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NEWSSTAND EDITION

Reality Bath

Wolfgang Güllich pictured here in 1986 on the first solo of *Separate Reality* (5.12a), Yosemite. One of the greatest rock climbers ever, the late Güllich put up *Action Directe* (5.14d) in 1991. Ten years later the route remains one of the world's hardest.



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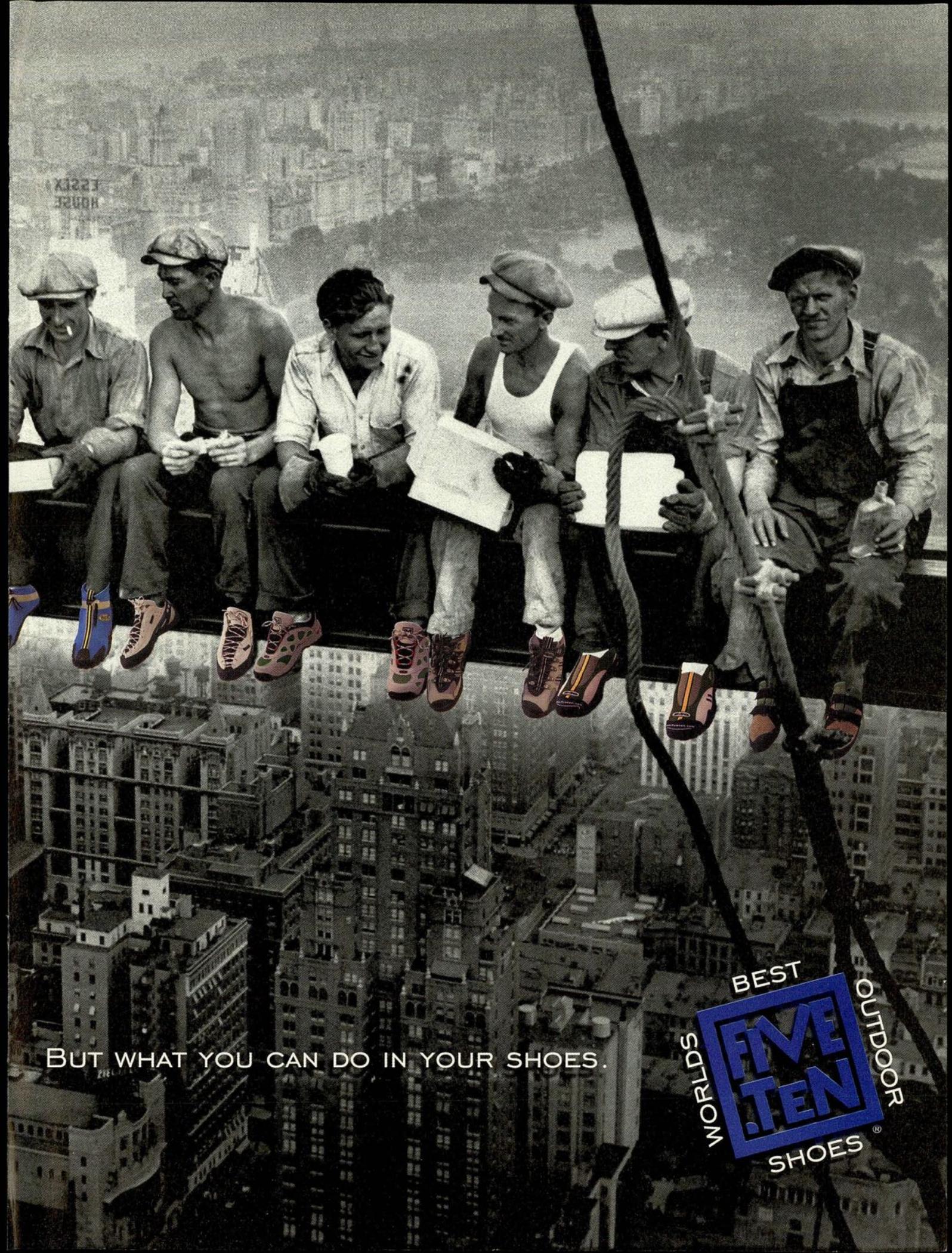
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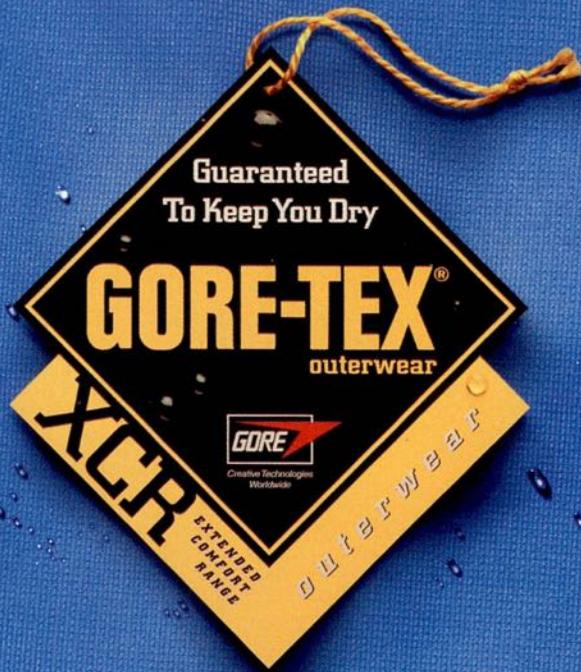
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COVER: Wolfgang Gullich on the first solo of *Separate Reality* (5.12a), Yosemite. Photo: Heinz Zak

THIS PAGE: An exultant Robyn Erbesfield latches the jug after a long dyno in the 1991 World Cup, Berkeley. Photo: Greg Epperson

Climbing EYEWITNESS

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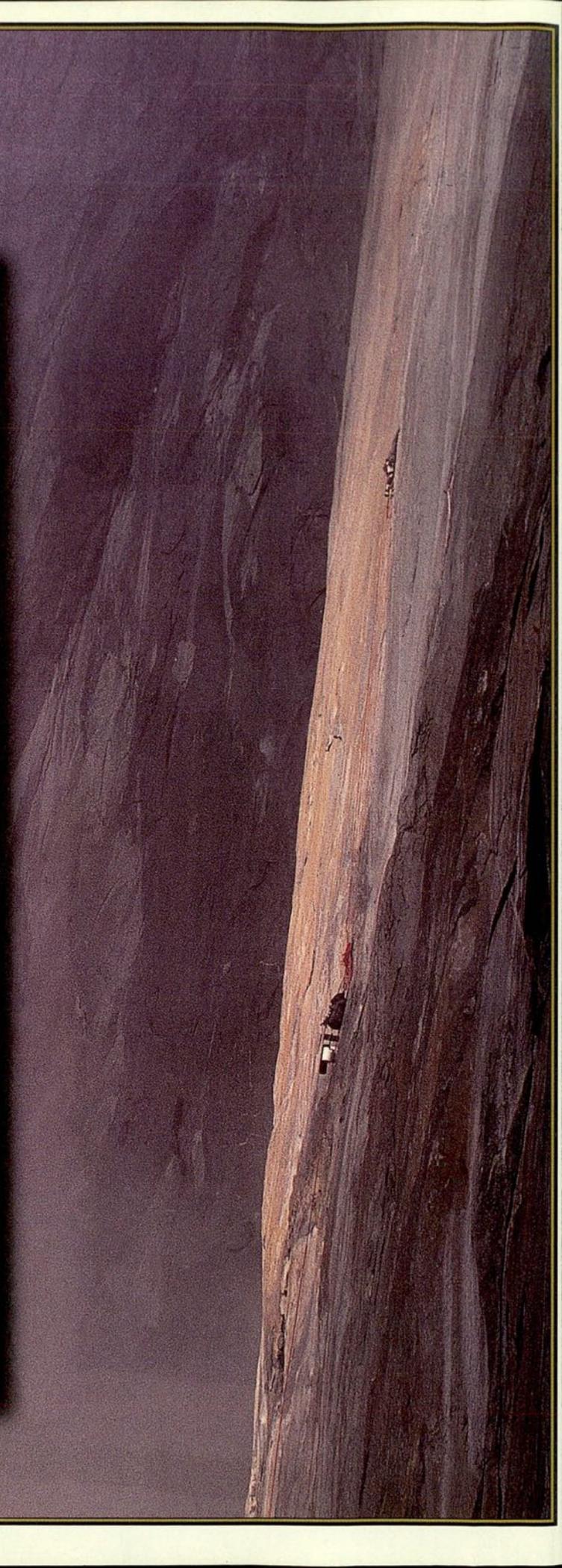
Dreaming big

Escaping on the world's great escapes. Plus: The baddest of the big.

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THIS PAGE: "Rad" Brad Jarrett on the first winter ascent of Iron Hawk (VI 5.9 A4), El Capitan, Yosemite. Photo: Greg Epperson



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Divine inspiration

Pictures are worth more than words

To a scrawny, bushy-haired kid growing up on the broiling, wind-whipped plains of western Oklahoma in the 1970s, escape, in the form of sports, offered a cruel hand. Too skinny for football, I was regularly whupped by corn-fed mamma's boys. In track, I was so bowlegged that to give me even a slim chance, the coach had to pit me against girls in the lower grades. There was rodeo ... naah. My outlet was to trot down to the middle-school library, where, between the covers of *National Geographic*, I discovered the article "We Climbed Utah's Skyscraper Rock."

The story by Huntley Ingalls documented his, Layton Kor, and George Hurley's 1962 first ascent of the Fisher Tower's *Finger of Fate* on the Titan in Utah. This was my first exposure to climbing, and my head swelled with unbridled opportunity. "This," I said to myself, "I can do."

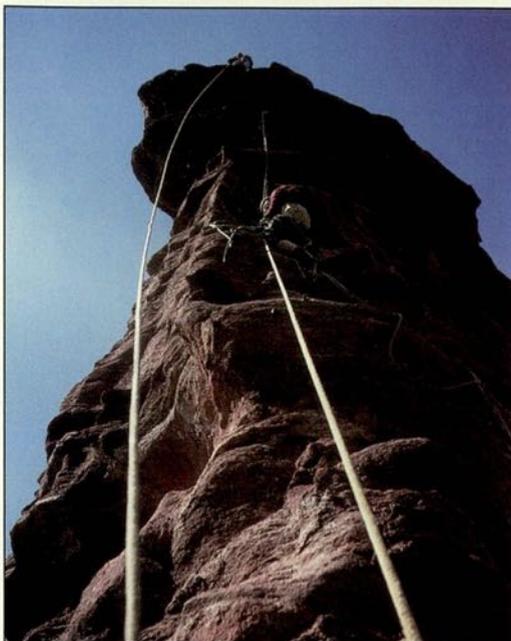
I kept a copy of that *National Geographic* jammed inside my school-books. By the time I was finished with the article, the pages were smudged and dogeared. The same could not be said of the textbooks, but I didn't care because I understood the ways of climbing, or so I thought.

For instance, I had always wondered how the rope got up there. Now I knew: Kor put it up there for you. Likewise I felt fairly schooled in the ways of belaying and piton and bolt placement. Most important, my eyes were opened to the sorts of things climbers climbed — crusty, unconsolidated walls of dried mud. To my everlasting joy, five miles outside my hometown of Weatherford, one of the tributaries of the Washita River had carved a deep channel into a wheat field. In one spot where the creek neared I-40 the ravine walls were dead vertical and up to 30 feet high. That the walls were almost as blank as a bridge abutment didn't matter. All one had to do was follow Kor's example and bash in some pins and bolts.

It would have been easier to scare up a copy of the Koran in western Oklahoma than to find the necessary climbing paraphernalia. Shamberg's, the local sport's shop, had tackles

of bass poppers, cases of birdshot, and an arsenal of rifles, shotguns and crossbows, but no pins or bolts. When I asked the clerk if he could order the gear, he pulled out a catalog for grappling hooks.

My friend Donnie Hunt and I ended up scrounging. He "requisitioned" a short hank of



Source of inspiration. Layton Kor and George Hurley on the final ridge during the first ascent of the Titan's *Finger of Fate*, in 1962.

rope off a pier at Crowder Lake. I went through my dad's tool box and pocketed a claw hammer and a handful of big nails. Screw-gate chain-link replacements became carabiners. Our harnesses were fashioned from pack straps and leather belts.

It took us a month to climb one line on that bluff. Every day after school we'd load our bicycle baskets with our "rack" and pedal down to our crag. Each attempt was epic. Pounding nails into clay walls was easy enough, but connecting the rope to the nails and hoisting yourself up was a struggle for inches. Often, I'd winch myself up onto a nail only to have Donnie, who belayed simply by gripping the rope with leather gloves, lose his strength, sending me slithering back down the route.

Ten feet from the top I took a "nut" I'd made by sawing off a piece of square steel

stock and jammed this into the short crack just below the cliff's rim. Jazzed by Galen Rowell's recent article "Climbing Half Dome the Hard Way," his 1974 *National Geographic* account of the first clean ascent of the *Regular Northwest Face*, I pulleyed myself onto the wedge. It ripped, and so did the whole string of nails under it. I landed with a *whump* on the muddy riverbank.

Despite the fall and losing some of our precious nails in the creek, Donnie and I pulled over the top of that climb one cold autumn evening. We shook hands, then dumped the dirt out of our pockets and shoes and bicycled back to town. At school the next day no one really cared about the climb, nor could they understand even faintly what we'd done. But that didn't matter to us. If anything, it drove us to keep climbing.

Twenty years later I got to climb Kor's *Finger of Fate*. It was as I had imagined. Dirty, sporty, and weird. When my partner and I pulled over the top of that route, we shook hands, then dumped the dirt out of our pockets and shoes.

Most climbers would say that the *Finger* is an awful thing, too loose, too dirty, too obscure, but to me it is the greatest climb on Earth. I have it and that article in *National Geographic* to thank for causing me to drop out of college, load up my 1972 Superbeetle and drive off the grid.

Today at *Climbing* we understand the value of our sport's rich history and the photos and articles of its participants. Within the pages of this special documentary issue we've gathered the top climbing images past and present. If as they say, a picture is worth a thousand words, then each of these images speaks volumes about a landmark ascent, a great personality, or a benchmark moment in climbing history. Accompanying these photos are six essays, one for each facet of climbing — bouldering, rock, ice, big walls, Himalayan, and alpine — and written by players who have been there and pushed the envelope.

Any collection is at best a stab at getting it all, and we don't intend for this to be a complete history. Instead, think of it as a thank you to everyone out there who has given us a reason to crawl out of bed.

— Duane Raleigh

HUNTLEY INGALLS



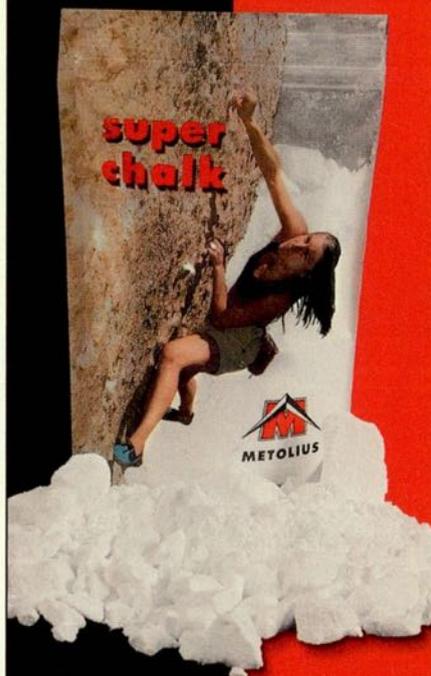
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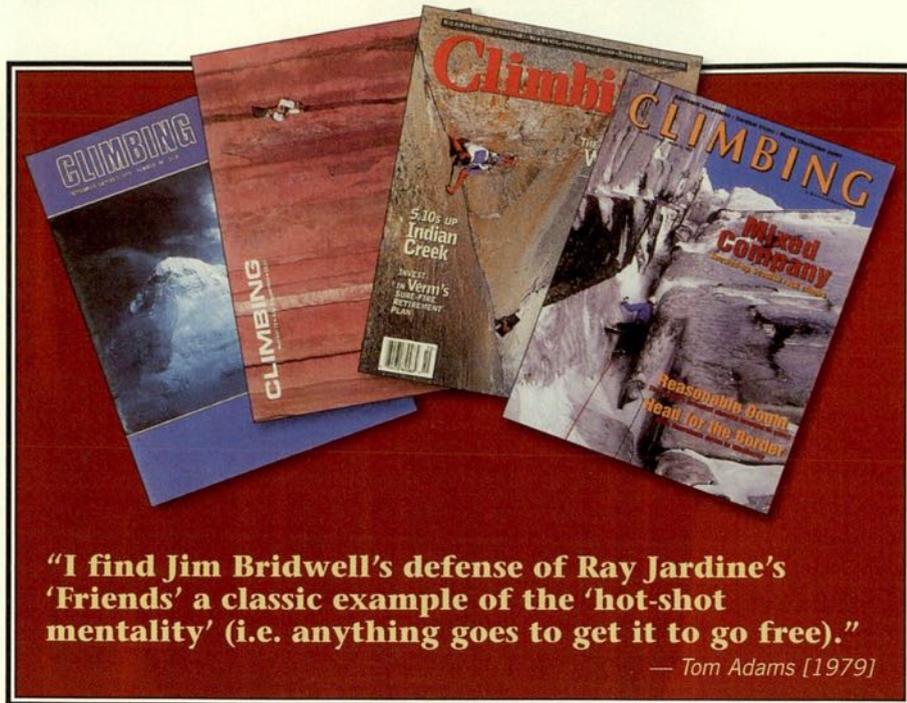


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"I find Jim Bridwell's defense of Ray Jardine's 'Friends' a classic example of the 'hot-shot mentality' (i.e. anything goes to get it to go free)."

— Tom Adams [1979]

5.10 hardmen

I enjoy your magazine tremendously, though I get a feeling of discrimination toward my type of climbers: middle-aged, two years' experience, most difficult moves accomplished 5.3. In other words, an engineer that's lucky to go climbing once a month. You know, the type that's ruining climbing for all the 5.9-5.10 acrobats.

— Bud L. Withrow
Fairfield, California [1972]

Mad chalkers

"Hardmen" are known to be copious sweaters but the number of chalk prints found in popular bouldering areas is now exceeding the limits of perspiration. I find it contradictory that many of these "mad chalkers" are the very same climbers who decry the use of pitons, hammers, and etriers as un-aesthetic, unnatural, and *unclean!*

I realize that chalk prints serve a couple of useful purposes. They drastically simplify route finding ... and help rock gymnasts maintain their ego problems by challenging them with a series of hard moves which have obviously been done before.

— Glen C. Daniels
San Jose, California [1975]

Bad Friends

I find Jim Bridwell's defense of Ray Jardine's "Friends" a classic example of the "hot-shot mentality" (i.e. anything goes to

get it to go free). Bridwell bases his support on the assumption that these devices (I hesitate to call them chocks) are the next logical step in the evolution of climbing equipment. This evolution, he believes, started with pitons, followed with artificial chockstones, which [will] in turn be followed by Friends.

What Bridwell fails to realize, however, is that the switch from chocks to Friends by some climbers is occurring for reasons vastly different from the nearly universal changeover from pins to chocks. Chocks grew out of the realization that the rock should be preserved, while Friends grew out of the desire to climb previously unprotectable, severe free routes ... In this sense success is determined by the contents of one's rack, and not by one's skills as a climber.

Bridwell sees nothing wrong with this practice, it seems, for these Friends as he says have opened up "the door to a new realm of climbing potential." If the only way to push the free climbing standards is to rely on purely technological innovations, then perhaps these routes should remain undone.

— Tom Adams
Santa Barbara, California [1979]

The use of chocks on established climbs was usually a step upward — the use of Friends on established routes is a step downward.

— Royal Robbins
Modesto, California [1979]

"cool moves"



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Dog days

On some of these new "testpieces," massive top roping has been required to wire the admittedly desperate moves. Oftentimes the top roping isn't even done free (i.e. hanging after each failure). When the moves are finally rehearsed enough to ensure physical success, the climb is prepared, from a top rope or rappel, with enough bolts to ensure mental success. After the route has been literally hammered into submission by these artificial tactics, a lead is finally made and a "first free" ascent claimed. Give me a break!

— Mark Wilford
Fort Collins, Colorado [1985]

Over the past several years, there seems to have been a degeneration of the climbing community's resolve to do anything other than make up excuses to remain complacent. Hiding behind a veil of "acceptable style" precludes the need to go out and climb anything harder than 5.11b ... While the so-called guardians of good style pontificate atop their VW vans in the parking lots of Eldorado, Joshua Tree, and Yosemite, the rest of the world has passed Americans in the push to raise free-climbing standards.

— Rob Slater
Chicago, Illinois [1986]

Lycraphobia

We are writing to express our dismay at the current trend prevalent among the new generation of "hot" climbers. In the good old days, climbers looked like climbers. Men and women wore baggy pants and had hair all over their bodies. Climbing was macho. It gave females an excuse for not bathing.

Today, every major climbing area is infested with young [punks] running around in purple shoes and pink lycra tights.

— Dick Meinig and Geoff Tabin
Denver, Colorado [1986]

Mother of all bolt wars

How would you feel if you woke up one morning to the sound of a Bosch outside your window? And if the sound was someone drilling holes in the side of your house to place bolts, because the stone of your walls was too tempting to forgo?

If you put bolts on every square foot of a crag you own, no one can complain. But if you do so on someone else's property, you are violating their rights. And if it's public property, it's not yours.

Every climber in Connecticut owes [Ken Nichols] a lot ... Nichols may not be perfect,

but I respect him for his integrity, his willingness to stand by an ideal with action, no matter the resistance of his peers.

— Mark Cashman
Windsor, Connecticut [1991]

Derek Hersey is dead and Ken Nichols is still chopping bolts. Anti-karma? Did God lose his address book?

— Kevin Schehrer
Calabasas Hills, California [1993]

Arrested development

[Kurt Smith] claims that the power drilling of 80 bolts on [the Muir Wall] is a community service. Yeah, the world's smallest, a community of two.

Through reckless and inconsiderate actions, [Scott] Cosgrove and Smith have placed my climbing rights at risk. They knew they were breaking the law! They epitomize the modern climbing ethic — selfish and stupid! There can be only be one legitimate response. We must wholeheartedly support the Park Service in their diligent efforts to slap the hands of these undisciplined children.

