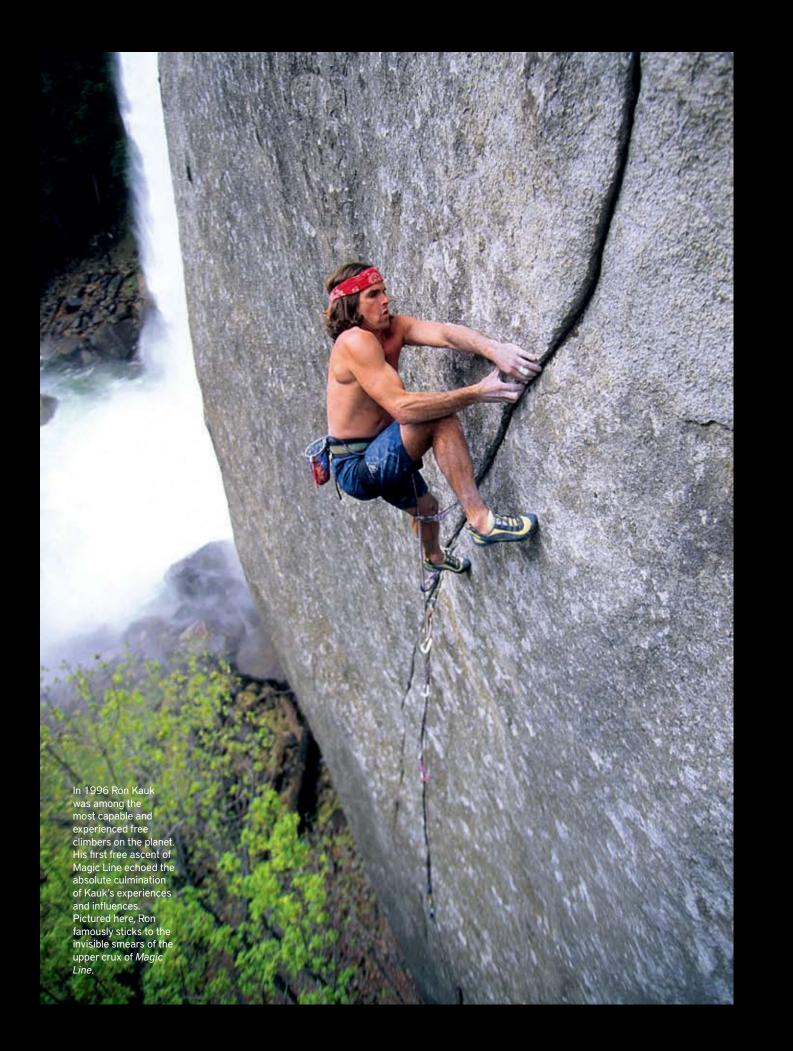
As if the climb wasn't hard enough, Lonnie also faced the hurdle of finding people to make the steep 45-minute trek to support him with belays. In addition, he also needed dry, cold winter conditions but was often hindered by rain and snow. Despite the obstacles, he persevered and finally, on November 14th, 2018, nearly 22 years after his dad's ascent, *Magic Line* had its first redpoint.

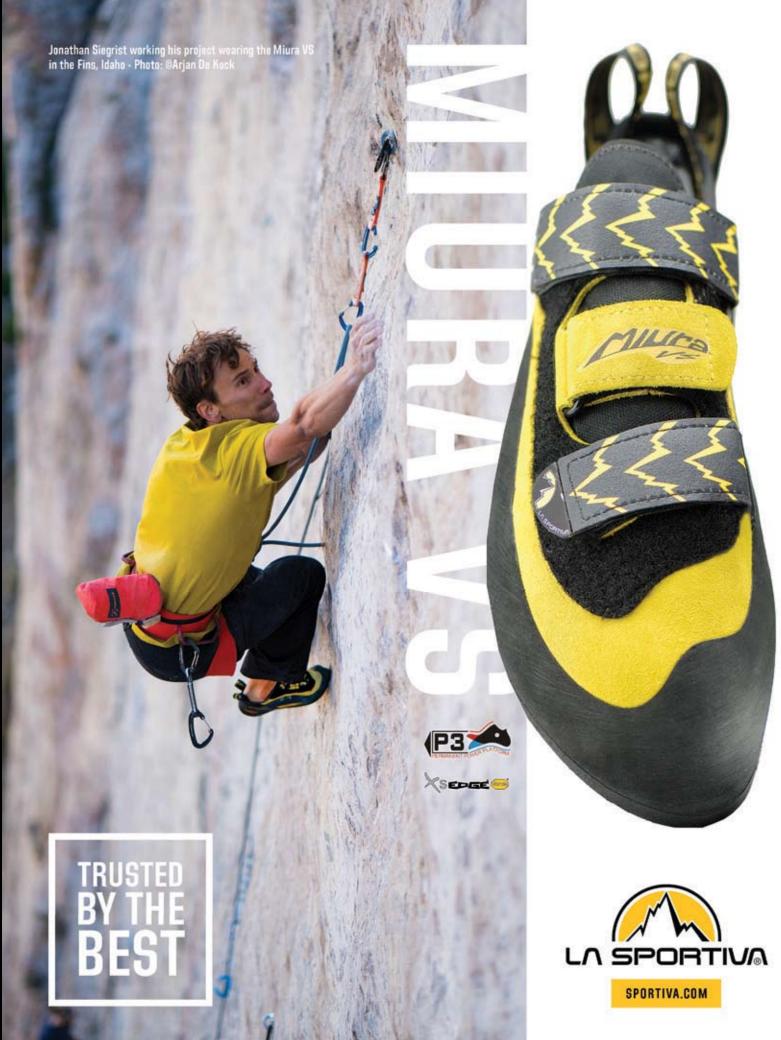
Lonnie's total time on *Magic Line* stretched out over two months in 2016 and 12 more days in 2018. In the process he learned patience, but at times he questioned the devotion the climb was requiring from him.