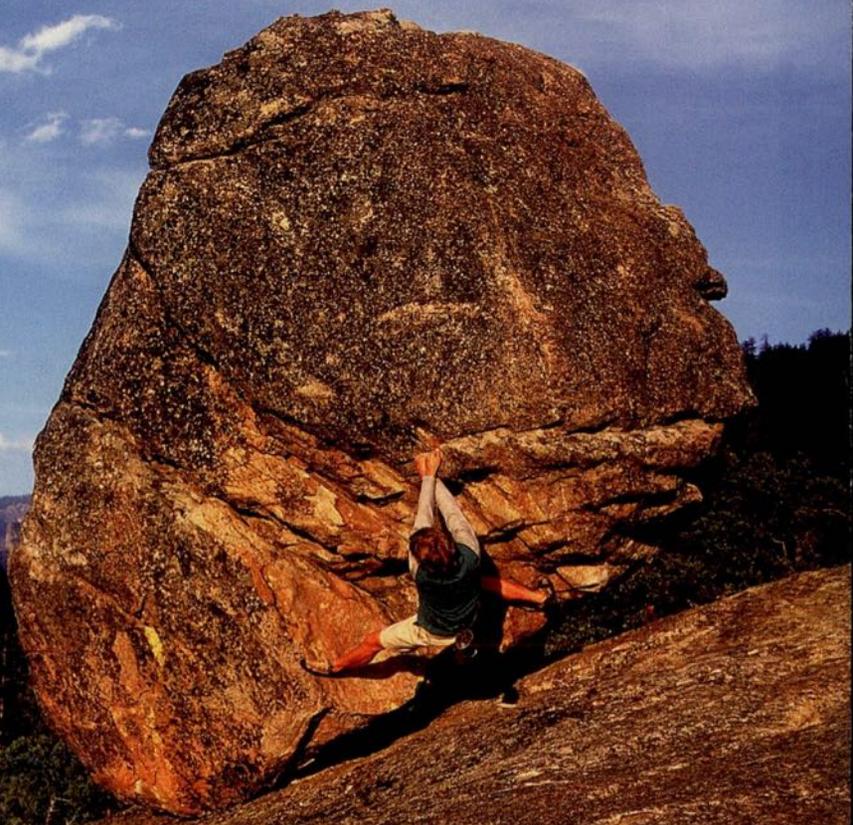
— C. Harris
Modesto, California [1994]



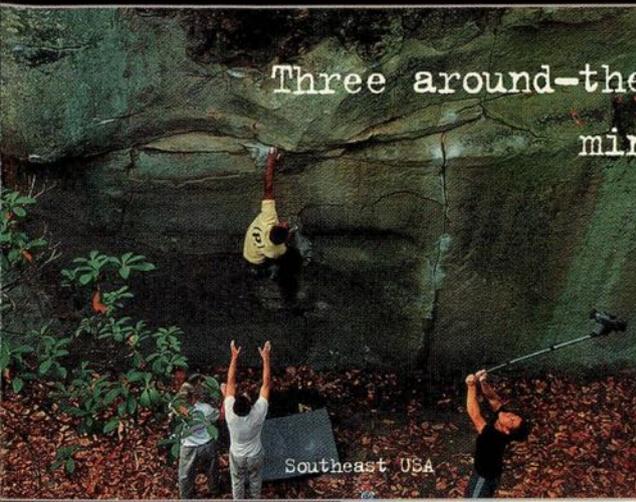
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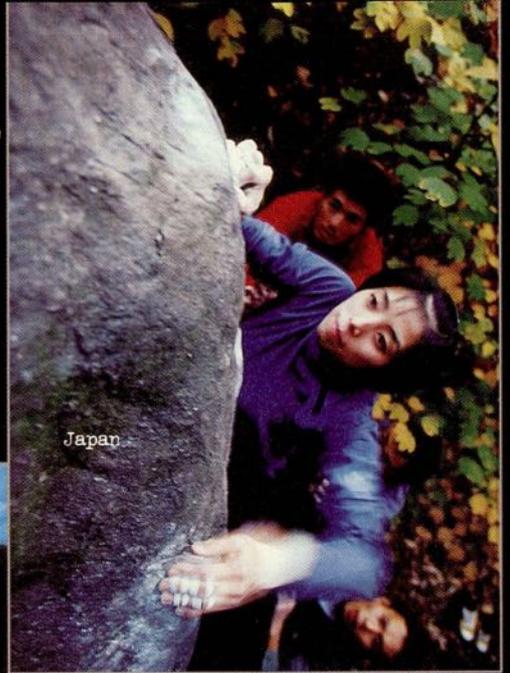
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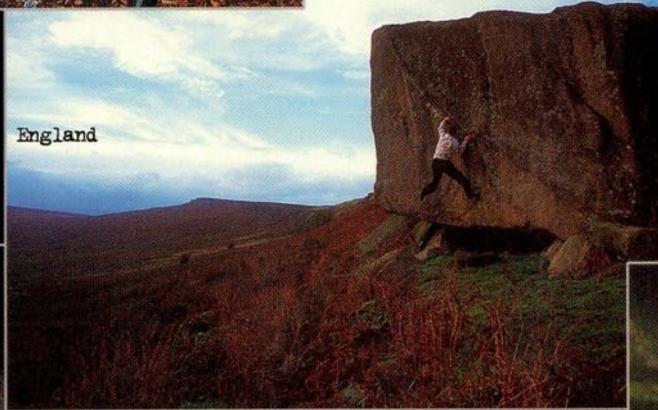
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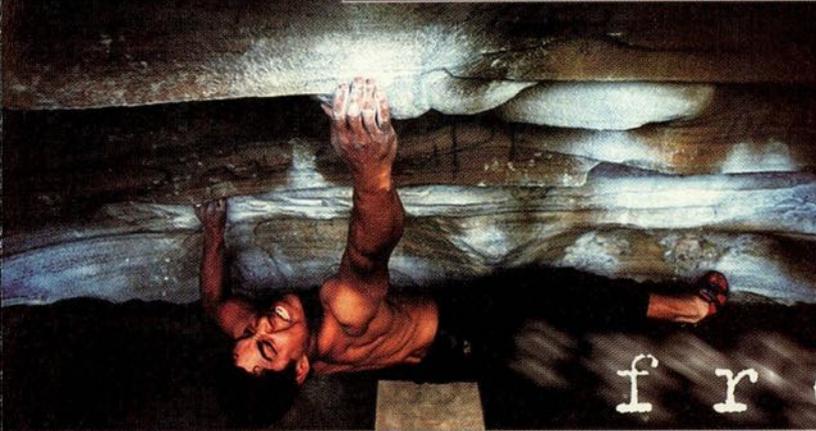
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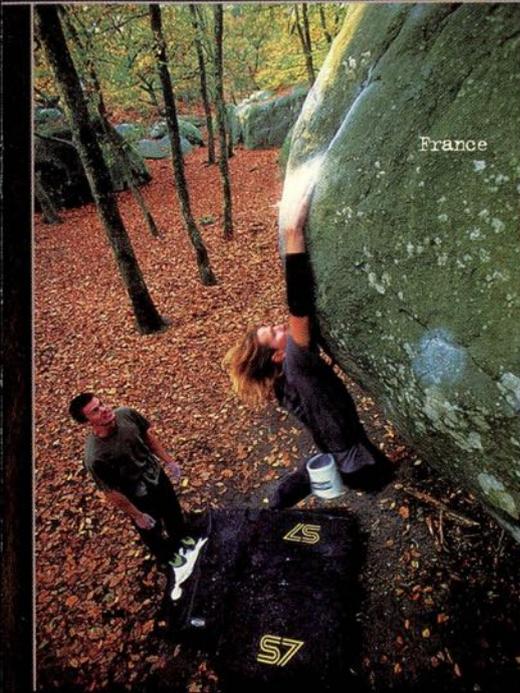
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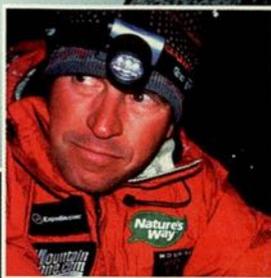
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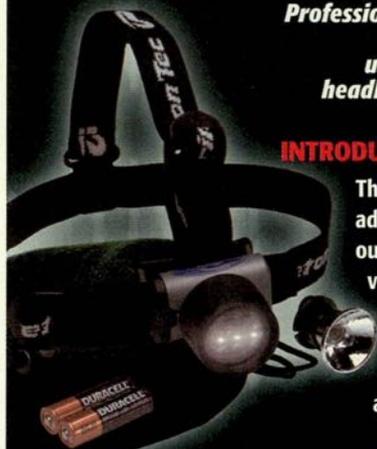
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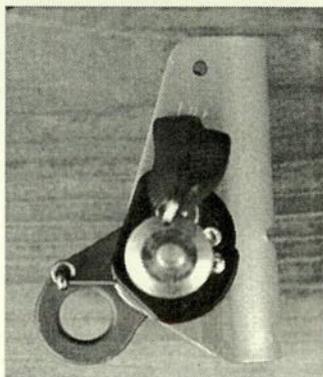
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Ultimately, climbing is about freedom. The rules we follow are self-imposed. I couldn't care less whether Dingus Milktoast approves of my climbing style or ethics, and if he feels the urge to crawl out of his armchair and write a letter to the climbing mags, then at least he's exercising his hands. But when Dingus is piping in on the side of Big Brother, it concerns me.

— Jeff Jackson

Austin, Texas [1995]

Unrefined fire

I offer to pay Louie Anderson \$1000 if he can redpoint *Refiner's Fire* [Southern California route claimed as America's second 5.14b], in front of witnesses.

— Randy Leavitt

Escondido, California [1996]

To me, climbing has always been an opportunity to go out into nature with friends and push your own personal limits. It has also been a sport based on integrity and trust. Obviously, these are no longer [its] defining qualities.

— Louie Anderson

Costa Mesa, California [1996]

I have read with interest the continuing controversy over *Refiner's Fire*. At first I thought, "Randy Leavitt is attacking someone in the national press over a 45-foot route. How pathetic." But then Warren Hughes fans the flames with unsubstantiated claims of Louie Anderson's abilities as a carpenter. Hughes claims Anderson hung over 150 doors in one day. Many details are unanswered in this claim:

- What type of door — metal, solid wood, or hollow core?
- Pre-hung or not?
- What size were these doors?
- Did Anderson install the lock sets?

I'm sure that Leavitt will now want to offer \$3000 to anyone who can, on successive days: Hang 150 doors (metal, pre-hung, with lock sets), not climb 5.11 in the gym, and then climb *Refiner's Fire*.

— Mark McKillop

Snohomish, Washington [1996]

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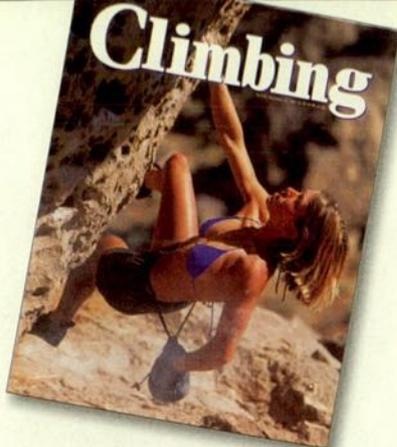
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That cover again

Women are bombarded daily by the mass media telling us we should be thinner and more beautiful. In many ways, climbing offers a respite from this insidious oppression. When I climb, I feel proud about the strength, courage, and knowledge that allowed me to haul my ass up the rock. I am tired of men assuming that my boyfriend is going to lead all the tough crack pitches. And I am tired of pictures of women climbers that focus on their sex appeal and not their skill.

— Janie Codosh
Missoula, Montana [1998]

I have big tits, but I still climb. Sometimes I even wear a shocking halter top. I suppose this should be restricted by the prudery police. I'd like to be free to climb topless — like men — but I guess I should keep my baggy T-shirt on and veil my sexuality.

— Lori A. Wagner
Seattle, Washington [1998]

Readers on Dan

Climbing's portrayal of Dan Osman is askew. The article presents him as a nice guy, slightly angelic, tending towards heroic, who just happened to love putting his life at risk — continually. This was a man who felt worthy of his life only when he was doing things that could kill him. Call me crazy, but does this sound healthy to you?

— Carolyn Peck
Santa Cruz, California [1999]

I am writing to preempt the inevitable mound of letters that will chastise the praise of Dan Osman and his way of life. I can see one now that says he wasted his life and was selfish in chasing his dreams, leaving his friends and loved ones with nothing. But Dan left us a real treasure, an example of how one can pursue dreams without inhibition or fear

and attain them. Dan *lived*. He may have existed longer otherwise, but I challenge anyone to point out someone who had more life in 35 years.

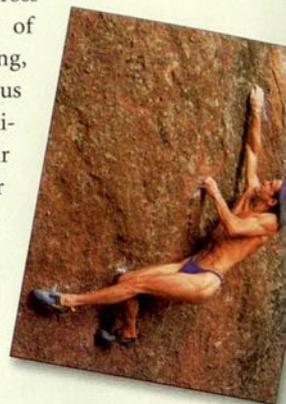
— Mike Bond [1999]
Las Vegas, Nevada

And lest we forget ...

Most of us here at Cross Country Connection of Laramie, Wyoming, except for those of us who actually wear bikinis and appreciate their utility, wish to register our strongest disapproval of the photo in your recent issue of Gallery.

It goes without saying that the men of Cross Country Connection feel abused and personally exploited by photographs of this ilk. None of us believe that bikini-clad ectomorphs contribute anything to the advancement of the sport ... In the future, consider printing a warning on the preceding pages of Gallery to the effect that turning the page may cause an unpleasant event. After all, many of us read your magazine in the smallest room of the store. One cannot overemphasize the pain of happening on the aforementioned photo while indisposed.

— The men of Cross Country Connection
Laramie, Wyoming [1998]



STEWART GREEN

Corrections

In our Basecamp report on the climbing in Rifle Mountain Park, Colorado, one of the walls in the park was mistakenly named with an obscenity; the area has been renamed "Funk Wall." [1992]

Climbing (USPS No. 919220, ISSN No. 0045-7159) is published in February, March, May, June, August, September, November, and December and an annual Gear Guide in February of each year by Climbing Magazine, 0326 Highway 133, Suite 190, Carbondale, CO 81623; (970) 963-9449. Periodicals postage paid at Carbondale, CO 81623 and additional mailing offices. Subscription rates are \$29.95 for one year, \$49.95 for two years, and \$69.95 for three years for postal delivery in the United States. Add \$10 per year for Canada (GST R127878270) and \$15 per year for surface postage to other foreign countries.

Postmaster: Please send subscriber address changes to CLIMBING, P. O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235.

Retailers: Please send correspondence to CLIMBING, 0326 Highway 133, Suite 190, Carbondale, CO 81623.

Climbing Magazine is a division of PRIMEDIA Inc.

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Canada GST #R127878270
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PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.


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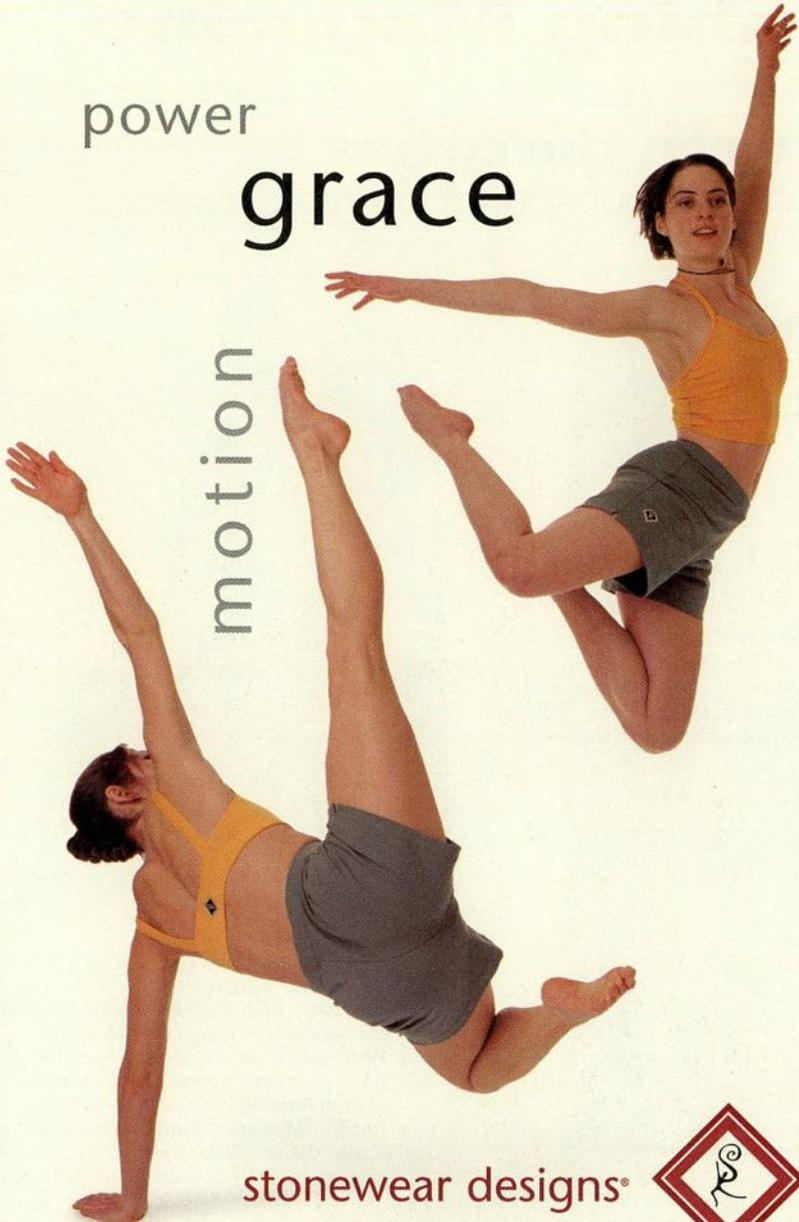
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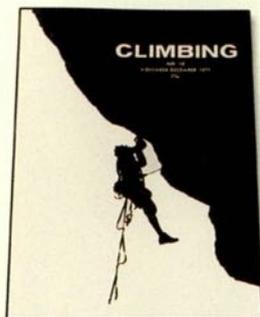


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Between the covers

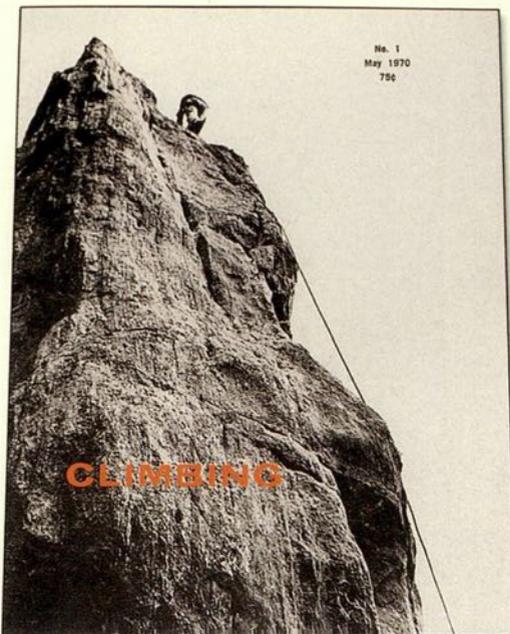
Chronicling our sport for three decades

- Friends invented
- Everest, no O₂
- Climbing 5.6 makes news



1971

- First ascent of the 328-hole *Wall of Early Morning Light* (VI 5.7 A3), by Warren Harding and Dean Caldwell.



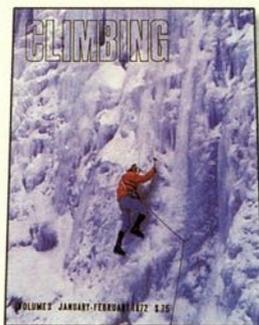
1970

- Desert pioneer Harvey T. Carter starts up a homespun magazine "by climbers for climbers." *Climbing's* initial circulation is in the hundreds; a copy costs 75 cents.
- First ascent of the South Face (VI 5.10 A4) of Half Dome in Yosemite, by Warren Harding and Galen Rowell.
- Cesare Maestri, Daniele Alimonta, and Carlo Claus climb Cerro Torre via the controversial *Compressor Route* (5.10 A3).



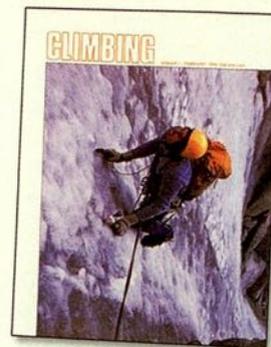
1975

- First ascent, *Pacific Ocean Wall* (VI 5.9 A5), by Jim Bridwell, Billy Westbay and Jay Fisk.
- First one-day ascent of the *Nose*, by Jim Bridwell, Billy Westbay, John Long.
- Messner and Peter Habeler climb Hidden Peak, the first 8000er to go alpine style.



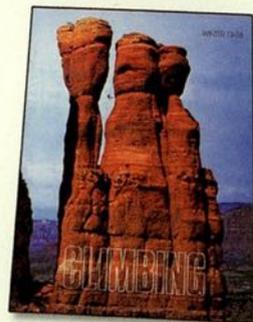
1972

- First ascent, North Face (V 5.6 A3) of Moses, Canyonlands, by Fred Beckey, Eric Bjornstad, Tom Nephew, Greg Markov, and Jim Galvin.
- First ascent, *Painted Wall*, Black Canyon of the Gunnison, via *Forrest/Walker* (VI 5.10 A4), by Bill Forrest and Kris Walker.



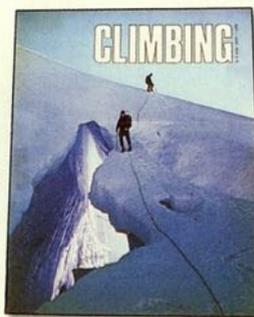
1976

- First ascent, *Nameless Tower*, Joe Brown, Mo Anthoine, Martin Boysen, Malcolm Howells.
- Pete Boardman and Joe Tasker climb the West Face of Changabang.



1973

- First clean ascent of *Regular Northwest Face* (VI 5.10 C3) of Half Dome, by Doug Robinson, Galen Rowell, Dennis Hennek.



1974

- Reinhold Messner solos the South Face of Aconcagua.
- First ascent, North Face of North Twin, Canadian Rockies, by George Lowe and Chris Jones.

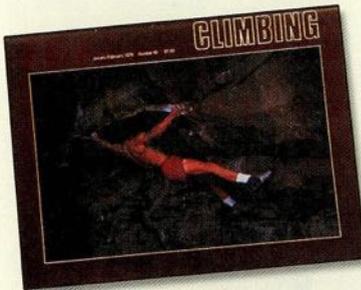


1977

- First ascent of the *Ogre*, by Chris Bonington and Doug Scott; Scott breaks both legs on the descent.

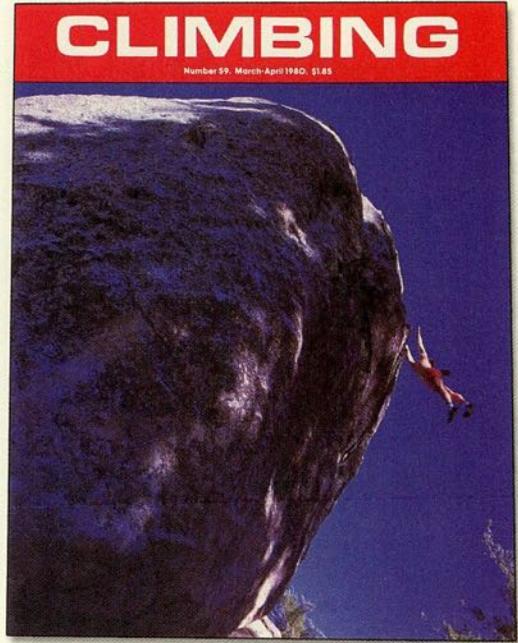
'80s

- Sport climbing introduced
- Sticky rubber invented
- Climbing 5.11 makes news



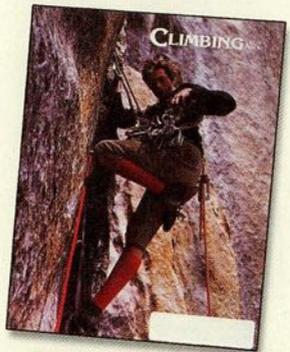
1978

- Reinhold Messner and Peter Habeler climb Everest without using supplemental oxygen.
- First ascent, *Emperor Face*, Mount Robson, by Mugs Stump and Jim Logan.
- First ascent, *Sea of Dreams* (VI 5.9 A5), by Jim Bridwell, Dave Diegelman, and Dale Bard.



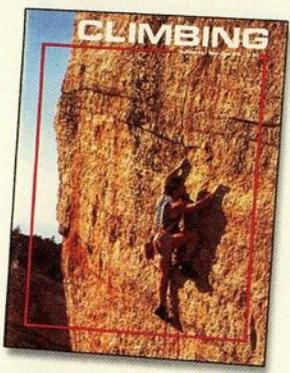
1980

- Messner becomes the first person to solo Everest.
- Leszek Cichy and Krzysztof Wielicki make the first winter ascent of Everest.
- Climbing's circulation is 6500; a copy costs \$1.85.
- Gramicci introduces the first commercial portaledge.



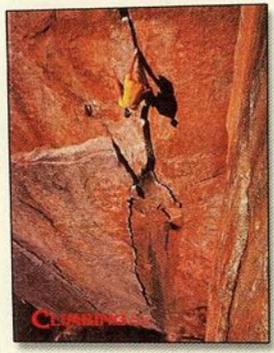
1983

- Austrian Thomas Bubendorfer solos the 1938 route on the Eiger North Face in 4 hours and 50 minutes.
- EntrePrises introduces artificial climbing holds.



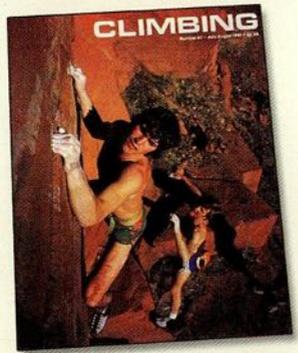
1979

- Jim Collins frees *Genesis* (5.12+), one of Eldorado's "last great problems."
- Ed Webster establishes *Primrose Dihedrals* (IV 5.8 A3) on Moses tower in Canyonlands.



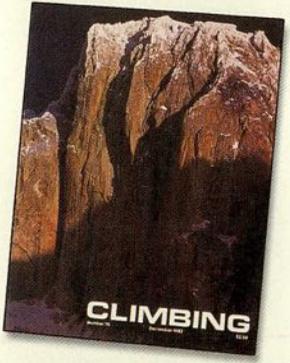
1984

- Renato Casarotto solos the first ascent of *Ridge of No Return* on Denali.



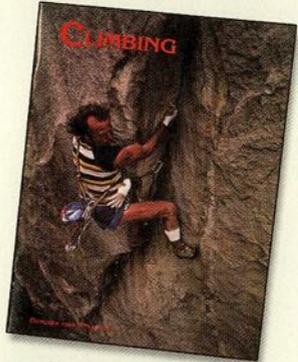
1981

- Jim Bridwell and Mugs Stump make the first ascent of the East Face of Moose's Tooth in Alaska.



1982

- First ascent of the extremely sporty *Bachar/Yerian* (5.11c), by John Bachar and Dave Yerian.

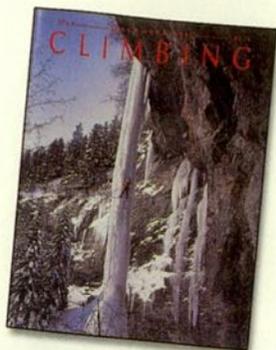


1985

- Christophe Profit climbs the North Faces of the Matterhorn, Grandes Jorasses, and the Eiger in 22 hours; he uses a helicopter as transport between mountains.
- Everest sees first guided ascent.

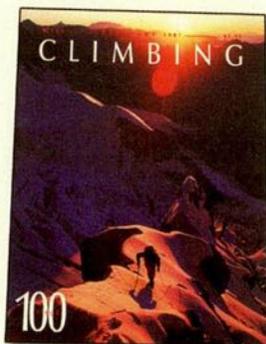
'90s

- Chipping becomes hot topic
- El Cap goes in 4:20
- Climbing 5.12 makes news



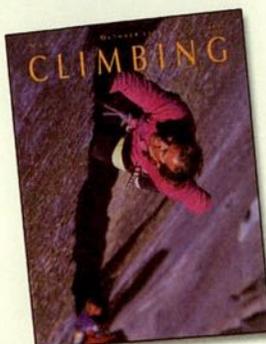
1986

- 13 die on K2.
- Messner climbs Lhotse, becoming the first person to climb all 14 "8000ers."
- America's first 5.14, *To Bolt or Not to Be*, Smith Rock, Oregon, established by J.B. Tribout.



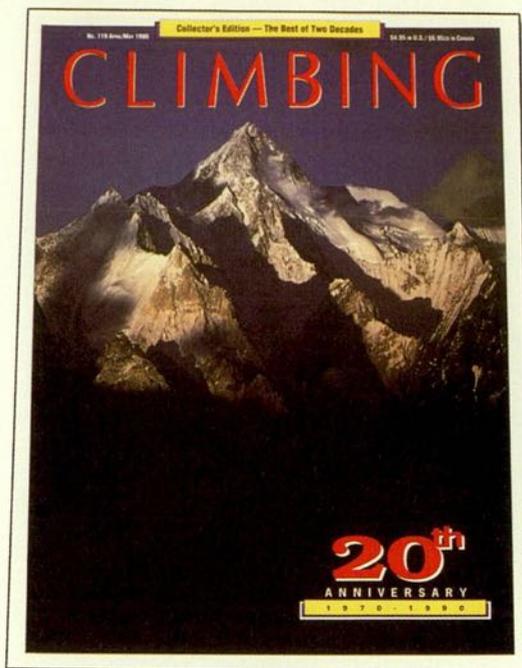
1987

- Peter Croft free solos *Astroman* (5.11d) on Washington Column, Yosemite.
- Smith Rock, Oregon, becomes the hot sport-climbing destination.



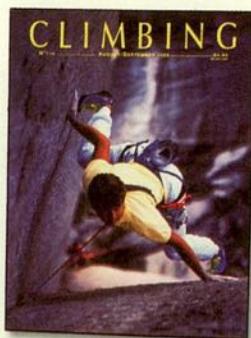
1988

- Todd Skinner and Paul Piana free climb El Capitan via the *Salathé* (VI 5.13b).
- First U.S. World Cup Competition held at Snowbird, Utah; Patrick Edlinger and Catherine Destivelle win.



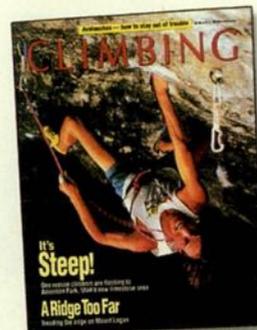
1990

- City of Rocks, Idaho, becomes the hot sport-climbing area in the U.S.
- Silvo Karo and Janez Jeglic climb the 5000-foot West Face of Bhagirathi III in the Karakoram.
- *Climbing* turns 20, has 14,000 paying readers, and a copy costs \$4.95.
- Sport climbing is still much debated, but later in the decade is overshadowed by threatened access and fixed anchors in wilderness.



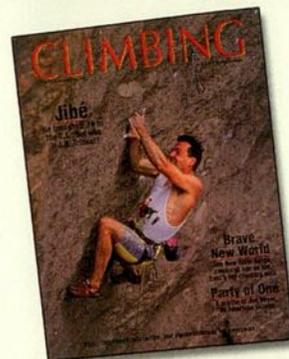
1989

- Ben Moon establishes *Agincourt* (5.14b), the world's hardest free route so far.
- Jerry Moffatt crushes Smith Rock, climbing all three of its 5.14s — *Scarface*, *To Bolt or Not to Be*, and *White Wedding* — during a five-week visit.



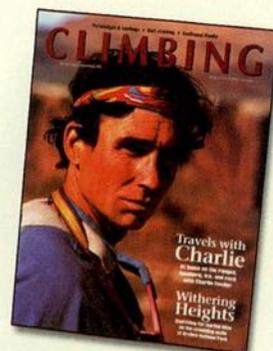
1991

- Wolfgang Güllich establishes *Action Directe* (5.14d), the hardest route on earth.
- Sport climbers flock to American Fork, Utah.



1992

- John Middendorf and Xaver Bongard climb *Grand Voyage* (VII 5.10 A4+ WI 3) on Great Trango Tower, Karakoram.
- Nose climbed in 4:20 by Peter Croft and Hans Florine.



1993

- Lynn Hill free climbs the *Nose* (5.13c) on El Capitan.
- Rob Slater becomes the first person to climb all 23 of the Fisher Tower formations.

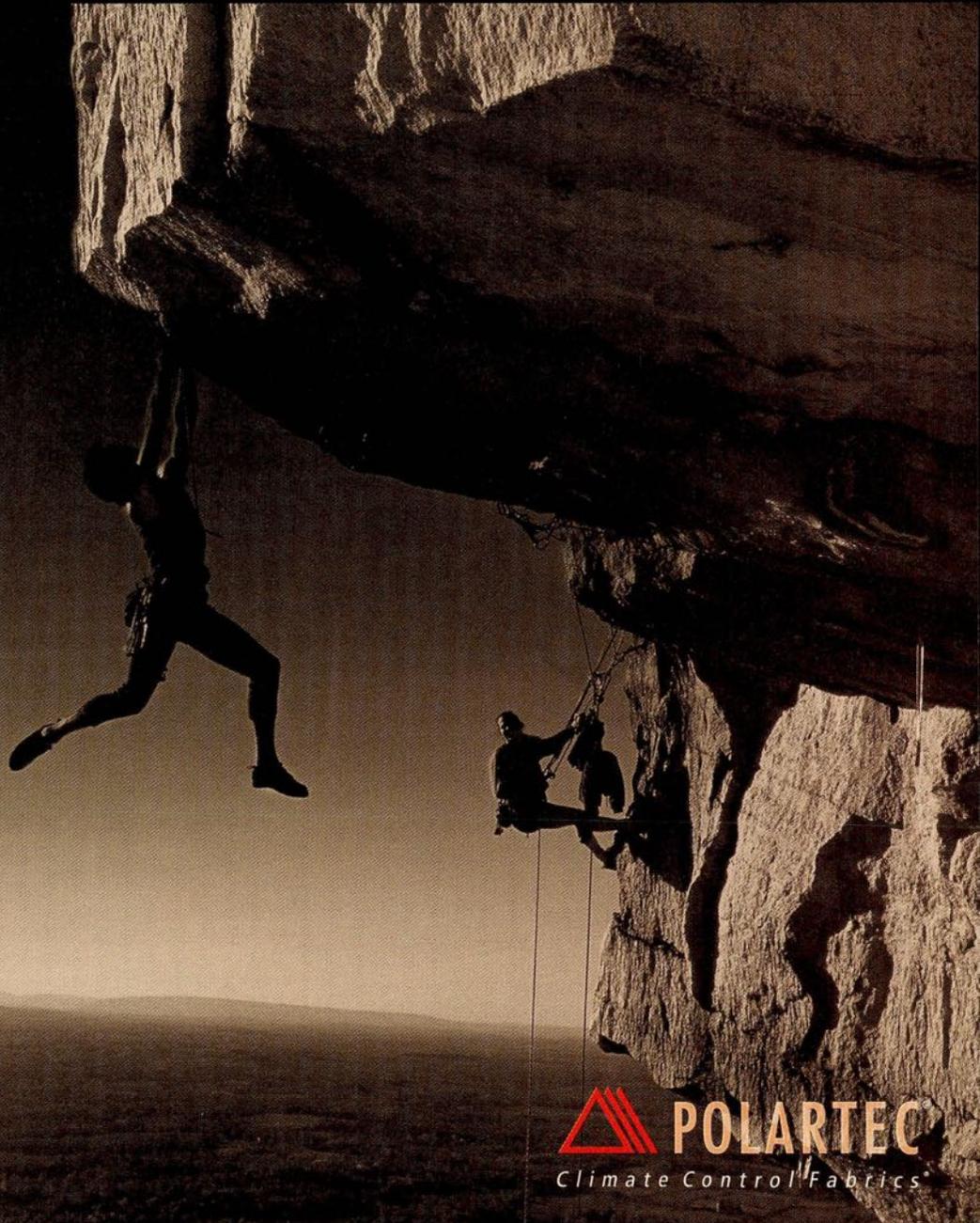
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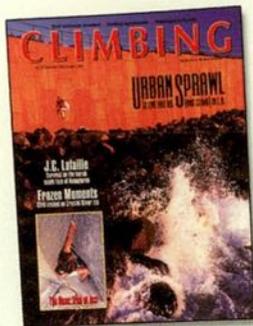
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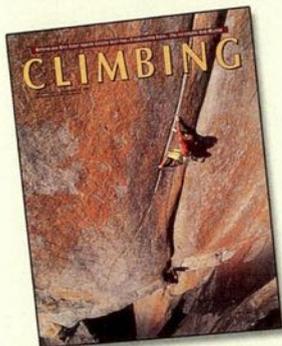
'00s

- Everest climbed in 16:56
- Bouldering booms
- Climbing 5.13 makes news — if you're in grade school



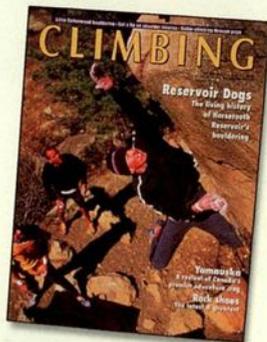
1994

- Crash pad introduced.
- Jeff Lowe climbs *Octopussy* (M8) at Vail, ushering in a new era for mixed climbing.
- Rifle, Colorado, is the new hot sport crag.



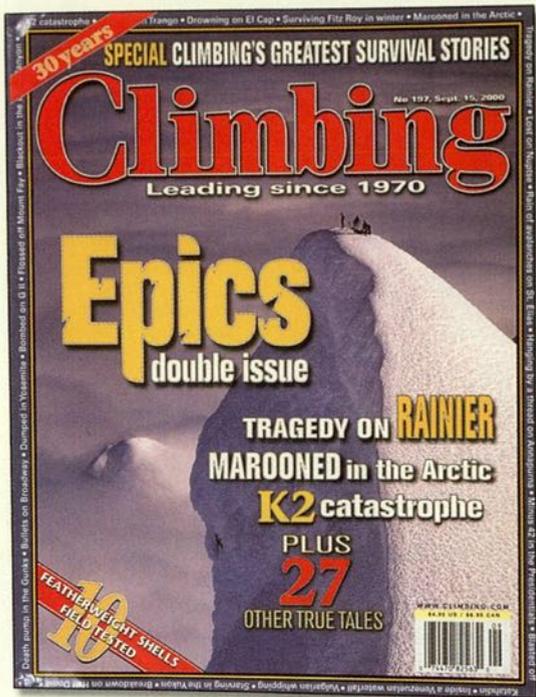
1995

- *Action Directe* sees second ascent by Alexander Adler.
- German Alex Huber becomes the first person to free climb every pitch on the *Salathé Wall* on El Cap.



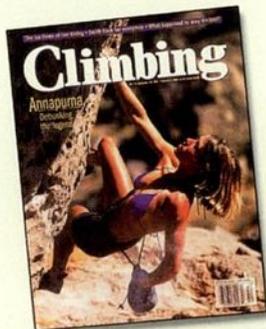
1996

- Disaster on Mount Everest claims 5 lives.
- Elie Cheivieux becomes the first person to on-sight 5.14, with *Massey Ferguson* (5.14a).



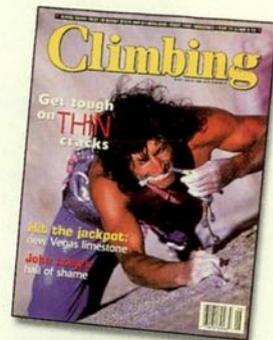
2000

- Sherpa Babu Chiri climbs Everest in 16 hours 56 minutes, a new speed record.
- Fred Nicole establishes *Dreamtime* (V15), likely the world's hardest problem.
- *Climbing* turns 30 and has 51,000 paid readers. A copy costs \$4.95.



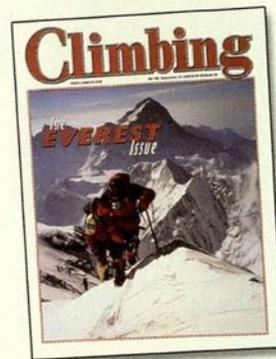
1997

- Janez Jeglic and Tomaz Humar climb the 8000-foot West Face of Nuptse (7879m); Jeglic disappears near the summit.
- Jon Krakauer's book *Into Thin Air* becomes a national bestseller.



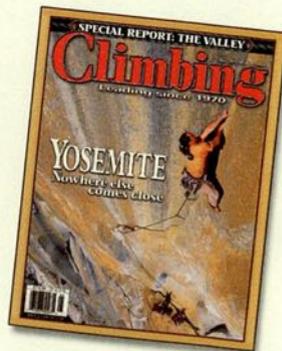
1998

- Mixed climbing in Vail, Colorado, becomes the rage.
- Chris McNamara and Mark Melvins climb El Cap — sideways.



1999

- Slovenian Tomaz Humar solos to within 500 feet of the summit of the 12,000-foot South Face of Dhaulagiri I.
- Himalayan pioneer George Mallory's body is discovered at 8160 meters on Mount Everest, where he disappeared in 1924.



2001

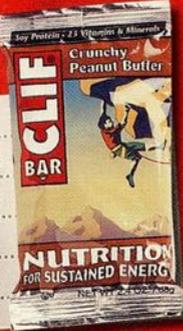
- Doomsday never materializes.
- Dave Graham dominates rock news.

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-Tom Richardson



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Sunset on the Coleman Glacier, Mount Baker, Washington.

The rebel yell

Alpinism, revolution, and the animal in man

BY MARK TWIGHT

Disobey. Defy. Take your own time. Fly.

— Anne Clark

I was a middle-class American with a stone-written future. The promises should have made me happy but society tried to talk me out of being who I really was. I hated the recipe and refused to be a cog in the cultural machine. I discovered punk music and climbing at about the same time.

Climbing wasn't popular as a casual sport back then. It was so marginal that a strong subculture formed around it. If you didn't climb hard, if you weren't committed, you couldn't join. We ate and drank and breathed for it. There were no rules. No one told us what to do or how to do it. We made it up as we went - the perfect punk method. It was about as weird a lifestyle as could be found in America and neither climbers nor punks counted my individualism against me.

Within the subculture my future was up to me. I could hold on, or let go at any time. I knew I wanted to be a great climber, to have the freedom of spirit that comes from being very skilled at a craft, from being comfortable with fear. The mountains could teach me these things. I soloed a lot, risking everything to feel terribly alive. The harder I climbed the darker my musical tastes became. History showed that most alpine climbers die young, which matched my No

Future attitude. One way or another, I was headed for the ground. It was a question of time.

Instead of abiding the romantic English notion of climbing, I adopted Germanic pessimism, and a fixation on death or disaster. I treated alpinism as a battle fought using courage and a Nietzschean will to power. My heroes were Paul Preuss and Georg Winkler. Winkler, AKA "The Meteor," epitomized the Germanic ideal: He was superhumanly strong, an aesthete, and a loner who used climbing to prove himself, soloing more often than not. I admired the strict ethical ideals that he and Preuss held, though both died (young) expressing them. I wanted to learn what was possible for me so I adopted Preuss and Winkler's tactics; cutting away as much advantageous equipment as competence and confidence allowed. I climbed alone in the Cascades, the French Alps, and Canadian Rockies, assuming responsibility for both success and failure. I shouted down the climbers who placed great emphasis on success and little on style. They made acquisition rather than experience important, and I bucked the trend because a summit reached in questionable style isn't worth shit to me.

I read about the first ascent of the Eiger Nordwand in Heinrich Harrer's book *The White Spider* [see "Wall of death" below]. I loved the symbolism of the young Germans

front-pointing past the step-cutting Austrian team; a brave new world was beckoning and the older one had to die. I didn't want to stagnate by clinging to old ways popular in the United States so I began climbing in the Alps, where alpinism was born, and where the French were busy reinventing it. I evolved at a furious pace. Every major growth was accompanied by tremendous shattering and passing away. The risks and demands of climbing hard in the mountains stripped away my civilized nature. I became an animal, obeying the laws of the pack, and of survival.

Although some believed the unique experience of climbing might provide the means to rise above the law of the jungle, man is an animal first, of the genus homo second. I felt exalted when my animal self howled in its purest form, when I climbed for no other reason than the sincere joy I felt while doing so. And I loved how my comfort with my animal nature separated me from my fellow man. Up there I wasn't necessarily Nietzsche's superman but I excised the disharmony caused by struggling against domestication. I did things of an uncommonly high order. While these may not have made me a better man, on the days my ego soared I felt superior. No wonder it was so hard to fit in when I came down from the mountains.

I struggle for acceptance in society because

(continued on page 108)



From the great Nordwand to the history books: Heinrich Harrer, Fritz Kasperek, Anderl Heckmair, and Ludwig Vörg returning from the first ascent of the Eiger's North Face.

Wall of death

Eiger North Face claims eight before first ascent

Few ascents have riveted the climbing community more than the 1938 first ascent of the North Face of the Eiger. Rising 6000 feet in a sweep of ice, snow, and rotten rock, this Swiss wall stood for much of the early 20th century as the ultimate Alps challenge. Too large and technically difficult to be surmounted in a day, the wall required suitors to climb alpine-style with several days of survival gear, and to bivouac on broken ledges offering scant protection from rockfall and storms. Eight of the first 10 climbers to attempt the Eiger died on the wall.

When Austrians Heinrich Harrer and Fritz Kasperek motorcycled over in July 1938 and started up the face, they were surprised to

encounter two Germans, Anderl Heckmair and Ludwig Vörg, already bivied by the Shattered Pillar on the mountain's lower wall. Later that day the four agreed to join forces, even though Heckmair and Vörg were a faster team. Heckmair led continuously for the next three days, pushing the team ever higher and into a fierce storm.

At the end of their reserves and suffering from frostbite, the foursome topped out at 13,100 feet in a whiteout and barely managed to descend the West Flank. They were hailed as heroes at Kliene Scheidegg, and just a few days after their ascent, Adolf Hitler congratulated the four climbers at the Breslau Sports Festival and touted the Eiger's ascent as proof of Aryan dominance.



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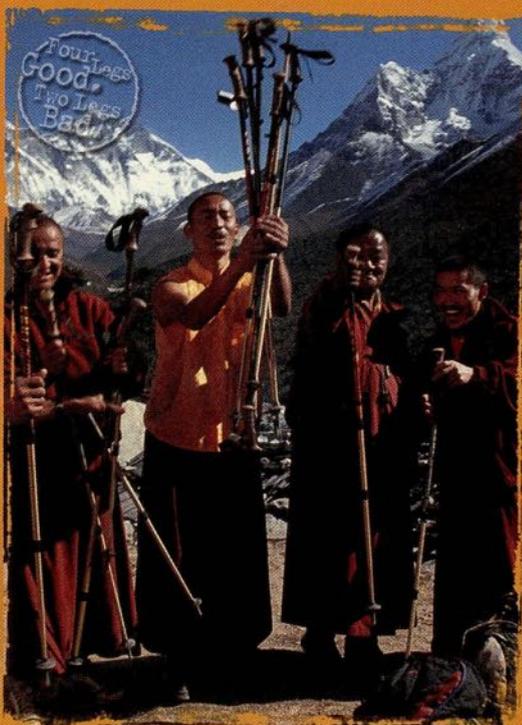
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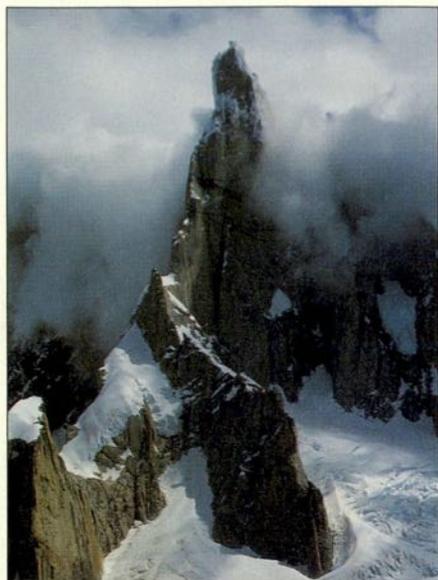
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Altered egos

Patagonia's greatest peak embroiled in bitter controversy

For alpine climbers, Cerro Torre is one of the world's most attractive peaks. Rising 5000 vertical feet above the glacier to a needled summit, this Patagonian giant has inspired hundreds to attempt its sweeping granite and rime-iced ridges (and to blow most of January and February storm-bound in the process). Paradoxically, Cerro Torre is also a peak mired in one of mountaineering's greatest controversies.

The Italian Cesare Maestri claimed the first ascent of this 10,320-foot peak in 1959, by way of the north face with Toni Egger. Egger was killed by an avalanche on the descent, and with him went the team's camera and film. Maestri survived the accident and returned to Italy a hero.

Over a decade passed before other climbers began questioning Maestri's ascent, most notably fellow countryman Carlo Mauri and Brit Ken Wilson. They cited a lack of definitive evidence — such as pictures or fixed gear on the route — to support Maestri's claim, and were further estranged by Maestri's refusal to even discuss the details of his route.

Enraged by the growing flock of naysayers,



Beda Fuster 4000 feet above the glacier on the summit headwall of Cerro Torre's *Compressor Route*, Patagonia. The route follows the peak's southeast ridge (left).

Maestri returned to Cerro Torre in 1971 with a gasoline-powered air compressor and drill, intent on proving beyond all doubt that he was, or would be, the first to stand atop the spire. The result was the *Compressor Route*, laced with over 350 bolts up the peak's southeast ridge. Just a few feet shy of the summit, Maestri called it quits, refusing to climb the final pitch up a looming snow mushroom that he considered an ephemeral part of the route.

Despite the questionable first-ascent tactics, the *Compressor Route* has become the line of choice for most of Cerro Torre's suitors. The fixed gear makes for speedy progress up the steep summit headwall — a real boon in a range known for its ferocious storms that can appear out of nowhere. And, says the author of this photograph, Alan Kearney, "the route really has some great free climbing: chimneys, steep faces, and rime-iced walls."

ALAN KEARNEY, JAY SMITH (LEFT)

Alpine State of the Art

Three for the record

Choose these routes based on the following ideals: Each was ahead of its time, each required huge commitment and determination, each is technically difficult by modern standards, and none of them have been repeated in similar or better style.

M-16 on the 3500-foot east face of Howse Peak, Canadian Rockies. First (and only ascent) March 23-27, 1999 by Scott Backes, Barry Blanchard, and Steve House, who graded the climb VI 5.9 A2 AI 8.

The Dance of the Woo Li Masters on the east face of the Moose's Tooth, Alaska Range. First (and only) ascent by Jim Bridwell and Mugs Stump, March 1981, at VI A4 AI 6.

Slovak Route on the southwest face of Cerro Fitz Roy, Patagonia. First ascent in January 1983 by Michal Orolin, Vladimir Petrik, and Robert Galfy (with abundant fixed rope, over two separate seasons). Climbed in that style, the route is suspect rather than modern. However, Rolando Garibotti and Silvo Karo repeated the 7500-foot-high route in a 30-hour push in December 1999, grading it VI 5.10d A0 ED-. Now that's state of the art.

As technical ability and psychological tolerance increase, more diverse terrain will become possible for alpine-style ascents. Tactics developed on small faces will be applied on increasingly larger ones. Some alpinists will prefer routes of great technical difficulty while others will attempt climbs posing formidable psychological challenge. These trends are present throughout the history of climbing.

Future technical developments will let climbers apply sport-mixed skills and pure rock ability to long, steep, and difficult alpine faces. Free climbing will replace aid in many cases. The standard Canadian Rockies grade of 5.9 A2 WI 5 will morph into 5.11 M7 WI 6 — as a routine. Psychological progress will allow climbers to apply single-push tactics — once relegated to non-technical routes — to ever more lengthy and difficult climbs. Comfortable with higher levels of difficulty and armed with rapidly accruing experience, climbers will commonly go for 36 to 48 hours non-stop, or do much larger routes in faster times. Big-wall routes that were formerly sieged will be blitzed by small, competent teams in lightweight style.

Although alpine-style tactics should become more prevalent in the Himalayas, siege-style expeditions will still make stylistically retrograde ascents of 8000-meter peaks. These contribute nothing to the evolution of alpinism. As well, new aid routes up remote big walls may make baby steps in technical difficulty, amounting to a "+" added to the current highest rating. These routes explore exterior, physical terrain rather than increasing our collective psychological experience. The biggest steps toward the future of alpinism reside in the mind, not in the fingertips or the drill bit.

- MT

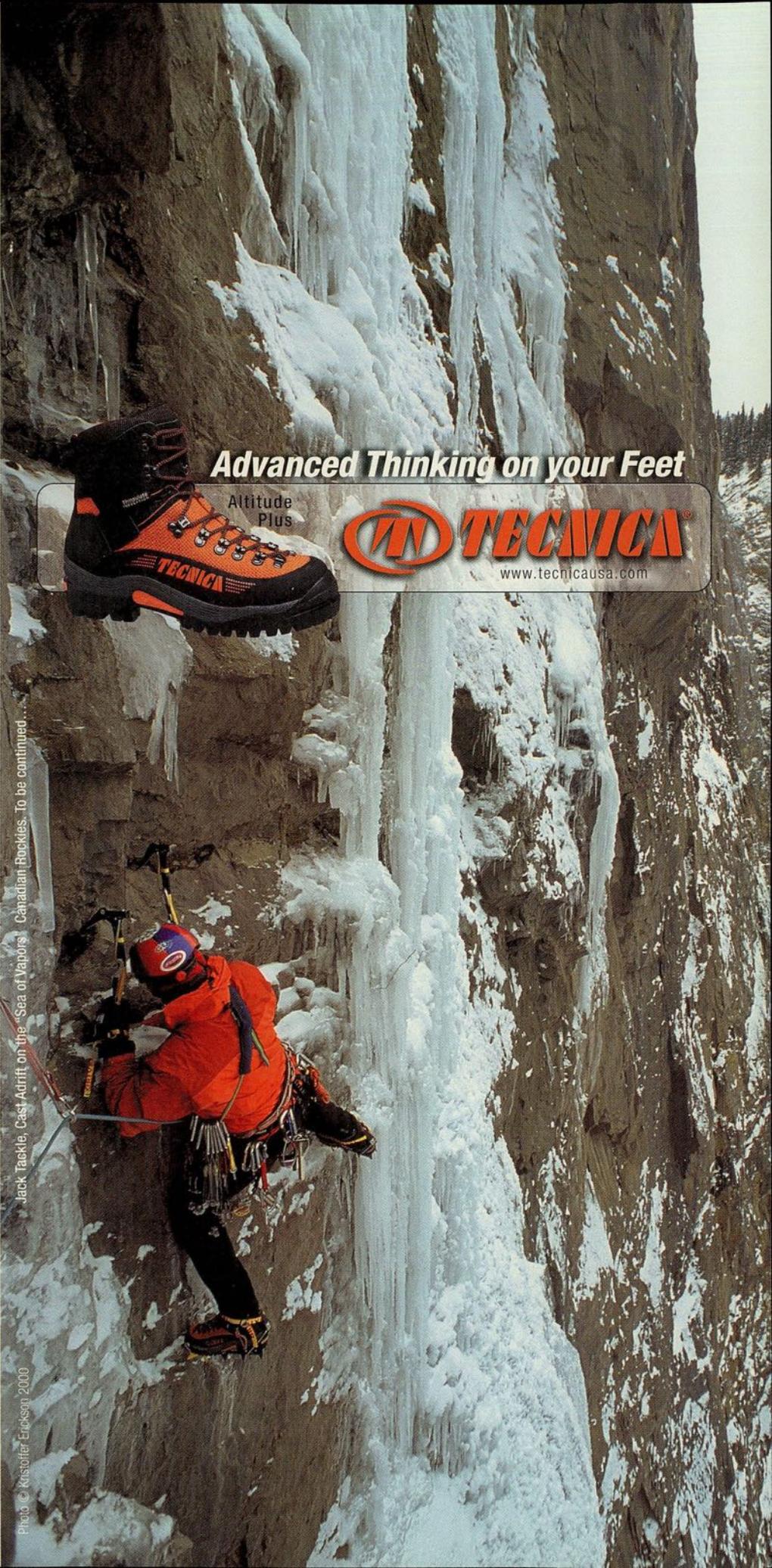


Photo © Kristoffer Erikson 2000
Jack Tackie, Cast Adrift on the "Sea of Vapors" Canadian Rockies. To be continued...