"I would wonder: is this truly my purpose?" said Lonnie. "I started realizing, hell yeah; this is part of us, to do this craft, to climb. Our dad did it and it felt so right. It was kind of like I was chosen to do this, so I just stepped to it and didn't worry about anything else."

Similar to his father in so many ways, Lonnie sees this as a beginning to giving back. Like Ron, who takes kids from the local juvenile hall out hiking in Yosemite to discover "education natures" way," Lonnie similarly hopes to start a non-profit with a mission to teach Native American kids in the Bishop area about rock climbing. Lonnie sees his future climbing harder and then sharing it, spreading the connection and what he's learned to pay it back to a younger generation.







LOS ANGELES

Arc'teryx La Brea

159 South La Brea Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90036

Sender One

1441 S. Village Way Santa Ana, CA 92705

Rockreation

11866 La Grange Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90025

Hangar 18 Upland

256 East Stowell Street Upland, CA 91786

Hangar 18 Hawthorn

4926 West Rosecrans Avenue Hawthorne, CA 90250

Hangar 18 Riverside

6935 Arlington Avenue Riverside, CA 92503

The Factory

1547 West Struck Avenue Orange, CA 92867

Top Out Climbing Gym

26332 Ferry Ct Santa Clarita, CA 91350

Gear Co-Op

3315 Hyland Ave Costa Mesa, CA 92626

1375 East 6th Street Unit #8, Los Angeles, CA 90021

Cliffs of Id

2537 S Fairfax Ave Culver City, CA 90232

Vertigo Boulders

266 E Magnolia Blv Burbank, CA 91502

Hollywood Boulders

1107 N Bronson Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90038

SAN DIEGO

Mesa Rim

10110 Mesa Rim Road San Diego, CA 92121

Vertical Hold

9580 Distribution Avenue San Diego, CA 92121

Nomad Ventures

405 West Grand Avenue Escondido, CA 92025

JOSHUA TREE

Nomad Ventures

61795 Twentynine Palms Highway A, Joshua Tree, CA 92252

Cliffhanger Guides

6551 Park Blvd, Joshua Tree, CA 92252

CENTRAL COAST

Pacific Edge

104 Bronson Street Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Sanctuary Rock Gym

1855 East Ave Sand City, CA 93955

CENTRAL FOOTHILLS

Metal Mark

4042 N Cedar Ave Fresno, CA 93726

Alpenglow Gear Co

40879 CA-41 #1f, Oakhurst, CA 93644

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

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

Sierra Nevada Adventure Company Murphys

448 Main St, Murphys, CA 95247

SACRAMENTO

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

The Boulder Field

8425 Belvedere Ave #100, Sacramento, CA 95826

Berkeley Ironworks

800 Potter St, Berkeley, CA 94710

The Studio Climbing

396 S 1st St, San Jose, CA 95113

520 20th St, Oakland, CA 94612

Great Western Power Co.

Dogpatch Boulders

2573 3rd St, San Francisco, CA 94107

Mission Cliffs

2295 Harrison St, San Francisco, CA 94110

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

Planet Granite Sunnyvale

815 Stewart Dr, Sunnyvale, CA 94085 Planet Granite San Francisco

924 Mason St, San Francisco, CA 94129

Bridges Rock Gym

5635 San Diego St, El Cerrito, CA 94530

WINE COUNTRY

Rockzilla

849 Jackson St suite 5A, Napa, CA 94559

Vertex Climbing Center 3358 Coffey Lane

Santa Rosa, CA 95403

NORTH COAST

Far North Climbing Gym

1065 K St C, Arcata, CA 95521

EASTERN SIERRA Big Willi Mountaineering

120 S. Main Street, Suite 13, Lone Pine, CA 93545

Elevation

150 S. Main St Lone Pine, CA

Eastside Sports

224 N Main Street Bishop, CA 93514

Fixe Hardware

TKTK

Hostel California 213 Academy Ave, Bishop, CA 93514

Sage to Summit

312 N Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514

Spellbinder Books

124 S Main Street, Bishop, CA 93514

Mammoth Mountaineering

3189 Main Street

Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Mammoth Gear Exchange 298 N Main Street,