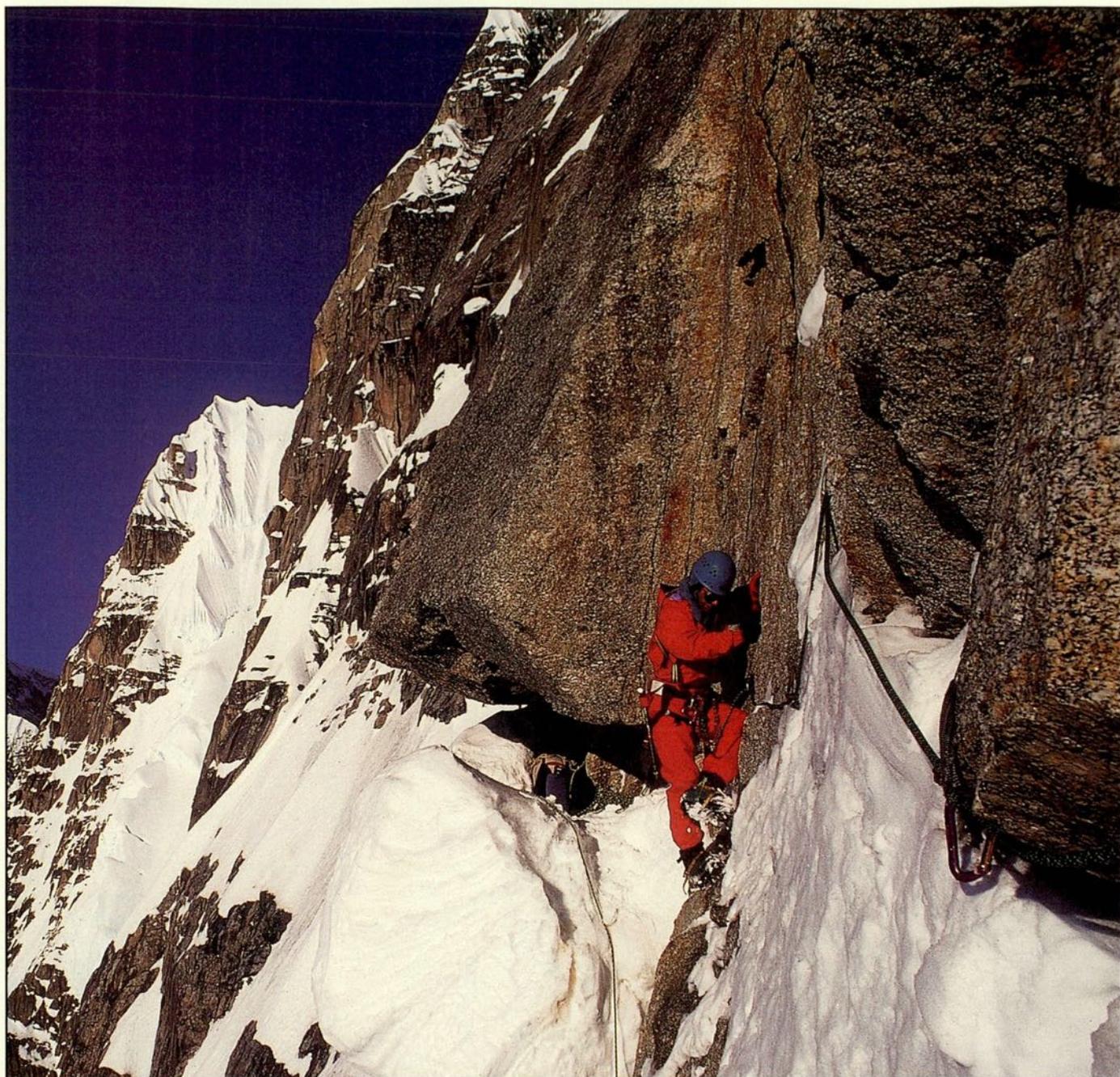
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ALAN KEARNEY, MICHAEL KENNEDY (RIGHT)

Steve Mascioli 10 pitches up the *Moonflower Butte* of Mount Hunter, his fourth attempt on the face.

Little big peak

Although dwarfed by neighboring Denali, Alaska's Mount Hunter packs a high-mountain punch

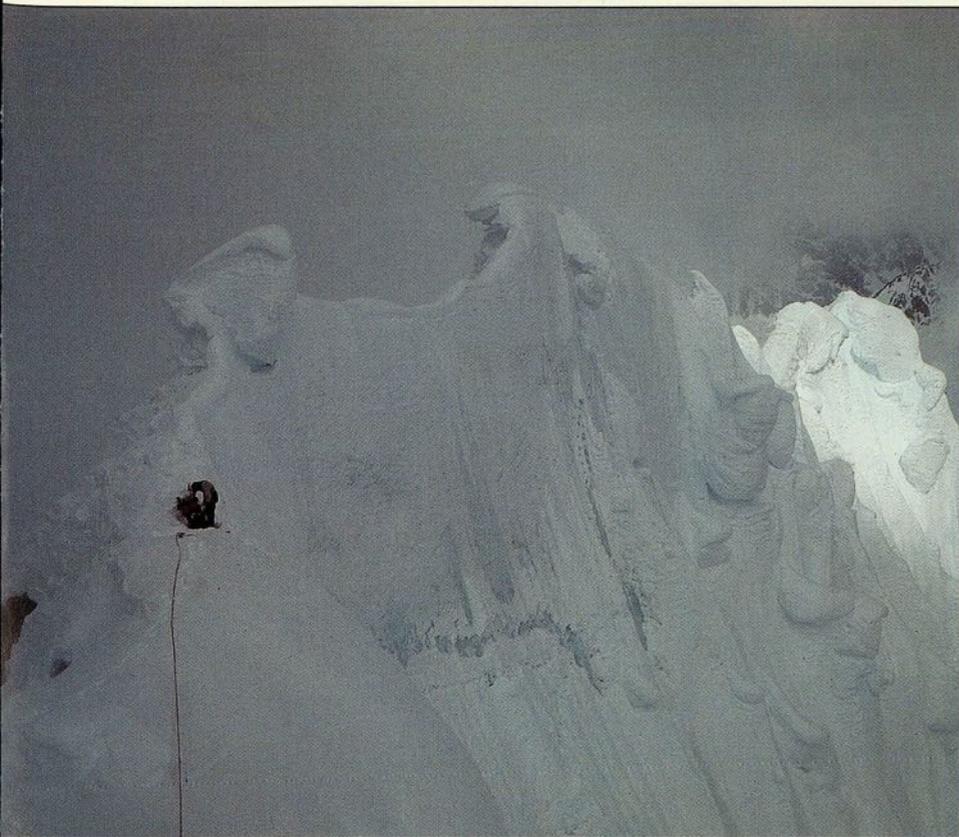
Mount Hunter is situated just a short walk from the busy Kahiltna Glacier airstrip — the staging ground for most attempts on Alaska's 23,320-foot Denali — but this "lesser" peak sees relatively few footprints. In fact, at 14,573 feet, the squat mountain barely registers in the minds of those intent on ticking North America's highest summit. Don't be fooled,

though; Hunter's compact stature packs a wallop of technical difficulties that test even the most hardened alpinists. Chief among these challenges is the 4000-foot-high north buttress, an Arctic El Capitan of near-vertical rock, snow, and ice.

The first to succeed on the buttress were Mugs Stump and Paul Aubrey in 1981. The two pushed a route up the center of the wall, a multi-day line that required difficult aid, ice, and free climbing under constant threat of rockfall and avalanches. Stump regarded his

ascent of the Moonflower Buttress as his best climb, even though he didn't continue up the last 2000 feet of relatively moderate snow slopes from the top of the buttress to the summit. Alan Kearney, who took this photograph, agrees. "The Moonflower has some of the most incredible climbing anywhere."

Tragically, Steve Mascioli died soon after this photograph was taken when a snow mushroom collapsed from above him (see "Stasis: Change, Loss, and Survival on the Moonflower Buttress," *Climbing* No. 177).



"The ridge ahead looked impossible, or at best, suicidal. It was not just steep and corniced, but horribly steep and corniced." — Michael Kennedy, 1978 *American Alpine Journal*, on the first ascent of Mount Hunter's North Face.

Daring the impossible

Climbers survive epic rescue before returning to first-ascent victory

Another one of Mount Hunter's testpieces is the *Kennedy-Lowe Route*. Many Alaskan expeditions prior to this 1977 ascent employed siege-style tactics, fixing thousands of feet of rope and stocked camps along the way. But Michael Kennedy, Jeff Lowe, and George Lowe eschewed these techniques for a light-and-fast, alpine-style attack on Hunter's unclimbed north face.

With just enough supplies for five days, the three left basecamp after dinner on June 14. Eighteen hours and 4000 feet later, they were shocked to discover that their prospective bivy ledge atop the "Triangle," which had looked so good from the ground, was entirely blank — without anchors or even a place to sit. What's more, the corniced ridge ahead look much too demanding for them to attempt in their exhausted state. Rest and a hot drink were paramount, so they chopped a cramped ledge from the steep snow that was just big enough to crouch on.

After a few hours of nervous sleep, Jeff started up the precarious ridge near the sun-lit right side

of this photo, determined to give it a try. Just as Kennedy began to simul-climb below him, Jeff slipped and fell 60 feet, shattering his left ankle. The trio were forced to retreat over two grueling days down their line of ascent, one climber rappelling with Jeff and the last man down-climbing with the anchors (they had only two dead-man and couldn't afford to leave them behind).

While Jeff flew back to the Anchorage hospital, Kennedy and the elder Lowe prepared for another attempt on the route. "Having been up a large part of the hard climbing," wrote Kennedy, "we almost had to complete it in Jeff's honor."

The two re-climbed to their highpoint, snapped this photo, and after a total of three days were standing on the summit. The descent in a whiteout left them staggering, sleep-deprived, down the West Ridge. Lowe fell when a cornice broke, and Kennedy plunged into a crevasse, but miraculously neither was hurt. Another day later, the pair returned safely to basecamp.

After a few days of rest the two attacked yet another unclimbed Alaskan giant, succeeding on the steep, mixed ridge of Mount Foraker's *Infinite Spur*.




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Charlie Fowler about to go for the big slide, at the top of the *North Chimney*, Longs Peak, Colorado.



Twice as hard as M8

Powerhouse trio blazes Canada's hardest alpine route

Steve House is fast making a name for himself in the elite world of high-end alpine climbing. Even among legends like Barry Blanchard and Scott Backes, House is regarded as a breed apart. His ability to climb steep, thin terrain in the mountains astounds everyone who has shared a rope with him, and his 1999 crux lead on Howse Peak's *M-16* in the Canadian Rockies proves the point.

The pitch began midway up the 3500-foot-high east face, a thin runnel of snow-ice plastered only an inch or two thick for 80 continuous feet. Blanchard and Backes could only watch in wonder as House tiptoed up the vertical funnel, struggling to find decent gear placements and pushing steadfastly upward. "That pitch was nowhere near WI 7+," said

Backes (*Climbing* No. 187). "It was alpine-ice eight. ... I couldn't have led that pitch.

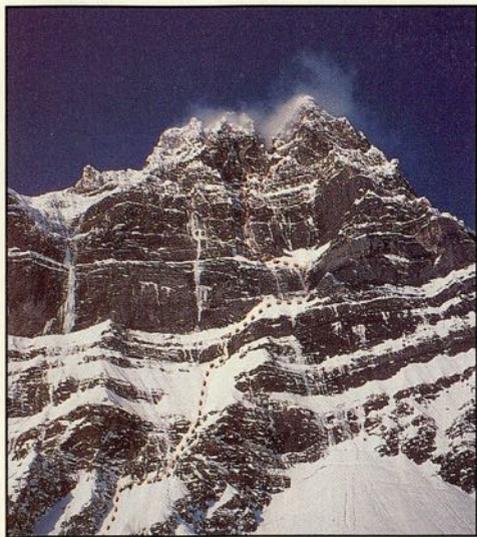
House's lead was only the capstone of the trio's visionary first ascent, a route that linked a series of ephemeral ice smears up a daunting Canadian Rockies headwall. And if the successful three-day ascent wasn't enough of an adrenaline rush, the team soon found themselves in the thick of a high-angle rescue during the descent. Blanchard took a falling snow block dead-on at a rappel station, breaking his tibia and knee, tearing his pack away, and cracking his helmet. Fortunately, half of the rappel anchor survived the impact, and the three made 10 more rappels to the base before a helicopter could fly Blanchard to the hospital.

What goes up ...

Fowler survives 400-foot fall on the Diamond

When most people think about climbing the Diamond in winter (or rather, when the scarce few people think about climbing the Diamond in winter), their thoughts tend to focus on the 1000-foot-high vertical headwall starting at 13,000 feet. North-facing and bone-numbing cold in winter, this granite wall on Longs Peak requires not just big-wall skills but also a Buddhist tolerance for suffering. Most aspirants don't bother worrying about the "approach," a 400-foot-long snow couloir dubbed the *North Chimney* that leads to Broadway Ledge and the start of the headwall.

Charlie Fowler was following Alex Lowe's tracks up this Chimney in April 1984 — perhaps Fowler's 20th time up the Diamond — when Lowe knocked loose a chunk of snow from Broadway. It hit Fowler square-on; he struggled to keep hold but slipped and fell the full length of the couloir, bouncing several times and landing face-down in the snow, 50 feet out from the wall. After recovering his senses, Fowler was able to take stock of the damages: a single bent crampon.



Barry Blanchard making tracks up the first ascent of M-16, Howse Peak, Canadian Rockies (left). The east face of Howse Peak and M-16.



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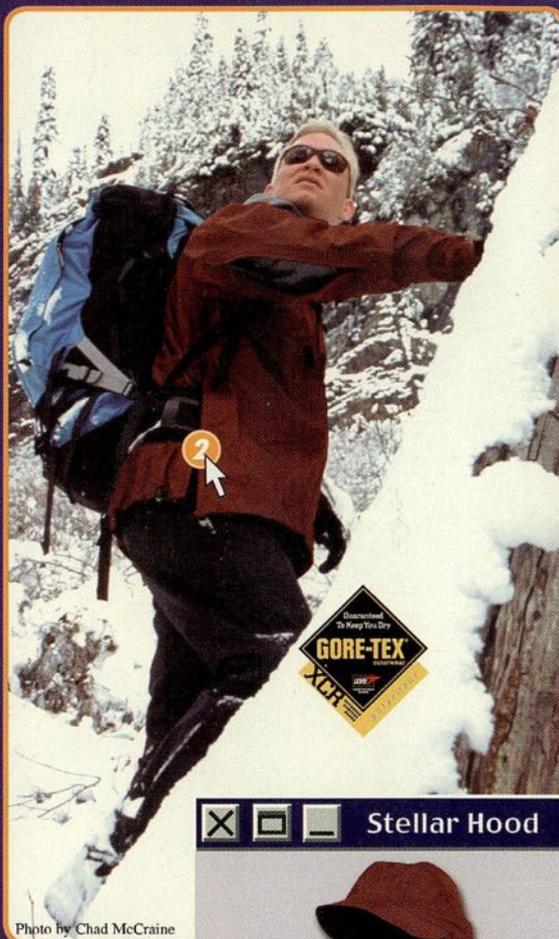
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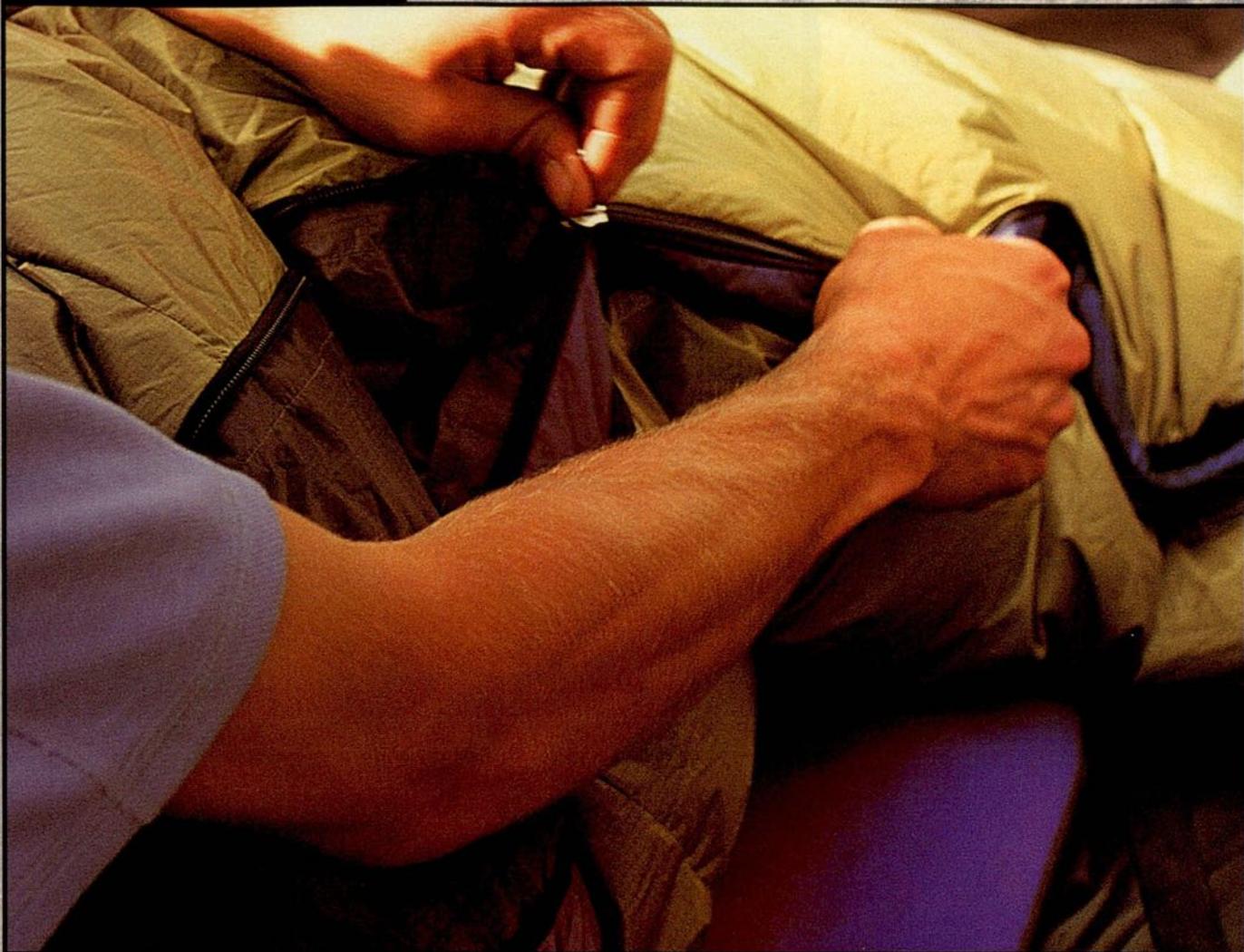
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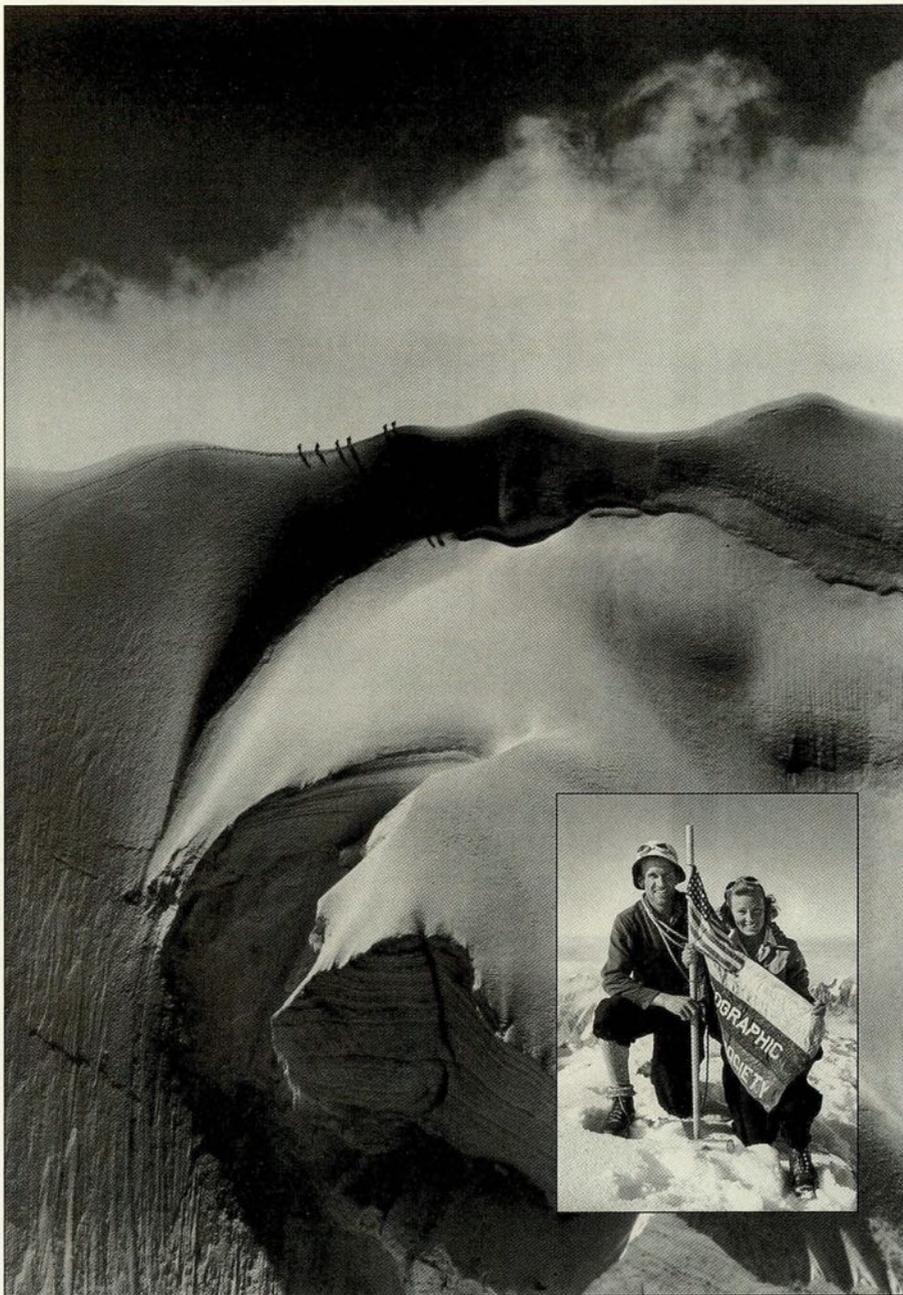


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BRAD WASHBURN/PANOPTICON; THOMAS WINSHIP/WASHBURN COLLECTION/PANOPTICON (INSET)



Just one of Washburn's classic alpine images, of climbers tackling the east ridge of Switzerland's Doldenhorn. Inset: Honeymooners Brad and Barbara Washburn on their first big climb together, the first ascent of Alaska's 10,000-foot Mount Bertha.

From the Alps to the Alaska Range

Brad Washburn's lasting mountain of imagery

A pioneer of both aerial and on-site mountain photography, Brad Washburn has photographed countless peaks and climbing expeditions around the world. From his beginning in 1930 as a surveyor on Alaska's Mount Fairweather, he has gone on to photograph for the National Geographic Society and make detailed topographic maps of Denali, Mount Everest, and New Hampshire's Presidential Range, among others.

This aerial photograph of the Doldenhorn's classic ridge leading to the 11,952-foot-high summit was taken on July 24, 1960 with Brad's

32-pound Fairchild K-6.

Just three months after their wedding, the formidable mountain couple of Brad and Barbara Washburn traveled to Alaska to film and make the first ascent of Mount Bertha on July 31, 1940. This was their first of many Alaskan climbing-and-filming expeditions together, including the first ascent of Mount Hayes in 1941 and the fourth ascent of Denali in 1947 (the first by a woman). After 61 years of marriage, the two are still active in the climbing community, presenting slideshows together throughout the country.

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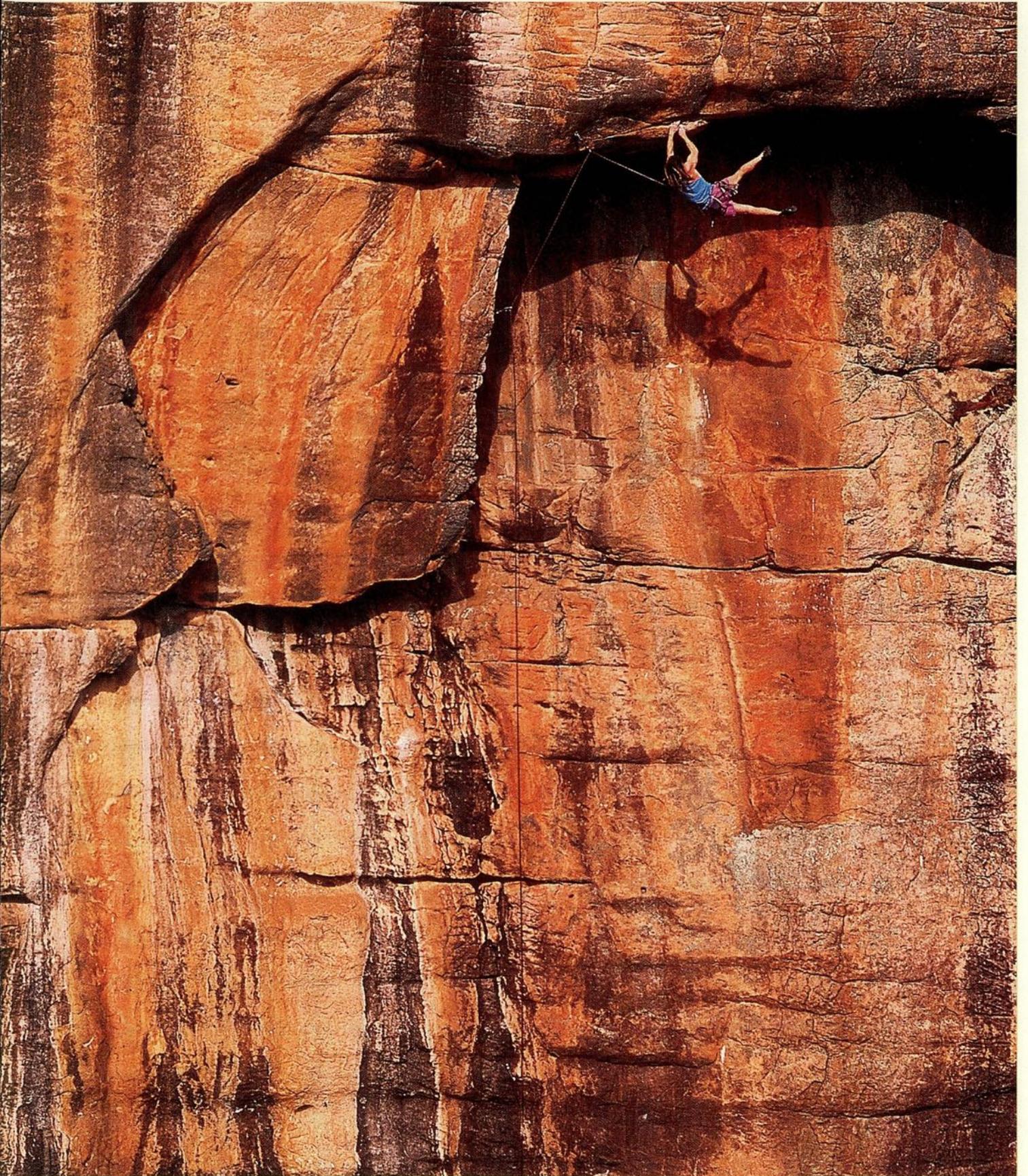
Australia blessed with rock and talent

Australia may be far from most other places, but it has always been significant in world rock climbing. It is blessed with gloriously steep, bullet rock, from the sandstone oceans of the Grampians to the gold bulges of Arapiles to the chiseled planes of the Blue Mountains. Long gone are the days, three decades ago, when “Hot” Henry Barber traveled to the region and single-handedly raised grades by two numbers. Australia has produced many top climbers — Kim Carrigan, Louise Shepherd and her brothers Lincoln and Chris, Geoff Weigand, Garth

Miller, Vera Wong, Jill McLeod. And it has always hosted many visiting standouts, from Barber to Didier Raboutou to Jerry Moffat and onward. In the 1980s Mount Arapiles offered early quality 5.13s by locals as well as the world’s first 5.14, *Punks in the Gym*, by the late great Wolfgang Güllich of Germany.

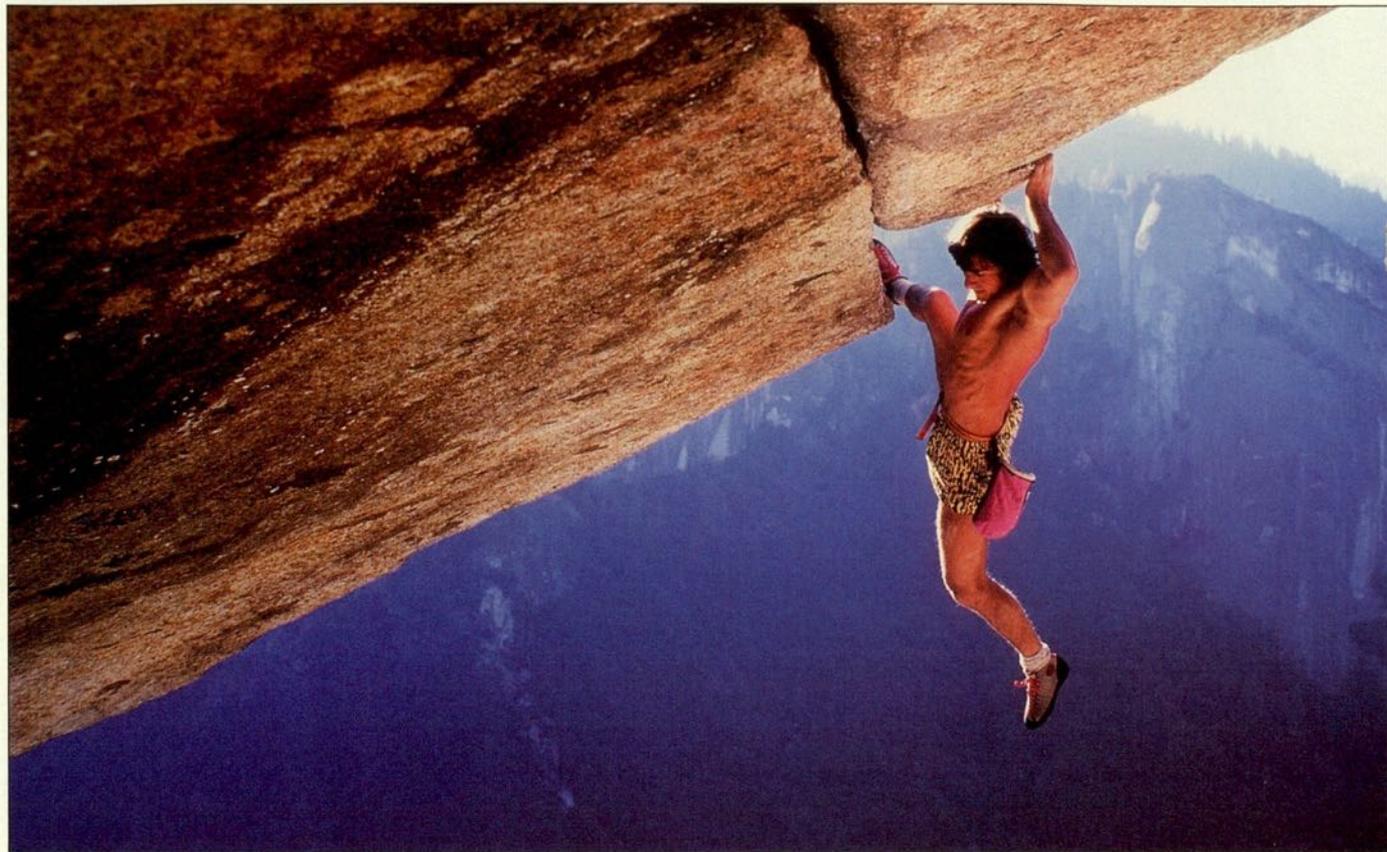
Much recent activity in Australia has focused here in the Grampians, particularly the wavy sandstone of the Taipan Wall. Today, at and near the base of Taipan Wall and apace of another world trend, hard bouldering is being developed at a gallop.

David Jones in the swing of it on *Milupa* (28/5.13a), Wall of Fools, Grampians, Australia.



High hopes The power of a photo

ESSAY BY PETE TAKEDA



Wolfgang Gullich confident on *Separate Reality* (5.12a) in 1986. Gullich, who died at only 32 in a car accident, put up the world's first 5.14, *Punks in the Gym* in Australia in 1985, and 5.14d, *Action Directe* in 1991 at home in Germany. He also did hard mountain routes on Trango Tower and the Central Tower of Paine.

A dozen of us clustered around a desk in back of class, our group exuding such rapt tension that Mr. Krauss could only assume something illicit was happening. Our fourth-period math teacher waded in, scattering the knot of students like sheep. My best buddy and I gaped, busted.

"Okay, let's have it," Mr. Krauss said, pissed and red faced. The object of our attention was a book cracked open to a smeary two-page centerfold. Mr. Krauss' certainty became confusion.

"What is THAT?" he exclaimed, poking a thick finger at the color spread. He'd expected a glossy rendition of an improbable sex act. Before him lay something more astonishing — George Meyer's picture of the grimacing Dave Diegleman straining to clip a carabiner on Yosemite's famous roof crack, *Separate Reality*.

The book, Meyers' *Yosemite Climber*, didn't fit into any established contraband such as

candy, tobacco, or guns, but my math teacher had to follow through, confiscating the book for the duration of the period.

At the end of class Mr. Krauss handed it back, asking with paternal concern, "You don't do stuff like this, do you?" I sighed and shrugged. No. I didn't do anything like that. But there was nothing I would rather do.

That's the power of a picture. The *Separate Reality* spread was the single most influential climbing image in my life. My cragging pals and I would crack the cover and inhale those pages of dreams and visions. The book didn't define who we were, but helped define who we, naïve and impressionable kids limited to boulders and short crags, wanted to be. We yearned to climb in marquee areas like the Valley, and *Yosemite Climber* set our brains on fire.

The Diegleman photo encapsulated everything mythic, athletic, profoundly senseless, and powerful in rock climbing. Diegleman,

hanging from that jam and one cammed toe, way out in space, was heroic.

Today, *Yosemite Climber*, long out of print, lacks the gloss, polish, and technical perfection of contemporary publications. But no one else had attempted to portray rock climbing with such dramatic hard-to-get photos and forthright first-person narratives. It was a work of art and a historic document that captured the spirit and atmosphere of a defining era.

The *Separate Reality* image epitomized everything that drove me to climb. It had it all — outrageous position in a land where up and down ceased to have any meaning. It was athletic — obviously strenuous, while the observer could feel the desperation of a climber hanging on and clipping while a deformed toe slowly oozed from the crack. It was exposed. The climber had to depart the comfort of a sheltered alcove for the inevitable battle at the

(continued on page 110)



ZEN

POWER





Spot that line: Jonny Woodward weaves up the arête of his signature *Beau Geste* (E6 6c).

If you have a mind for it

Or, rather, stomach?

"The most established free-climbing area in the world," *Mountain* magazine called Elbsandsteingebirge, East Germany, in 1984. From the late 19th century, extremely hard climbing here developed in isolation, and under strict ethics. "While other Europeans were frantically killing themselves in the Alps," wrote Louise Shepherd in *Mountain*, "the Saxon Germans were quietly putting up 5.9s in the 1910s, 5.10s in the 1930s, and 5.11s in the 1950s."

Protection was widely spaced — it could be 30 or 90 feet in between — ring-bolts placed on lead. (Resting on them was, however, permitted.) Jammed knots and threads were also used, nuts and cams banned; and climbing was done mostly barefoot and chalkless. Rappel-bolting was in recent decades approved — it is still controversial and very limited — but established climbs and crags remain in their original states.

The area's driving force was Bernd Arnold. In a 1996 article, *Climbing* quoted Henry Barber, who visited the area twice, as saying that Arnold "was the author of so many hard routes that in effect a new grade was created for his unrepeatable ascents, some 80 climbs ... Certainly in the 1970s he was the best lead climber in the world." Arnold has authored at least 400 routes — at least, that he has

recorded in his guidebook (he considers sub-par routes unworthy of documentation). He also climbed in the Tatras and Pyrénées, the Alps, Transos, and Patagonia, and remains, in his mid-50s, active on local turf.

Mind-control such as Arnold's has always been a revered component of climbing, especially so in the United Kingdom. Also pictured here is Jonny Woodward on his famous *Beau Geste* (E6 6c), done in 1982 at Froggatt, England, on an immaculate, plumb vertical arête. The route was, "The big grit[stone] breakthrough of the early 1980s," says the book *On Peak Rock*. Woodward, one of the most talented climbers of his generation, tried top roping it a few times, decided he needed the energy of a lead to inspire him, and then succeeded, using three ropes and belayers: one rope through Friends in a horizontal break off to the right, one to the left to dampen a big swing off the crux, and one for the sole placement (a #3 RP) after that.

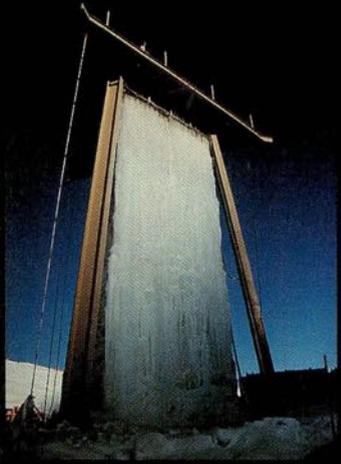
"It was clearly a climb at the absolute upper limit of what was possible at the time," wrote Ian Smith, photographer, in *High* magazine.

The route took four years to gain a second ascent, and still sees fewer ascents than the better-known and similarly perfect grit arête, *The Master's Edge*, done ground-up in 1983 at Millstone, and graded harder at E7 6c. Nearly 20 years later, *Beau Geste* retains a fearsome aura.

Bernd Arnold in his sandstone playground, Elbsandstein.

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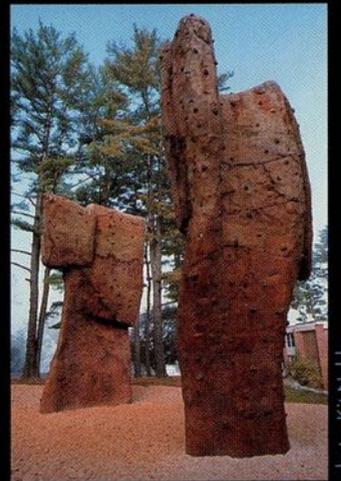


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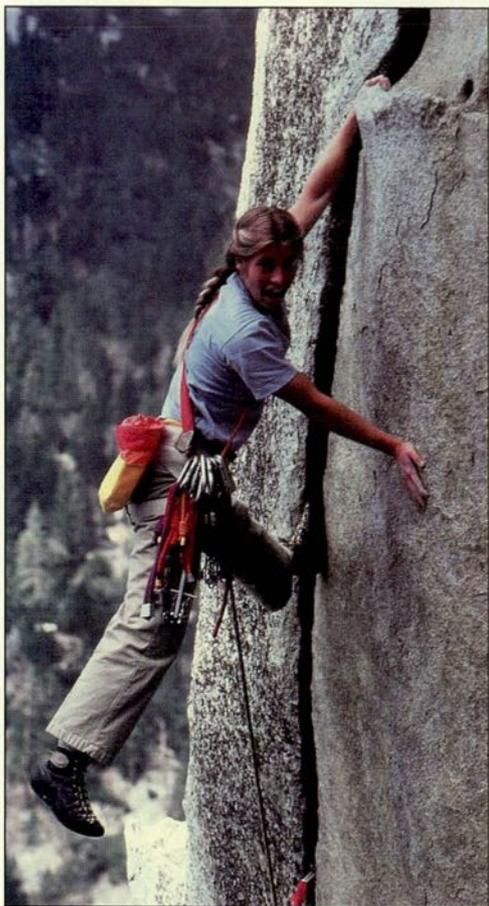


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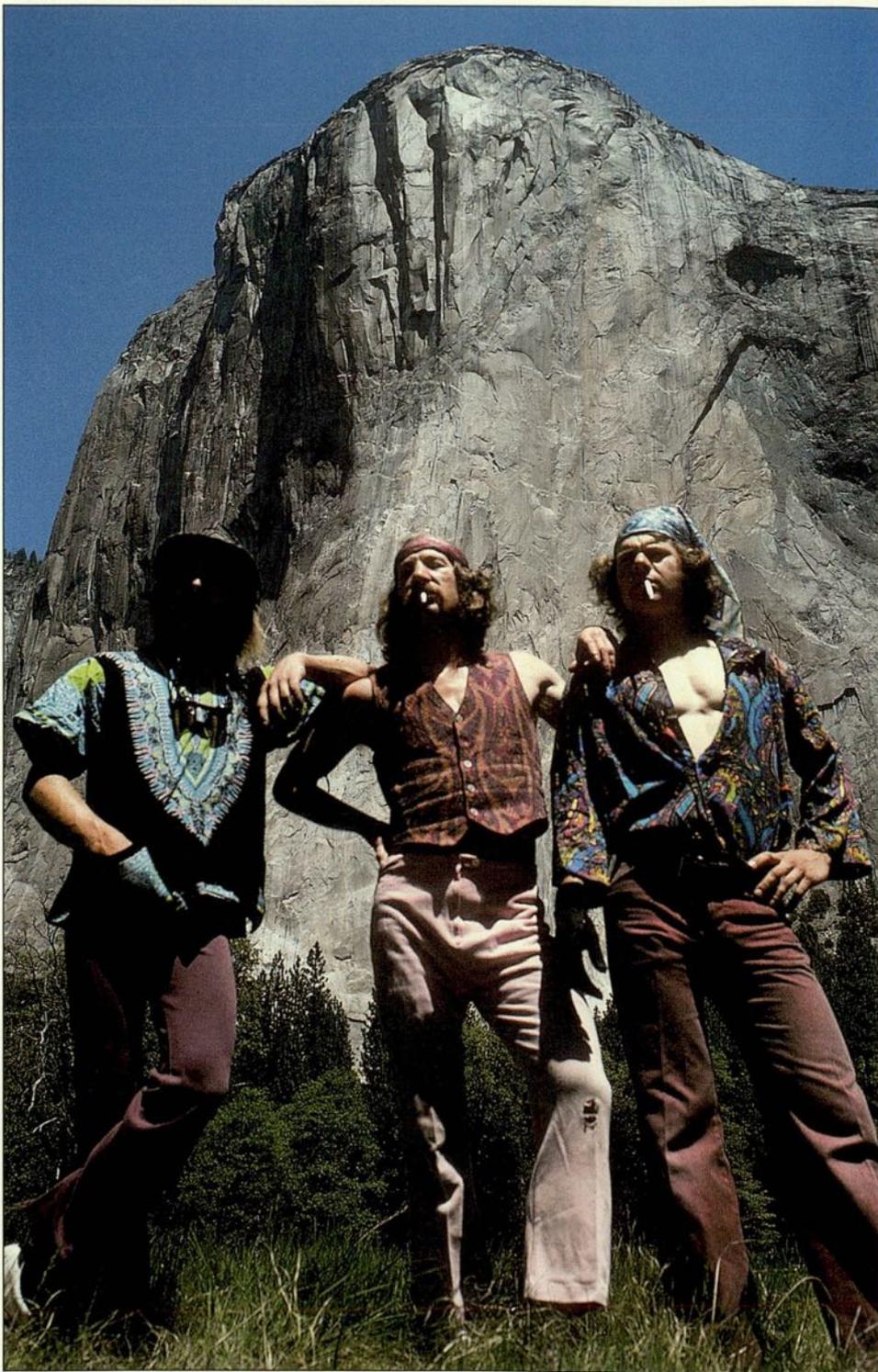
Lynn Hill on *Insomnia*.

■ You may not remember this shot, but it was a defining image, even totemic, of Lynn Hill, taken when she was only 21. At the time, in the early 1980s, it was still unusual to see women on hard rock climbs, and *Insomnia* at Suicide Rock, California, is a pumper 5.11a. Rarer yet was that the shot, taken on a serious route, showed someone having fun — she was actually *playing* on the thing. (The moves just below her feet were hard, so she was also feeling relieved). Though Hill was in the midst of winning the televised Survival of the Fittest contest for four years starting at 18, this was her first photo published in the climbing world.

■ This scene, Jim Bridwell recalls, “was sort of a put on. There’d been a photo on the cover of *Mountain* magazine of all these guys who’d done a movie on the North Face of the Eiger ... everybody had the same sweaters on, all the gear in front of them.

“We didn’t have an Eiger, we had an El Cap. We went down and bought those clothes at the thrift store, except for the shirt John Long was wearing, which I’d made. I just sold that shirt, for \$500, as a collector’s item.”

After the recent illness and untimely death of Billy Westbay, owner of the shot, his widow, Angela, generously gave the classic shot to Bridwell.



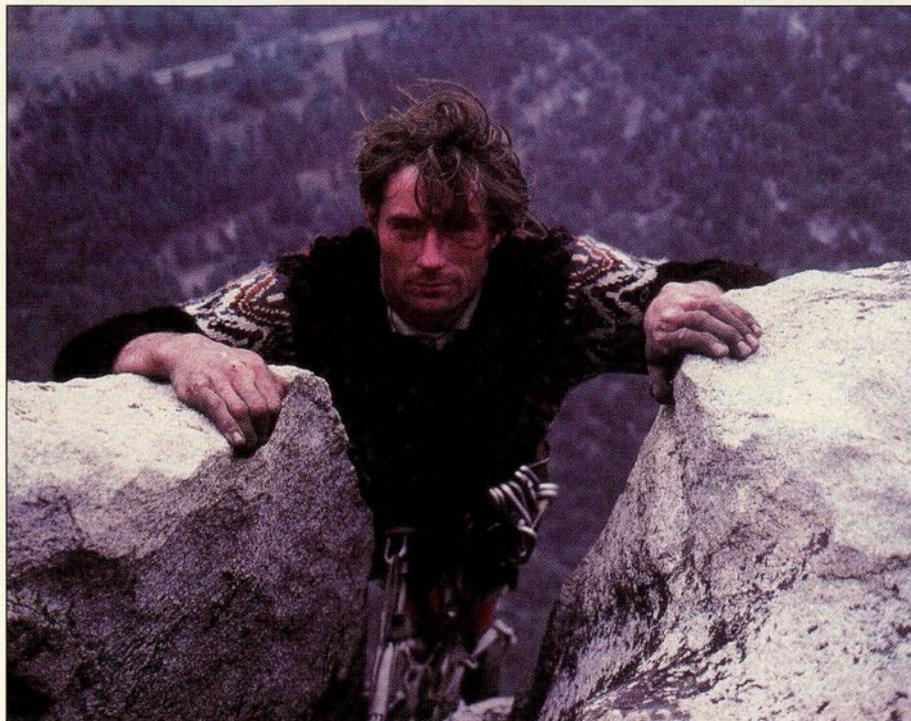
Triumphant triumvirate: Billy Westbay, Jim Bridwell, and John Long in 1975 after their eye-opening one-day ascent of *The Nose* of El Cap in a day.

■ Climbing has always been a sport of sharing. The very specific and demanding moves of hard modern routes, often practiced and memorized one by one before managed and then, in yet another layer of difficulty, linked, gave rise to a whole new realm of transpired detail. Dubbed "Beta" by the Gunkie Jack Mileski, the thorough style of narration is practiced here — and for usefulness, pantomimed — by two of the country's standard-bearers of the 1980s and 1990s.

BETH WALD



Jim Karn and Dale Goddard deep in conversation.



GALEN ROWELL

Layton Kor pops over the top of El Capitan's Salathé Wall in 1967.

■ Layton Kor. Steve Roper, in *Camp 4: Recollections of a Yosemite Rockclimber*, described a situation once familiar to dozens of climbers: "the enthusiastic big man looming over me, insisting we go climb. Now! Anything! Pack up! Kor, cursed or blessed with an abundance of energy, simply could not sit still. In all the years I knew him I never saw him read a book or newspaper, or look contemplative. He paced; he told filthy jokes; he chased women. He ate with great zest... He nudged people constantly." Kor tore it up in Eldorado, in the Black Canyon, in Yosemite, climbing fast and putting up consecutive major routes in great bursts of energy. In 1965 he and his dear friend John Harlin went to Europe for a winter ascent of the Eiger Direct. Harlin fell to his death when a fixed rope snapped, and Kor returned with his heart broken. Although Kor made the fourth ascent of the *Salathé Wall* with Galen Rowell two years later, he then stopped climbing, returning to it only after 20 years.

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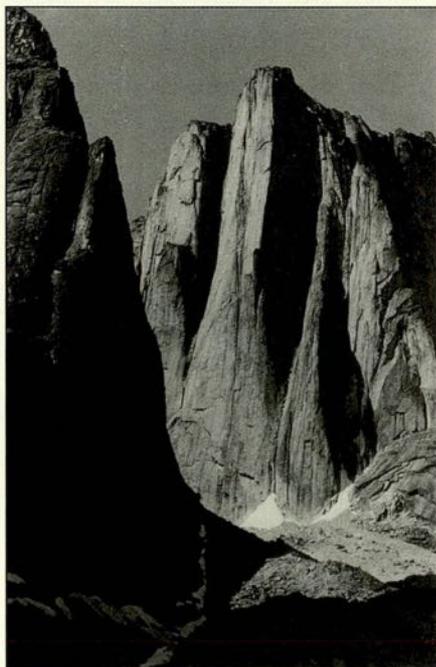
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Danica Fitts (US) 2000 Youth World Championships, Amsterdam



Steve Levin on the first free ascent of Lotus Flower Tower, 1977.



The southeast face of Lotus Flower Tower: The original line takes the sunlit face left of the obvious prow.

Still the one

Lotus Flower Tower caught the world's eye

The southeast face of Lotus Flower Tower in the Cirque of the Unclimbables, Logan Mountains, Canada, was first climbed by Jim McCarthy, Tom Frost, and Sandy Bill in 1968. You could, of course, argue that the southeast face of Proboscis, in the same area and done in 1963 by McCarthy, Royal Robbins, Layton Kor, and Dick McCracken, was a bigger deal, as the apparent first big wall in a truly remote location. The face would not be repeated for nearly 30 years (in the 1990s two routes went in to its left, one, a long 5.13 sport route by Todd Skinner, Paul Piana, and Galen Rowell in 1992, and the other, the third overall ascent and second free ascent of the wall, in 1995, when Kurt Smith, Jeff Jackson and Scott Cosgrove did a 5.12 up a dihedral and crack system). The Lotus Flower Tower, however, thanks largely to Tom Frost's images, immediately captured the imagination of climbers all over the world. Three European parties repeated

the 24-pitch *Frost/McCarthy/Bill Route* in the 1970s; Americans put up new routes in 1972 and 1974, and Austrians in 1977.

In August 1977 Mark Robinson, Sandy Stewart, and Steve Levin freed the original route at VI 5.10+, making it then, as *Mountain* magazine recorded, "one of the few all-free grade-six climbs in the world. Absolutely no aid was used on the climb, and each member of the party free-climbed every pitch. Only one leader fall was taken and," the magazine added sternly, "there was no sieging or other monkey business."