Bishop, CA 93514

Black Sheep Coffee

232 N Main Street. Bishop, CA 93514

Mountain Rambler

186 S Main Street,

Bishop, CA 93514

GREATER LAKE TAHOE AREA

Basecamp Climbing Gym

255 N Virginia Street, Reno, NV 89501

Blue Granite

1259 Emerald Bay Rd, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

Greater Tahoe Gripworks

Pine and, Sage Ave, Markleeville, CA 96120

High Altitude Fitness 880 Northwood Blvd

Incline Village, NV

Alpenalow Sports

415 N Lake Blvd, Tahoe City, CA 96145

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

The Backcountry

11400 Donner Pass Rd #100, Truckee, CA 96161

MEED TO TIGHUDN LOAD?



BRING **ALPENGLOW**



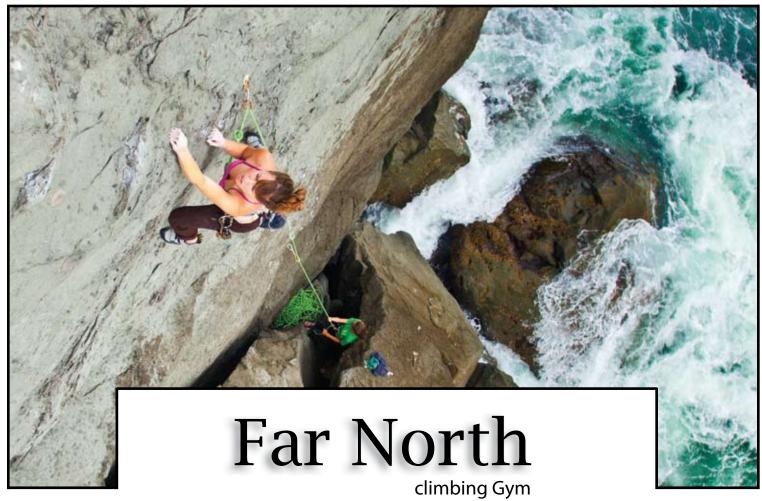
BUY*SELL*TRADE*CONSIGN

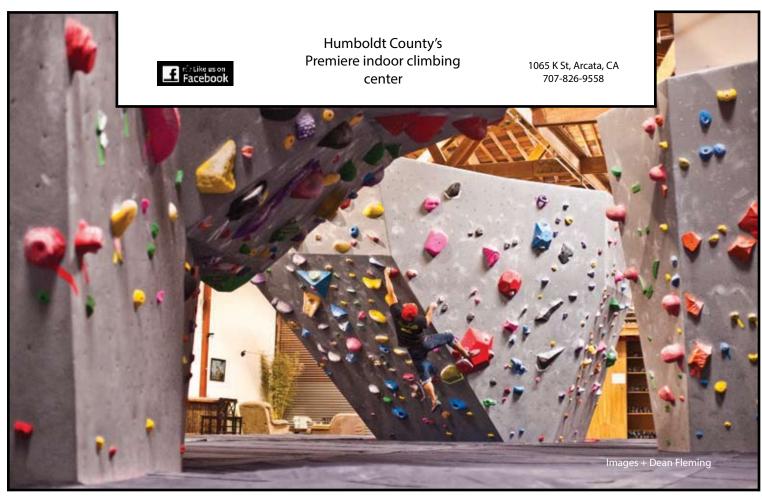
'NEW/USED OUTDOOR EQUIPMENT : CLIMBING GEAR : PAD RENTALS 'FRIENDLY ADVICE 'GUIDEBOOKS 'PART-TIME **HUMOR · CAMPING & BACKPACKING SUPPLIES · FREE TOILET**

> NOW OPEN IN OAKHURST (SOUTH OF YOSEMITE ON CA-41)

40879 STATE HWY 41 * SUITE 1F * OAKHURST, CA 93644 * (559)800-8099 * ALPENGLOWGEARCO@GMAIL.COM * @ALPENGLOWGEARCO ON FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM







a legend is born ANASAZI PRO Two-time World cup Bouldering Champion, Shauna Coxsey, brings dynamic insight to the Anasazi FIVE TEN lineage. Boasting a textured Stealth® Mi6 $^{\text{TM}}$ toecap (providing soft, ultra-flexible, $^{3}60^{\circ}$ grip) and high-friction Stealth® $C4^{TM}$ soles for unparalleled performance on any angle. The spirit of the Anasazi continues... FIVETEN.COM