Today the route is well-traveled, free at a relatively accessible grade or via straightforward aid. But its real draw is as one of the greatest of aesthetic lines, with stunning rock. In the excellent history *Pushing the Limits: The Story of Canadian Mountaineering* by Chic Scott, Canada's Rob Rohn, who in 1978 did the second free ascent, calls the line "one of the world's classic routes. Personally, I thought it was the best route I had ever done."

SANDY STEWART (TOP); TOM FROST

"Your head is totally worked,
your arms twitch like they're gonna
fall off, your fingers
are cracked, swollen and
bleeding. I find it all so peaceful."



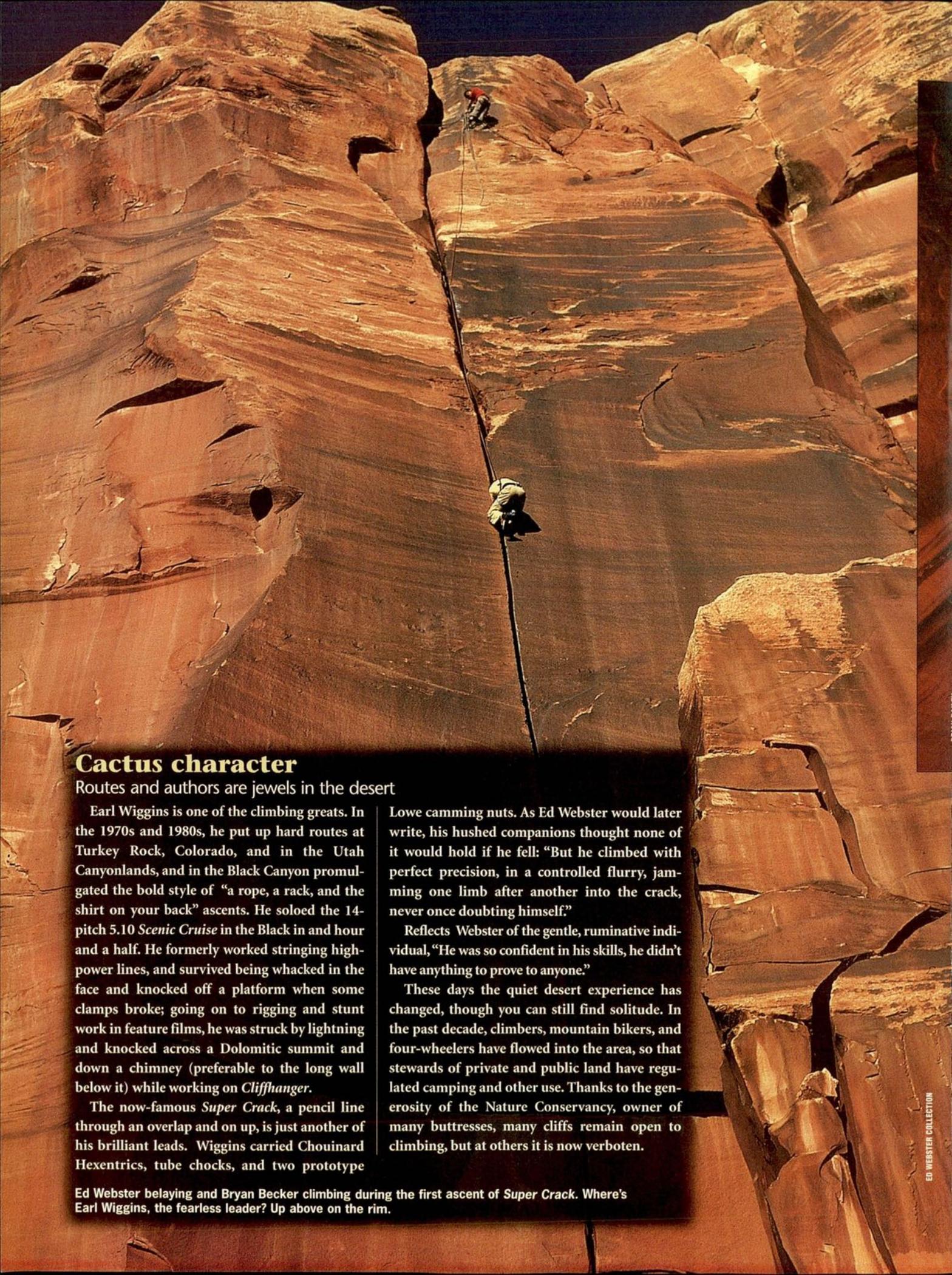
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-Tommy Caldwell, 21
Climber

First Free Ascent of
Kryptonite 5.14d
PowerBar user since 1993

A photograph of a desert canyon with a climber on a rope and a belayer on the rock face. The rock is reddish-brown and layered. A climber is visible on a rope, and a belayer is on the rock face. The scene is dramatic and captures a moment of high-altitude climbing.

Cactus character

Routes and authors are jewels in the desert

Earl Wiggins is one of the climbing greats. In the 1970s and 1980s, he put up hard routes at Turkey Rock, Colorado, and in the Utah Canyonlands, and in the Black Canyon promulgated the bold style of “a rope, a rack, and the shirt on your back” ascents. He soloed the 14-pitch 5.10 *Scenic Cruise* in the Black in an hour and a half. He formerly worked stringing high-power lines, and survived being whacked in the face and knocked off a platform when some clamps broke; going on to rigging and stunt work in feature films, he was struck by lightning and knocked across a Dolomitic summit and down a chimney (preferable to the long wall below it) while working on *Cliffhanger*.

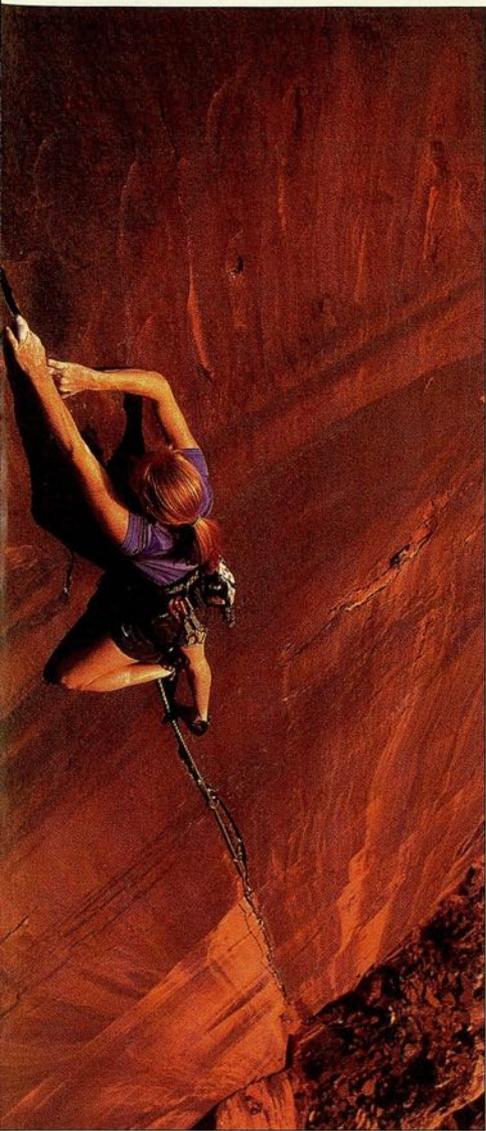
The now-famous *Super Crack*, a pencil line through an overlap and on up, is just another of his brilliant leads. Wiggins carried Chouinard Hexentrics, tube chocks, and two prototype

Lowe camming nuts. As Ed Webster would later write, his hushed companions thought none of it would hold if he fell: “But he climbed with perfect precision, in a controlled flurry, jamming one limb after another into the crack, never once doubting himself.”

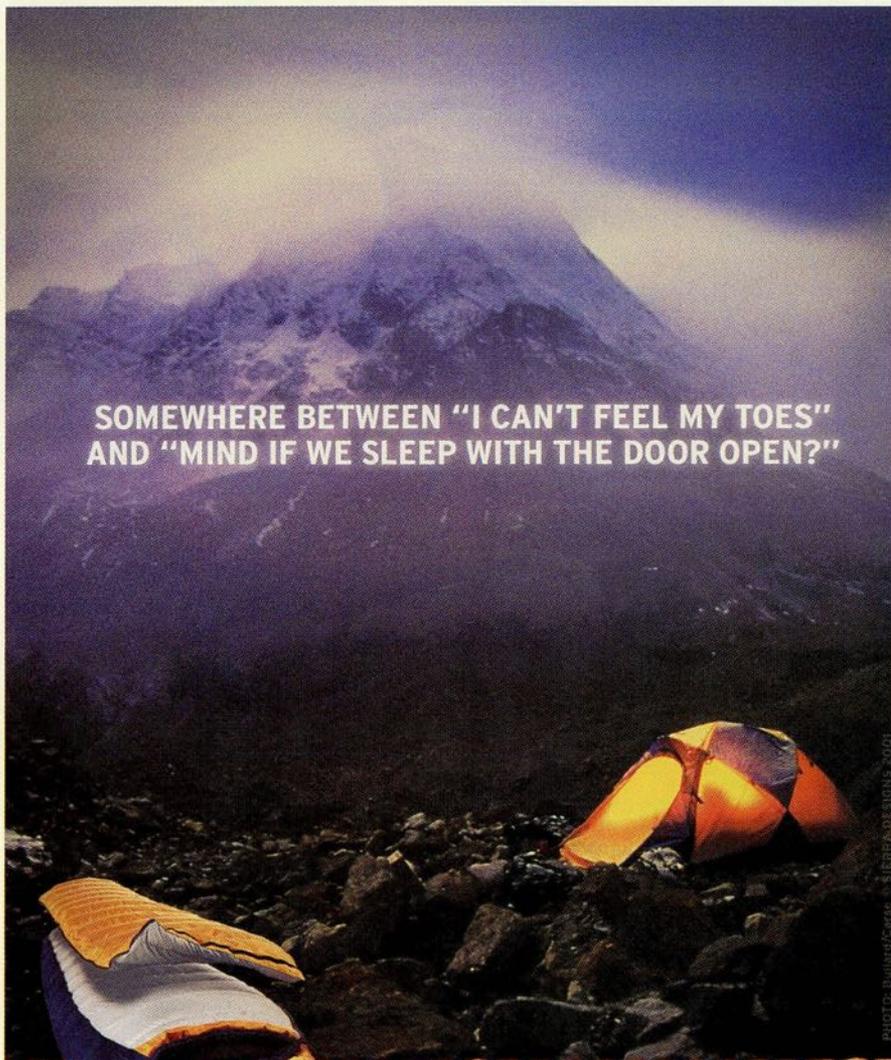
Reflects Webster of the gentle, ruminative individual, “He was so confident in his skills, he didn’t have anything to prove to anyone.”

These days the quiet desert experience has changed, though you can still find solitude. In the past decade, climbers, mountain bikers, and four-wheelers have flowed into the area, so that stewards of private and public land have regulated camping and other use. Thanks to the generosity of the Nature Conservancy, owner of many buttresses, many cliffs remain open to climbing, but at others it is now verboten.

Ed Webster belaying and Bryan Becker climbing during the first ascent of *Super Crack*. Where’s Earl Wiggins, the fearless leader? Up above on the rim.



Splitter, forever. Lisa Gnade on *Optimator* (5.13a), another of the immaculate Indian Creek lines that are the best the desert has to offer. Aside from towers, that is ...



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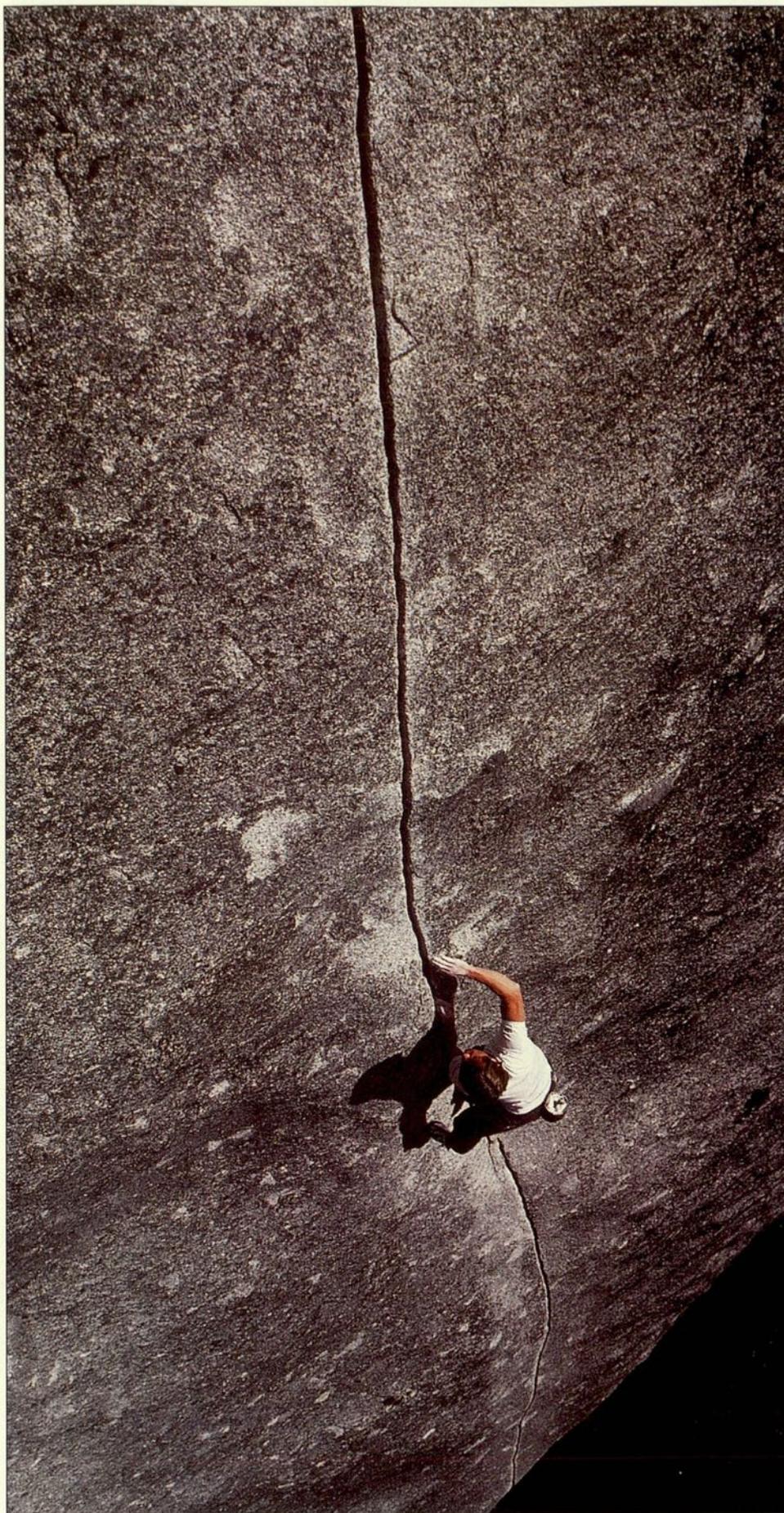


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Peter Croft at home on *Tips* (5.11d), Yosemite.

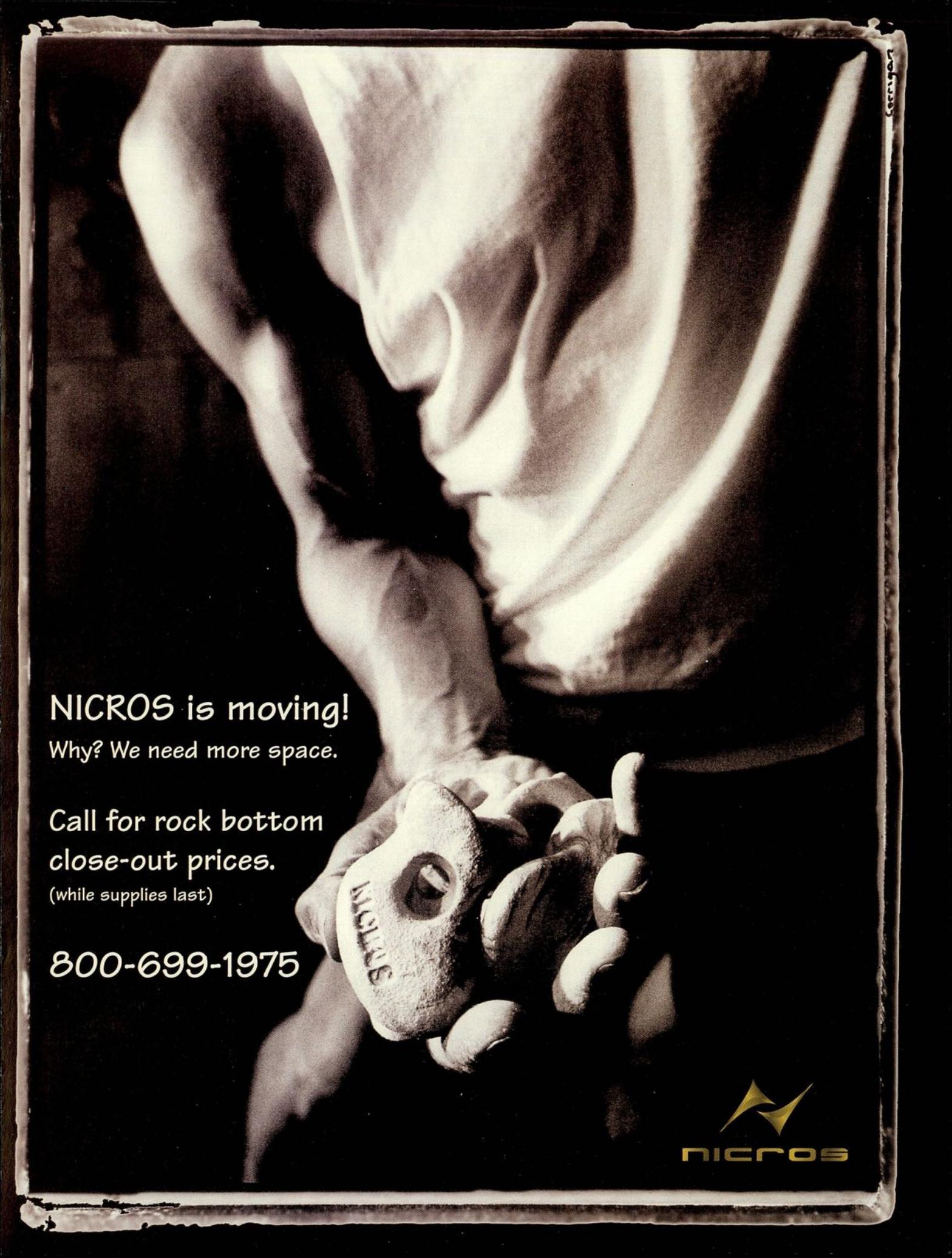
In the realm of the senses

Peter Croft did his own thing

Where do you start with Peter Croft? Soloing four routes in a day in the Bugaboos, or 110 hard pitches in a day at Mount Arapiles? Making the first traverse of the Waddington Massif in the Coast Range, Canada? Flashing two 5.13 first ascents at Squamish, or free climbing the University Wall on Squamish? Climbing, with John Bachar, the *Nose* of El Cap and the *Regular Northwest Face* of Half Dome in a day, the first to link the Valley massifs?

Others — notably Henry Barber in the 1970s and Bachar in the 1980s — took soloing to new levels, and Croft added frequency and breadth. “In Peter’s game,” wrote *Climbing* as of 1989, “he remains the only player.”

Croft today says that, aside from the routes he has done, “The reasons for it, for soloing or doing the long routes or even climbing itself, are really more interesting. I just got back from climbing so I’m trying to collect my thoughts ... In school, I thought that sports were supposed to be fun, but they were packed with rules, all about rules. It took me a while to figure that out, and so I dabbled in all kinds of things. Then when I finally found climbing it was a way to break away from all of that. You make it up as you go, and it is more like the real adventure. Some people call climbing a sport. To me, that always sounds wrong.” He laughs. “I probably just watched one too many Tarzan movies as a kid. That was instrumental.”



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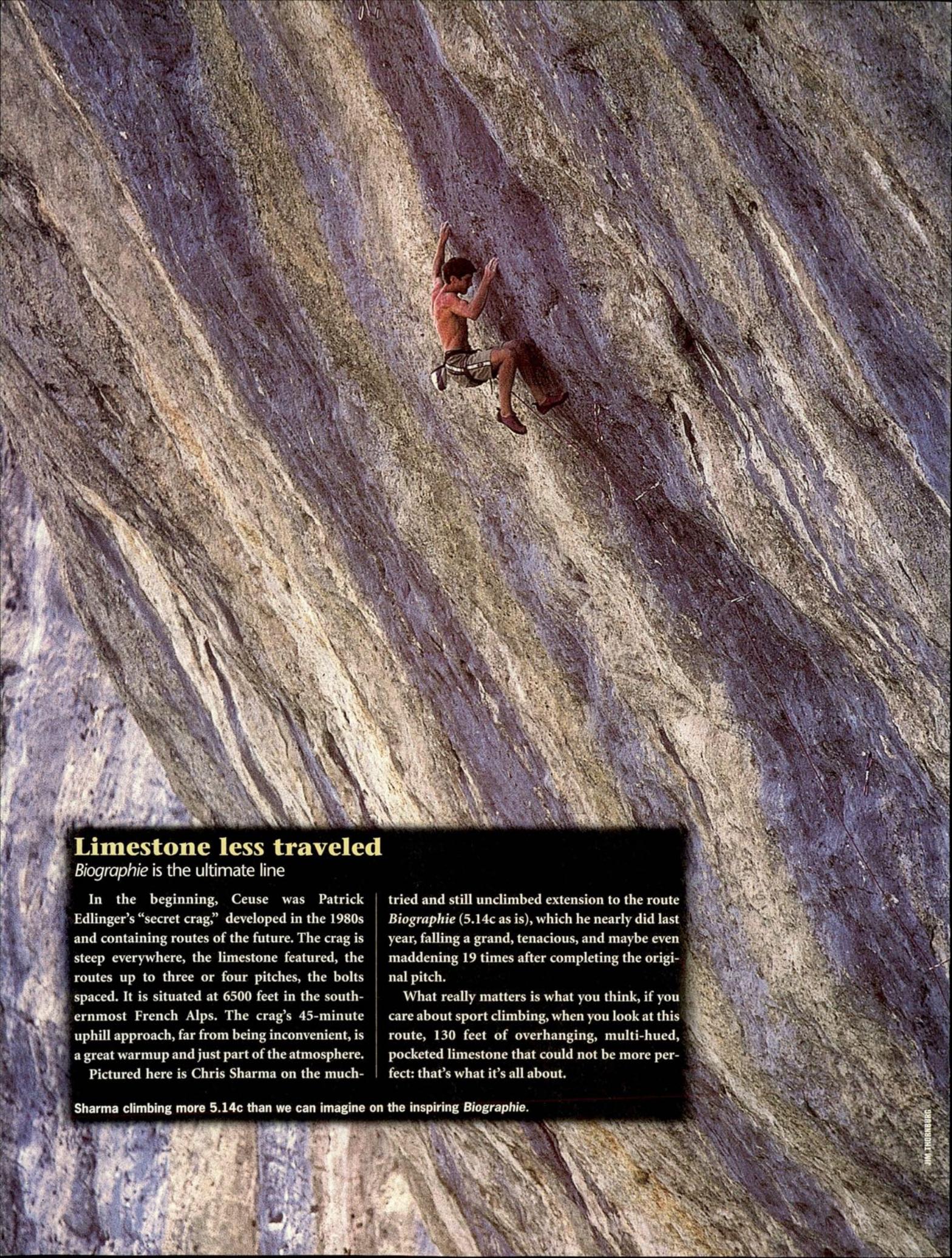
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Pictured here is Chris Sharma on the much-

tried and still unclimbed extension to the route *Biographie* (5.14c as is), which he nearly did last year, falling a grand, tenacious, and maybe even maddening 19 times after completing the original pitch.

What really matters is what you think, if you care about sport climbing, when you look at this route, 130 feet of overhanging, multi-hued, pocketed limestone that could not be more perfect: that's what it's all about.

Sharma climbing more 5.14c than we can imagine on the inspiring *Biographie*.

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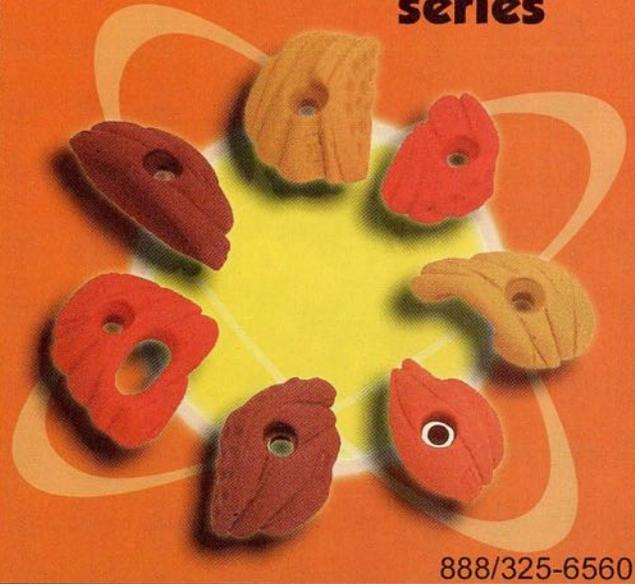
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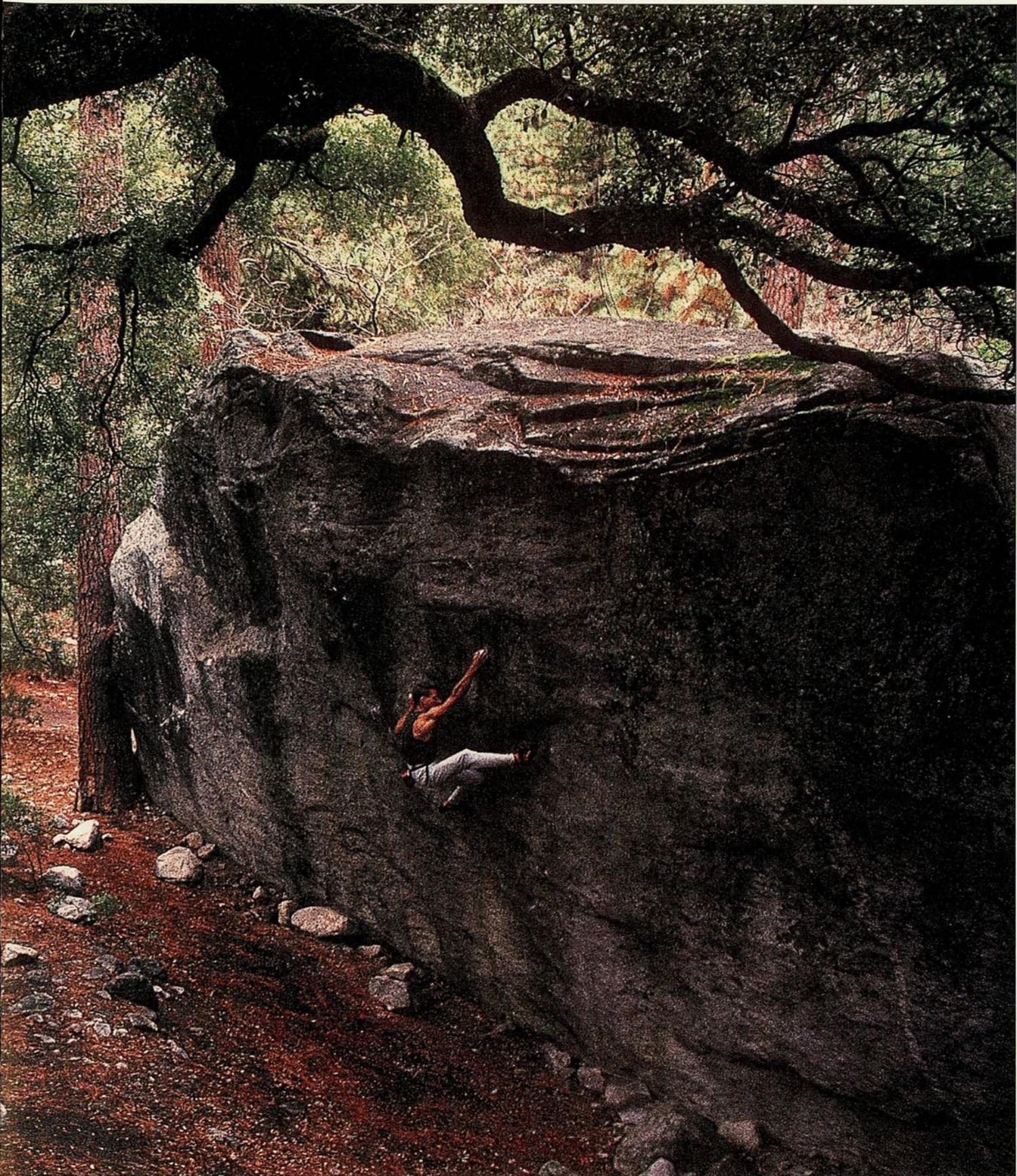
Eyewitness Bouldering

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Good-bye Valley madness Find peace in Michael Jackson's magic world

Yosemite Valley is crazy. At certain times the diesel-belching tour buses, hair-pulling gridlock, concrete-hard campsites, and swarming visitors give Yosemite the ambiance and magic of a New York subway at rush hour. Bouldering solitude, however, can be had merely a few steps away from the mad house of Camp 4. Nestled peacefully in a serene grove of oak and pine trees

with a plush carpet of leaves and needles is the Thriller Boulder. This immaculate chunk of granite, named in homage to the King of Pop's blockbuster 1982 album, is home to two of the Valley's most revered boulder problems, *The Force* (V10) and *Thriller* (V9). No, they aren't easy (and you thought *Midnight Lightning* was stiff), but few places in the Valley are as enrapturing and peaceful.



Long-time Valley climber Ed Barry pulls through the hard, thin moves of *Thriller* (V9).

Bouldering

Smut, lust, and two-foot dynos

My teenage years as a bouldering-porn junkie

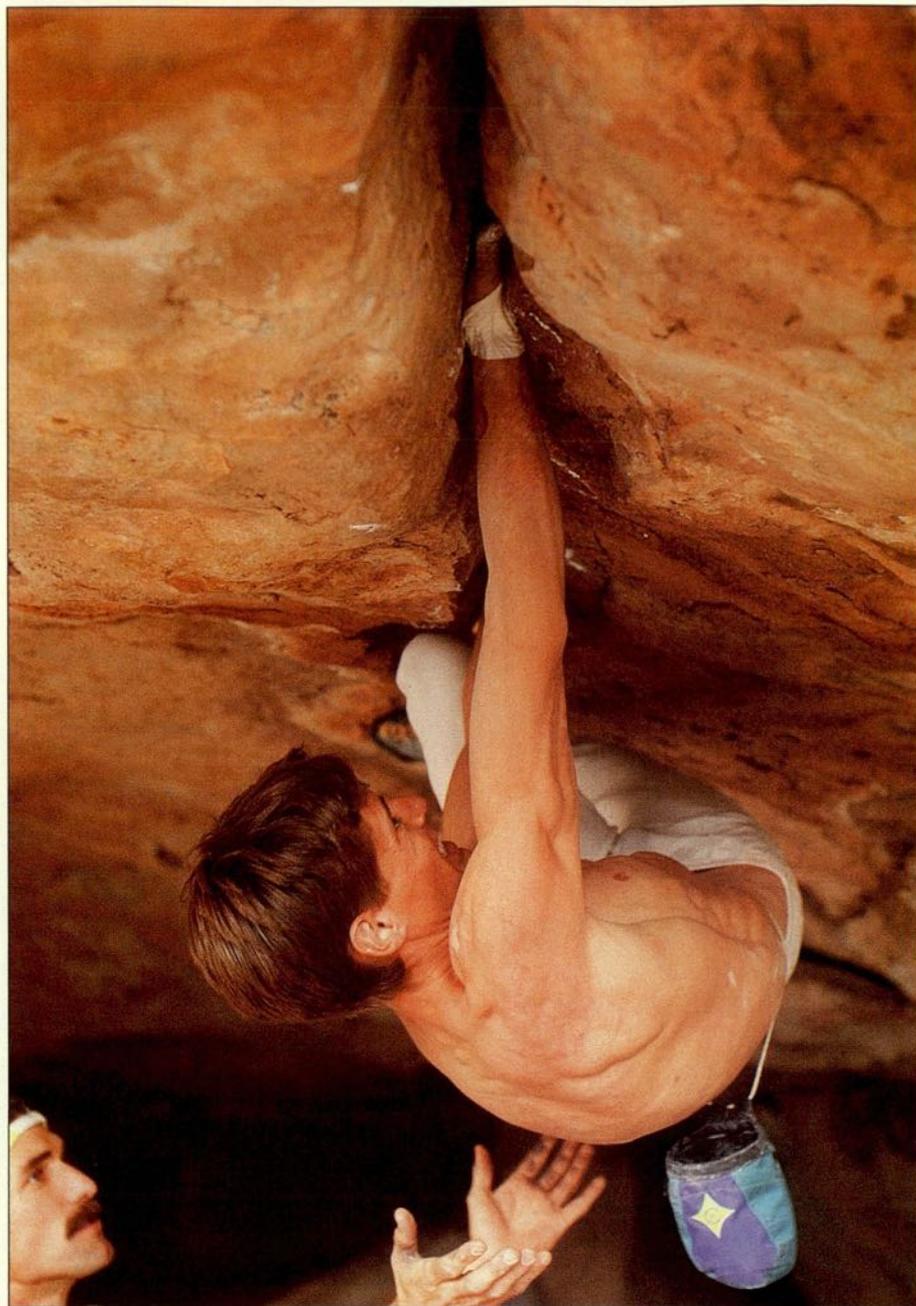
ESSAY BY MATT SAMET

Boulders, by definition, are small chunks of stone. They neither sweep upward like El Cap nor loom overhead like Nameless Tower. They just kind of sit there — low, squatty, rounded, and at times uninspiring.

Even the most impressive lines like *Right Eliminator*, *The Mandala*, or *Slashface* pale in comparison with the jaw-dropping grandness of granite big walls, sandstone desert towers, and neck-bending sport crags. The idea, then, of a bouldering photo being spectacular seems antithetical. How do you make something — even the hardest sequence on earth — look spectacular if it's only four feet off the ground? It's unlikely that your dear Aunt Ethel will be impressed by a "sick" photo of you cutting loose on the 12-foot-high, double-digit, crimper project you scrapped your way up after three months of effort. "That's nice," she'll likely say. "Do you ever do any *real* climbing, with ropes?"

Since the early days of American bouldering — when Valley locals honed their skills on the lowly pile of Indian Rock in Berkeley or the Camp 4 boulders hiding in the forest beneath Yosemite's big walls — the sport has been looked on as little more than a means of training for bigger and better things.

When I first began climbing in 1987, bouldering was an esoteric pursuit, one that few climbers — not to mention my dear Aunt



Mean-ass Mother — Dale Goddard straining to get through the "easy" hand jamming section of Hueco Tanks' *Mother of the Future* (V9), leading contender for the title of "world's most difficult crack boulder problem."

Ethel — could understand. It would be nearly five years before Hueco was on the map, before bouldering went *big*.

I was 16 at the time, and had a box full of back issues of *Climbing* that I'd leaf through late at night, slobbering over the images. Although bouldering was dismissed by "real" climbers as an arcane game, it was just mainstream enough for photos of boulderers at the cutting edge to make the mags: Ron Kauk, feet adrift on *Midnight Lightning*; Jacky Godoffe, clinging to a rounded, green bulge in the idyllic forest of Fontainebleau; John Long flexing his

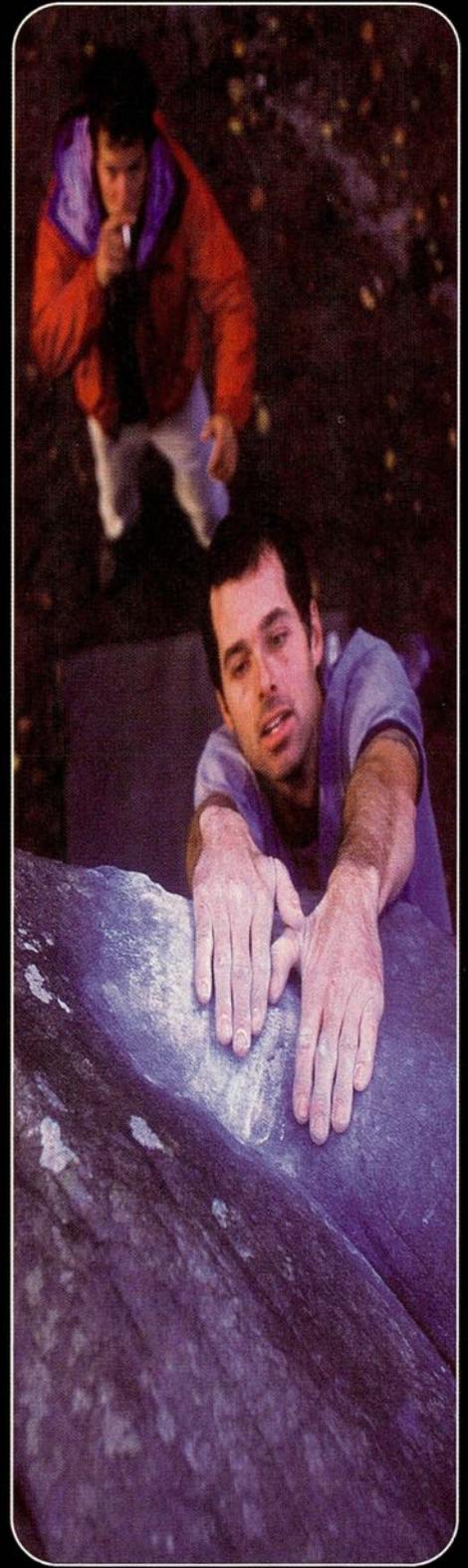
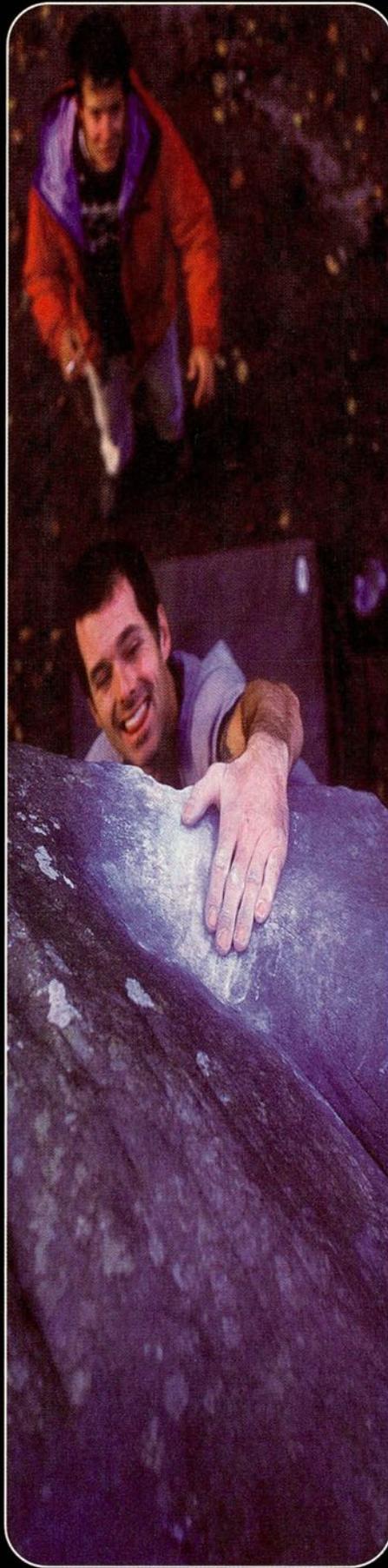
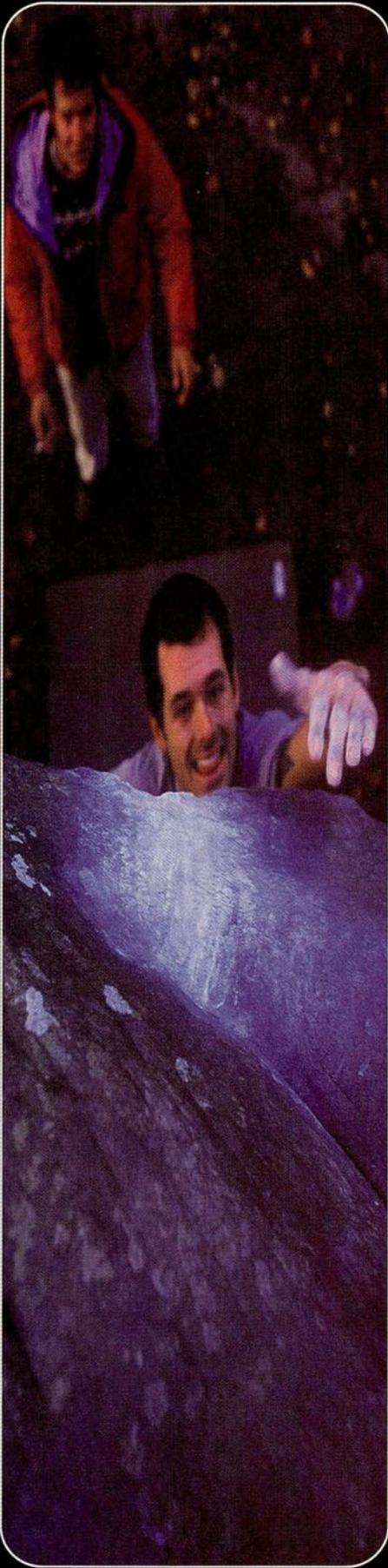
biceps on the *Pinch Overhang* at Horsetooth; John Gill leaping up the *Fatted Calf* near Pueblo or effortlessly holding a one-armed front lever. Within a month I had every one of those images memorized, each hold, every ripple of the rock, even subtle dimples and foot chips ingrained in my mind. Bouldering photos covered the walls of my room, a bizarre shrine to an even more bizarre sport.

More than anything else in the mags, bouldering photos captured the raw essence of vertical movement, its fluidity, explosiveness, and

(continued on page 106)

KEVIN POWELL

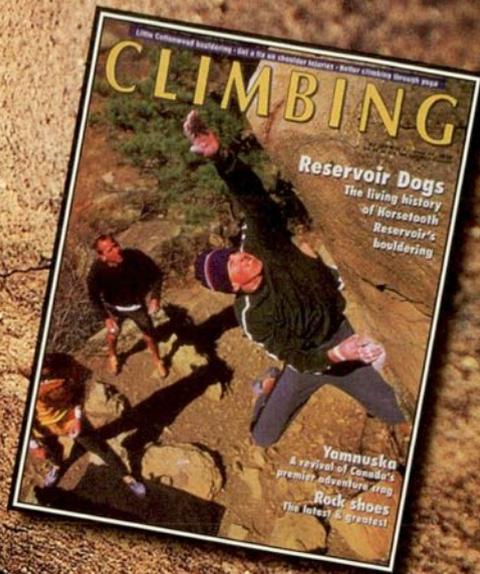
JEFF POWELL AND JAY JAGODZINSKI (THE SMOKING MAN) IN FRONT.



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Bouldering



CRAIG LUEBREN

Mike Auldrige tests his right-hand pinch strength and manteling savvy on Horsetooth Reservoir's lodestone problem, the Pinch Overhang (V5).

Sandstone heavyweight

Times may change but the *Pinch Overhang* still packs a punch

"A discovery akin to an archaeologist finding the Great Pyramid," John Gill, the grandmaster of bouldering, once said of discovering the Mental Block, a diamond of Dakota sandstone at Horsetooth Reservoir, Colorado. Gill must have danced a jig that day in 1968 when he bushwhacked up to the boulder's base and realized the beauty of his find: the overhanging 12-foot-high-by-40-feet-wide west face, sparsely featured with flat, smooth edges, abutting a frying-pan-blank slab topout.

That day Gill established the block's three ultra-classics: *Cornerlock* (V3), *Standard Route* (V3), and the *Pinch Overhang* (V5), whose sweeter-than-sweet pinch grip has become as celebrated in bouldering lore as *Midnight Lightning's* "bolt" hold.

Although Gill, a junkie for the aesthetic pleasures of a dynamic move, loved jumpstarting the problem, an ascent is now considered invalid unless both feet are pulled off the ground *before* launching for the lip. This makes the *Pinch's* first move a burly test of power. One, however, worth the effort — sticking the lip slap is one of the sweetest feelings a boulderer will ever have.

That move is delicious, but be forewarned it's merely the *apéritif* — it's *pressing* out the mortifying mantel, requiring deft technique and a cool head, that serves as the problem's crux entrée. Failure on this maneuver carries a stiff price, but it used to be *really* stiff. Two decades ago, the landing was a chaotic jumble of blocks and bushes. Visions of falling off the mantel and the resulting tib-fib open fracture messed with climbers' heads for years, keeping repeats to a minimum.

Since then, the landing zone has been "comforted." Bushes cut down, blocks dug up and rolled away. This landscaping and the advent of crash pads has taken much of the sting out of a fall from the mantel.

That is not to say the block doesn't still claim casualties. More than one falling boulderer has been "volleyballed" over the landing zone and down the talus-strewn hillside by the outstretched, overhead arms of a too-close spotter, or tweaked, mangled, or broken an ankle on one of the remaining spikes of stubborn rock. Victim number 189 is writhing on the ground with a sprained ankle (left), his arm barely visible behind cover-boy Auldridge.

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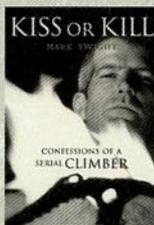
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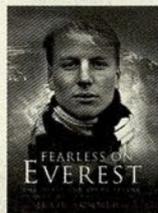


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Now put those same "casual" moves at the top of a 20-foot boulder and they'll seem five grades stiffer. You'll be overgripping, psyching yourself out, chalk, chalk, chalking again. Hands refusing to stop seeping sweat. Heart pounding as though a cocaine-filled balloon burst in your stomach. That five-inch-thick, four-by-five-foot crash pad looks sickeningly small and inadequate. Your spotter is earnestly staring up at you, hands overhead, as though he's signaling a touchdown, feet nervously *skooching* the pad an inch to the left, two inches forward, trying to estimate where you'll be cratering.

You're high ... too high, and each successive move is one stroke further into the deep end, where a fall can leave you broken and damaged — and picking out cast colors with an orthopedic surgeon.

Dave Graham getting high in the Buttermilks attempting a new direct finish to *Saigon*. The uncompleted problem's crux is at the very top of the 25-foot boulder.

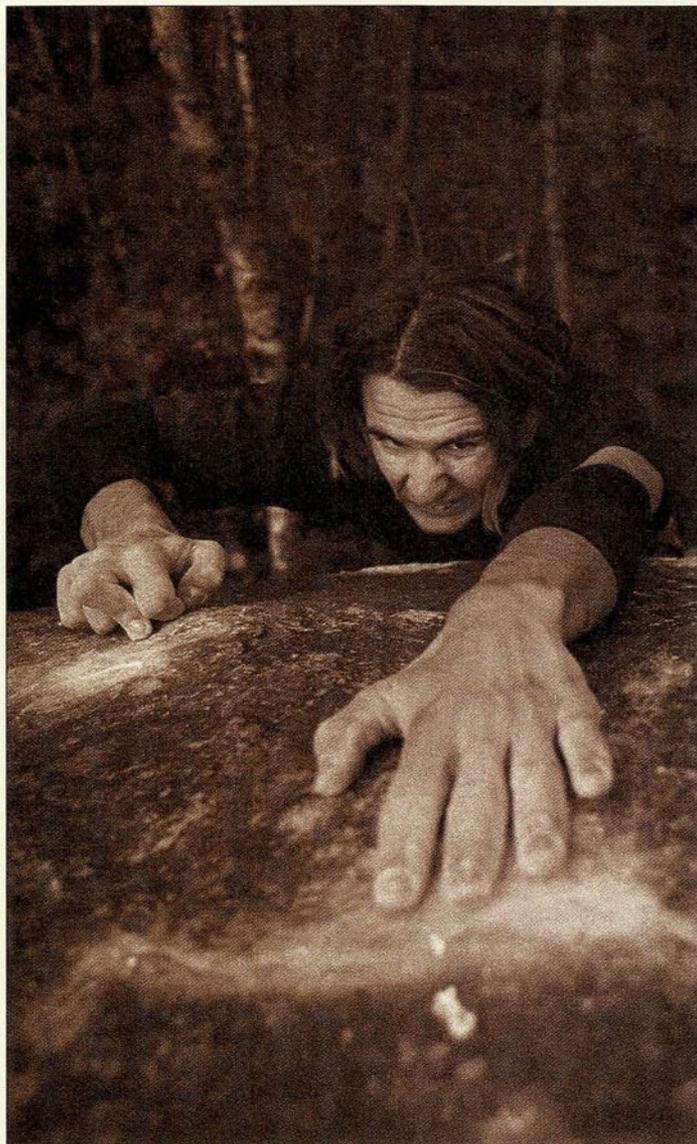
So close

Why does a boulder problem's last move have to be so hard?

You never hear about wall climbers getting shut down by the last aid placement. Mountaineers don't fail *one* foot from the summit. But boulderers, much to their anguish and sure to go insane from it, lob off from a problem's last move — that last @%#\$!* move — all the time.

In bouldering, the distance between euphoric success and hair-pulling failure is an inch, a millimeter, a chicken's lip. If you hit that last grip, hang that final move, you'll send the problem and can boast to your buddies, spray around the campfire, or call your sponsors. Fail to stick it and you can yell until you're hoarse, kick a crash pad, cry like a baby, pout like a Frenchman, hurl a chalkbag, stoically stew, fling a shoe, fling both ... But one thing that you can't do is say you did the problem.

No matter how *cloooooose* you come to nailing the final bucket.

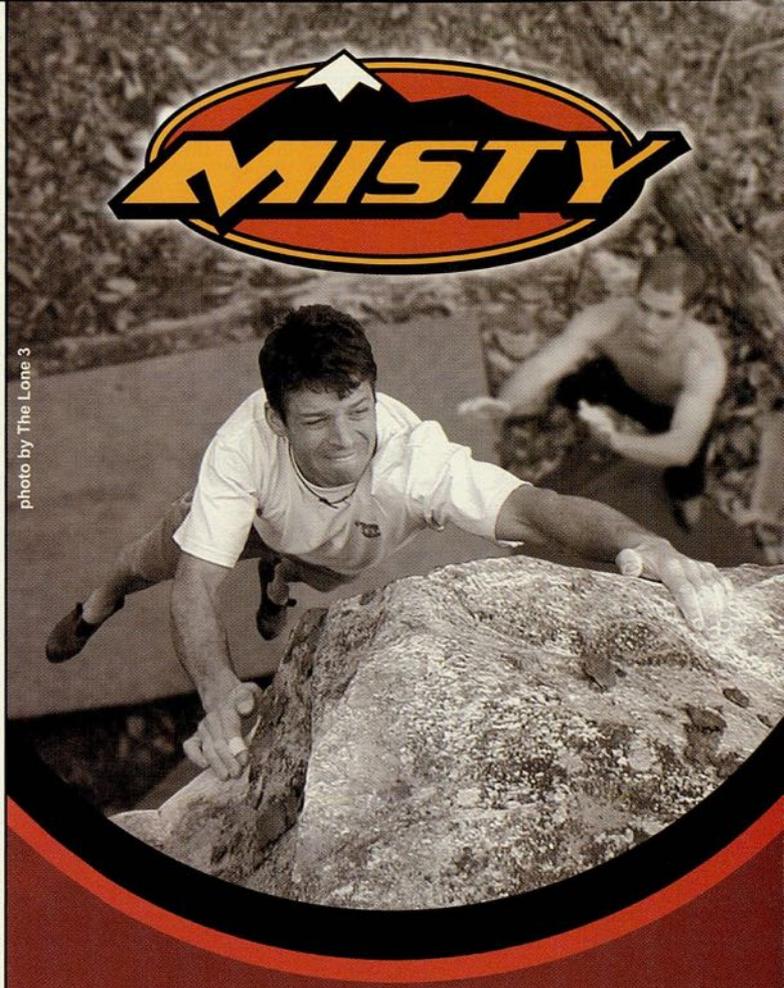


Jason Kehl applies satanic power to a right-handed-mono-crimp, and comes devilishly close to flashing *Alta* (V9), in Fontainebleau, France. This is as close as he ever got to doing the problem.

STEPHEN SCOTT GROSS

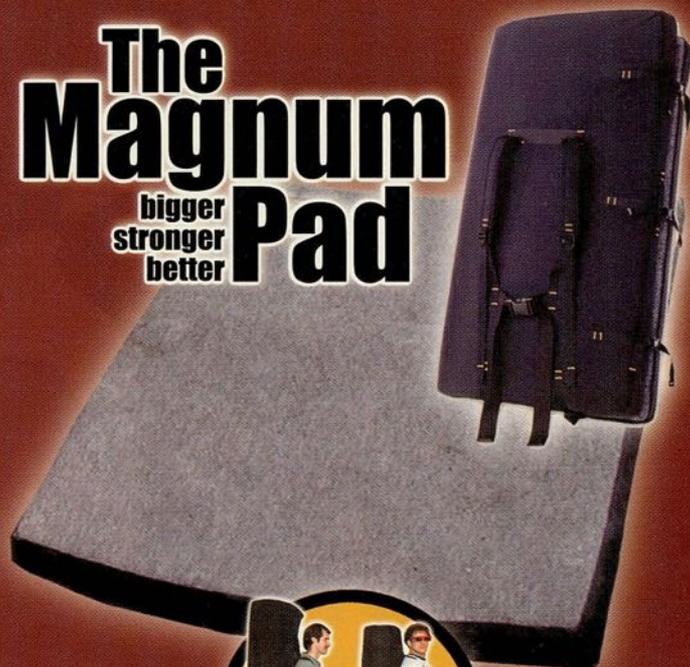


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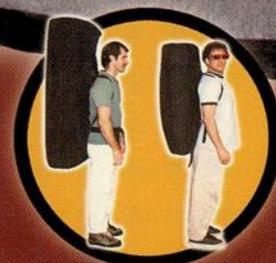


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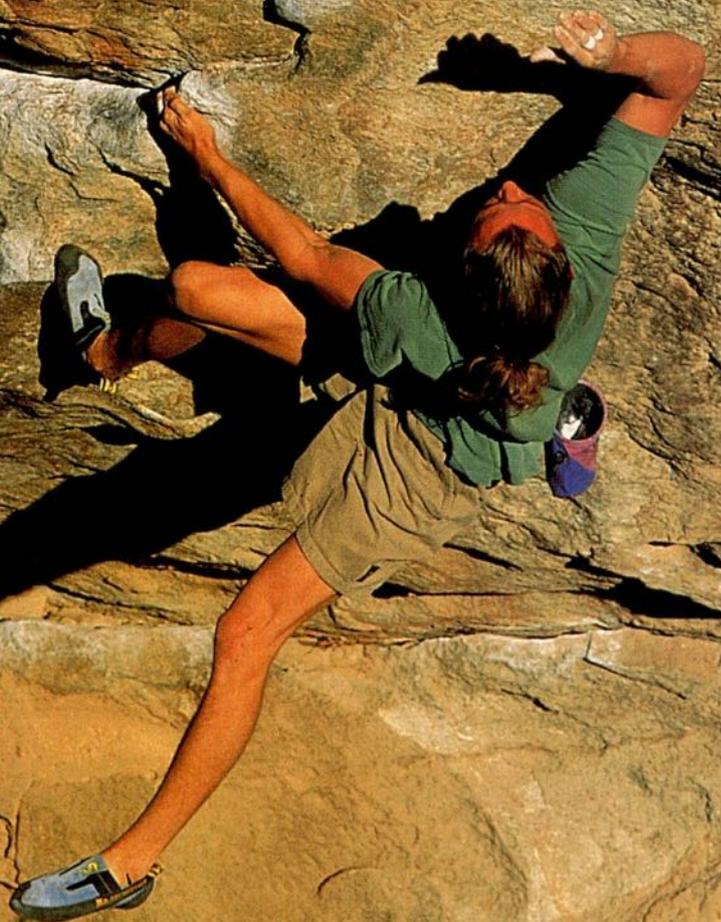
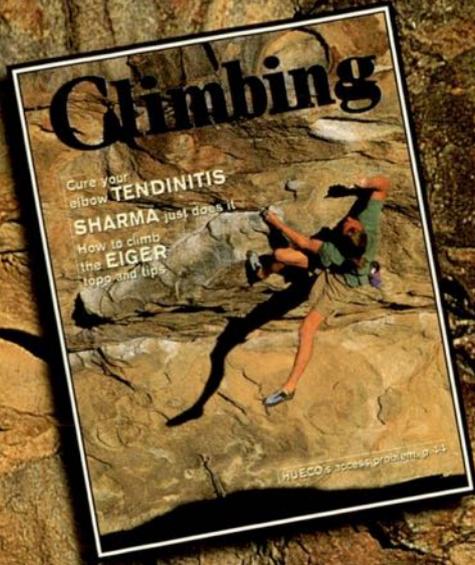


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Matt Krise on Hueco Tank's immaculate Warm Up Roof (V8).

Shafted

Why climbers were squeezed out of Hueco Tanks

"Matt Krise pulls what may be one of the last ascents of the *The Warm Up Roof* (V3), at Hueco Tanks, Texas. America's premiere bouldering area is threatened on several fronts by recent access issues." — this picture's cover-photo caption for *Climbing's* June 15, 1997 issue.

On page 44 of that issue, the Access reporter warned of a potential climbing closure at Hueco. The article optimistically quoted the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife's statement that the closure was *not* their "preferred option, and that climbers would have an opportunity to provide input." Yeah, right.

Climbers quickly realized this was merely more lip service from the notorious anti-climbing managers of Hueco. Despite countless letters, protests, and offers of help from climbers, their plan to ban climbing was non-negotiable. A sham of good-old-boy back-room dealings and governmental bullying replaced honest and rational park planning and user management.

Although the park managers had never built any additional trail systems and done little to properly educate and administer the park users, they cast the blame of the park's network of social trails and resource degradation on their favorite whipping boy — climbers.

One year after the report ran in *Climbing*, the TDPW banned unguided access to the entire park, save North Mountain, and set a limit of 50 park users per day. With the guided tours restricted to only 10 people for two hours maximum — and only when the park employees felt like shepherding an abhorred user group — the park was essentially closed to climbing.

The TPWD's plan has succeeded. Visitation is down over 75 percent. The park employees have the lazy, bureaucratic lifestyle they wanted. Boulderers have migrated to new winter destinations with fewer restrictions, leaving Hueco and its boulder problems mournfully vacant.

What has happened at Hueco — once the future of American bouldering — is a disgrace; a vile and dirty chapter in climbing's history. Climbers should still visit the park, though. One weekend in the park in its current Draconian state will magnify how thankful we should be for the areas still open, and how important it is to act swiftly and purposefully to protect our access to them.

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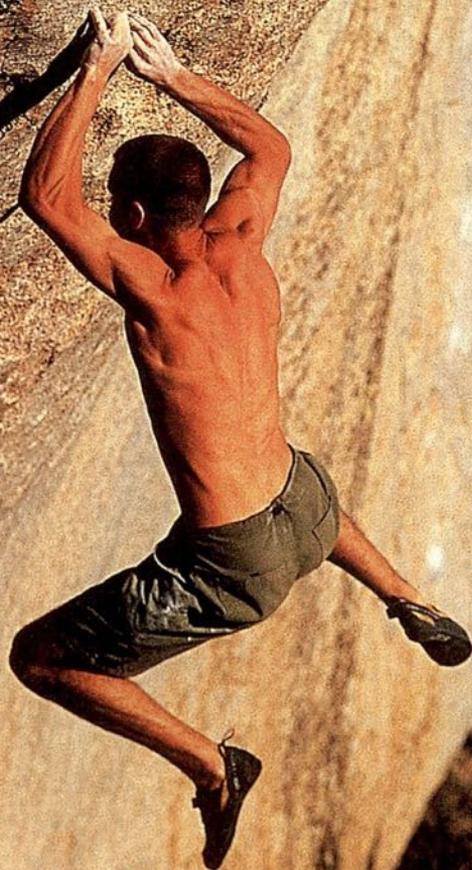
**Infeasible, impossible, inconceivable ...
until the next generation comes along**

A boulder problem is stared at for years. A few people try it. It's deemed impossible — the holds too small and far apart, the angle too steep. People walk over to the base, touch the rock, look up at 20 feet of blankness, and shake their heads. "Too bad there aren't any holds," they probably say, walking away to find realistic objectives.

Thirty years later, fresh sets of eyes with new ideas of what is possible visit the area. They warm up on the previous generation's testpieces

and seek out their own. Chris Sharma is at the forefront of this new generation of boulderers. Many talk, many try. Sharma does. Within a few days he has crimped and pimped his way up the "impossible" granite prow, to establish his most celebrated problem, *The Mandala* (V12).

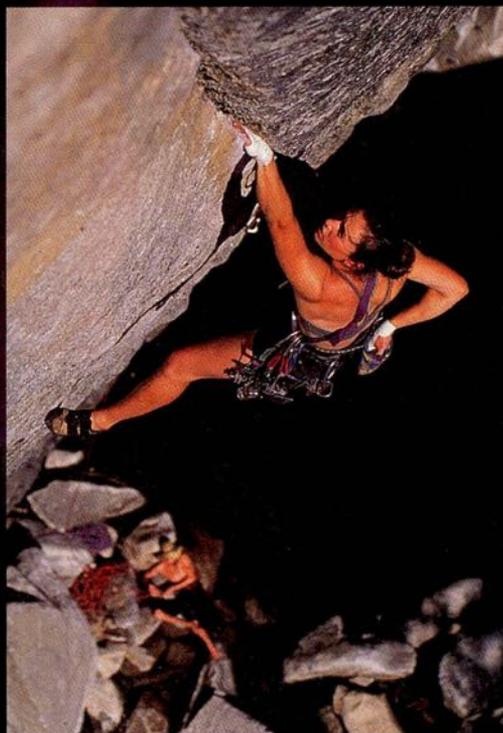
Not the most difficult or the scariest, *The Mandala* is simply the proudest, likely to become this generation's *Midnight Lightning* — an unblemished testament to power, vision, and skill.



Chris Sharma cruxing through the opening moves of *The Mandala* (V12), Buttermilks, California.

THE ROPE THAT WOULDN'T DIE

BY STEPH DAVIS



PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT: STERLING ROPE TEAM MEMBER STEPH DAVIS PUTS HER 9.5 MARATHON TO THE TEST ON "CRIMSON CRINGE", YOSEMITE VALLEY.

It was a spanking new 9.7—60 meters of gleaming purple cord. I hadn't used a Sterling Rope before, but was on a mission to find a crag rope that would last more than a month before getting a core shot. My ropes live a hard life.

I started the spring with multiple trips to the cracks and big walls of the desert southwest. I proceeded to toss my new rope in the red dirt, bake it in the desert sun, subject it to mass party ascents of sandstone cracks, a little hauling and jumaring. It was fine.

I decided to give the rope a rest while I went to Pakistan to try a free ascent of Shipton Spire*. I returned successful and hit the crags with a vengeance. I took my 9.7 to American Fork, City of Rocks, and Red Rocks for months of rope punishing sport climbing. I took it to Joshua Tree, where I was sure that a week of lowering off cheese grating granite would surely finish this cord off. It had already lasted six months, far more than I expected or even asked it to. But at the end of the trip, no sheath burrs, no snags, nothing. It was fine.

More rope destroying desert towers, sport climbs, and big walls, the rope handled everything. In fact, I was starting to get sick of looking at this rope. Purely out of superstition—after all, the thing was nine months old and rarely have I had a cord last more than two.

After a few months of much needed rest, I took the rope rock climbing in Durango and ice climbing in Telluride. It was still fine. As I planned for a trip to Europe. I debated take the old 9.7 or a new rope? Never had a rope last this long or handle this amount of abuse, I was sure it was about to die. But I had confidence in the 9.7. I sport-dogged in Majorca, climbed through seaspray in Gogarth, and dragged it over abrasive gritstone. It was still fine.

Here it is, a year and a half later, and the purple rope is starting to lose a little spring. The sheath has faded to more of a periwinkle, but is still completely intact. I don't understand it. How can a rope survive this much abuse? Nothing has before. More out of respect than anything else, I've decided to retire it!

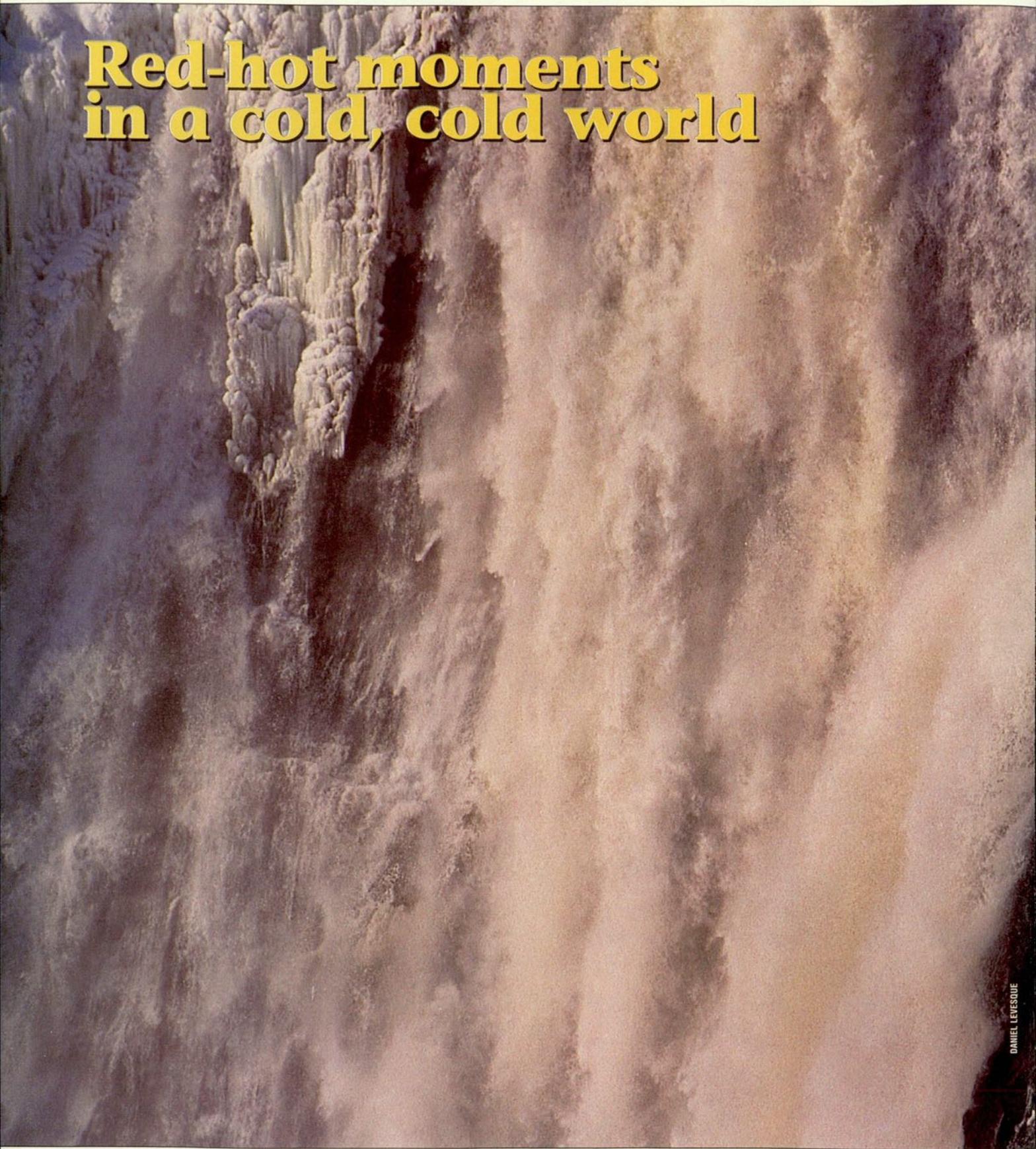
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Red-hot moments in a cold, cold world



DANIEL LEVESQUE



Close to the edge

Urban escapes and improbable probables

Why do we climb? There's the family tree that links us to monkeys, and the need to satisfy our hunter-gatherer instincts in a sterile, risk-free society. But there's also something more, a simple childlike joy in breaking the rules, in doing things that other people can't do, going places the masses can't go. Whether it's the blank-looking face of a boulder or the serrated, knife-edge ridge of an alpine peak, the more improbable the line, the better the climb.

Few situations are more improbable than those

encountered on ice. Take *La Dame Blanche*, a two-pitch route on Chute Montmorency, just outside Québec City. Bigger than Niagara, the central section of the cascade is so powerful it thunders year-round — a constant reminder of the outrageousness of climbing its frozen flanks. But don't be fooled by the fearsome backdrop. Chute Montmorency is one of eastern Canada's most popular tourist attractions; the route is a flat 100-yard stroll from a parking lot, and the climbing no harder than WI 4. It's difficult to imagine a more civilized setting. Not that that diminishes the thrill of being up there, wondering how close to the edge you can go.

François-Guy Thiviérge and Stéphane Thiviérge thrilling the tourists at Chute Montmorency, Québec.

Improbability drive

There are many reasons to climb ice. Reasonableness isn't one of them.

ESSAY BY WILL GADD

Climbing ice is by far the most improbable and dynamic form of climbing. For starters, every climb is guaranteed to fall down at least once a year. Then there's avalanche danger, questionable gear, and the seldom-overlooked fact that ice climbing is often cold, miserable, and paradoxically wet. If you were to sit down and develop a list of all the worst possible experiences of summer climbing, the result might look an awful lot like the average ice climb. Don't believe the smiling-face magazine photographs; they were all staged in a studio in L.A.

So why bother? I've asked myself this question countless times at long belays and while slogging in the dark toward ice that may or may not exist. The answers often come in these times of forced reflection. The simplest explanation is that many of the rewards in climbing come from overcoming the difficulties of adapting to a harsh environment, and no form of climbing requires more of it than ice climbing. I could speak of the striking draw of a blue ribbon of ice screaming toward the sky or the delicacy of lightly stepping onto a phone-pole-sized ice stalactite, and mean it, but the real reason I do it is that I still can't believe it's possible. It takes a suspension of disbelief to step off the ground onto *vertical ice*.

Ice is also the most variable medium in climbing. I can go back to a rock climb I did 10 years ago and find the same holds, but each season an ice route will have a valid first ascent — as well as a last. Every year each route will come in differently and require different tactics. The ice may form as fat, smooth waves or a series of taunting, anorexic chandeliers. Even day to day the climb will vary due to the temperature, wind, sun, and other variables.

Curtain Call, a classic three-pitch route on the Icefields Parkway, has taught me a lot about the dynamic nature of ice climbing. Ken Wallator and I first tried this route 15 years ago on a -20 F day when the crystalline ice exploded like shrapnel with each hit. We backed off due to fear, cold, and a rare showing of teenage common sense. I finally succeeded on it two years ago, on a day when the wind was blowing



Fifteen years ago a youthful Will Gadd retreated with his tail between his legs from *Curtain Call*, a classic three-pitch ice route in the Canadian Rockies. This winter he returned and climbed the unformed version, *Call of the Curtain* (M7, shown here).

wild snow devils across the glaciers on Mount Kitchner and the low-angle northern light washed the mountains in a soft Arctic glow. The final curtain — which has the disconcerting habit of falling down for no apparent reason — hung free for 100 feet, and as Kim Csizmazia and I kicked our way up it I couldn't help but think of Mike Weiss 25 years earlier in the same position on the first ascent. I know he too waited for a big *crack!*, but what else went through his mind as he fought for gear and hung from his relatively primitive tools? A couple of weeks later Guy Lacelle and I climbed the pillar for a

TV show, laughing at our good luck to get paid to climb something so magical. The sun was a bit higher in the sky, and for 15 glorious minutes the pillar lit up as though God had plugged it into the main current of life.

But it's not just about beauty and position. When I was 12, my dad, inspired by John Lauchlan and Jim Elzinga's bold three-day ascent of *Slipstream* in the Canadian Rockies, bought the latest and greatest ice gear. I had never gone ice climbing, but I immediately fell in love with the carefully machined equipment. Let's face it, a

(continued on page 104)



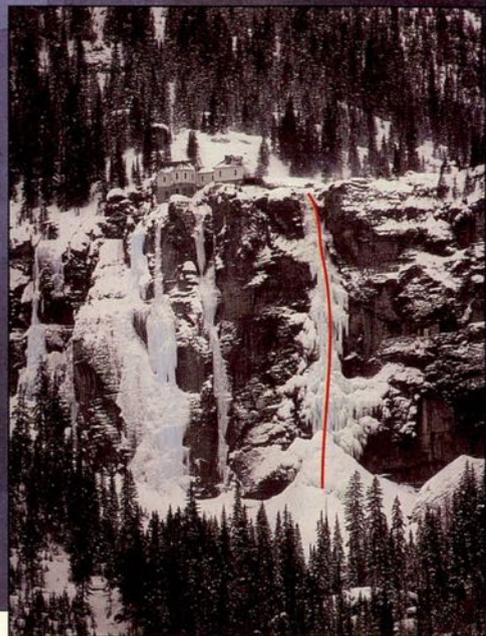
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Neal Beidleman on a recent, and legal, ascent of *Bridalveil Falls* (IV WI 5+).



Forbidden fruit

Knowledge and sin on Bridalveil Falls

Before Jeff Lowe and Mark Weiss climbed *Bridalveil Falls* (IV WI 5+) in 1974, waterfall-ice climbing was a one-dimensional game. Limited by primitive gear and preconceptions, early tool swingers had eyes only for the smooth, straightforward flows they could kick-kick, pick-pick their way up in Stairmaster-style. *Bridalveil Falls*, a wildly featured 400-foot cascade near Telluride, Colorado, changed all that; with long sustained vertical sections, bulging ice cauliflowers, and tricky routefinding, it was bigger, steeper, and wilder than anything that had been done

before. Lowe was a visionary who continued to expand the horizons of ice climbing into the 1990s (see "A whole new world," page 70), although on this ascent it was Weiss, a talented fellow Coloradan, who led the crux pitch.

An ascent of *Bridalveil* remained an extreme affair into the mid-1990s, but for very different reasons. The Idorado Mining Company owned mineral rights to the land. In 1980 the company posted guards and told *Climbing*, "Nobody under any circumstances will be allowed to climb on our land." This didn't stop keen climbers, of course. They snuck in before dawn, climbed it by moon-

light, or went up when the conditions were so bad you could barely see your crampons. After one stealth ascent, the Colorado climbers Kevin Cooney and Tom Pulask descended to find a sheriff waiting for them, ticket in hand. Cooney was sentenced to two years' probation.

The access problems were resolved in 1994, thanks largely to the efforts of Steve Johnson, a local climber and attorney. Each season scores of climbers now grapple with the challenges that once put *Bridalveil* at the forefront of ice exploration. Forbidden fruit no longer, an ascent remains just as sweet today.

MICHAEL KENNEDY; DOUG BERRY/TELLURIDE STOCK (INSET)



Bet that hurt! But it didn't stop the late, great Alex Lowe on the first ascent of *Grassroots Revival* (5.10 WI 6+), Hyalite Canyon, Montana.

Ahead of his time

Alex Lowe: ice pioneer and unprecedented all-rounder

Taken, with Dave Bridges, by an avalanche on Shishapangma in 1999, Alex Lowe remains America's most revered climber. Others have done harder ascents, but no one has come close to matching his all-around accomplishments. Whether flashing 5.12d's, climbing A5 big walls, summiting Everest twice in a week, or pulling off two daredevil, back-to-back rescues high on Denali, he simply did more things better than anyone else.

Lowe had the energy and motivation to get after the best lines wherever he went, and no style of climbing has benefited more from his voracious enthusiasm than ice and mixed. Climbed in ground-up style, two decades of Lowe testpieces span the country, from *Prophet on a Stick* (WI 7) in Provo Canyon,

Utah, to *The Fang* (WI 5/6) at Vail, Colorado, to *Champin' at the Bit* (M8) at Champney Falls, New Hampshire. In Hyalite Canyon, near his home in Bozeman, Montana, he established around 30 new routes, including *The Matriarch* (5.11 WI 6/7 R/X), *Winter Dance* (5.10 WI 6+), and *Grassroots Revival* (5.10 WI 6+, shown here).

When this picture of the bare-headed Lowe first appeared in *Climbing*, it prompted several critical, safety-conscious letters. Nevertheless, it captures the essence of the man. Lowe was not the sort of climber to back off when a tombstone-sized chunk of ice whacked him in the face (he didn't fall, and finished the route). Whether pushing the limits in most every discipline of climbing, or not wearing a helmet, he sized up the conditions and himself, and did things in his own audacious style.

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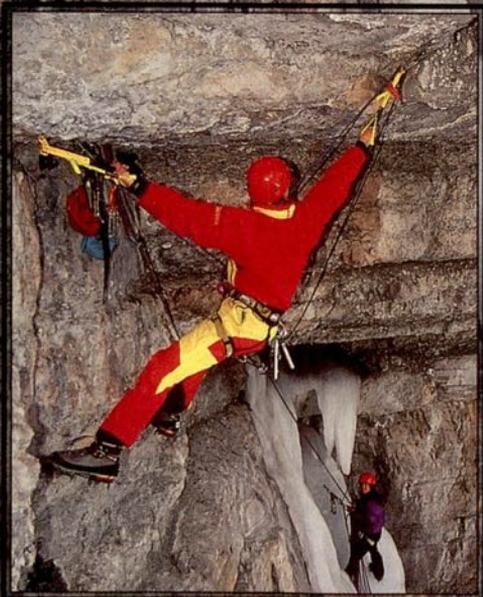
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Jeff Lowe on the first ascent of the seminal mixed route *Octopussy*, at Vail, Colorado. In recent years the route has proved less of a monster at M6 WI 6, but in the lean conditions of Lowe's first ascent it was probably M8.



A whole new world

Octopussy spawns modern mixed climbing

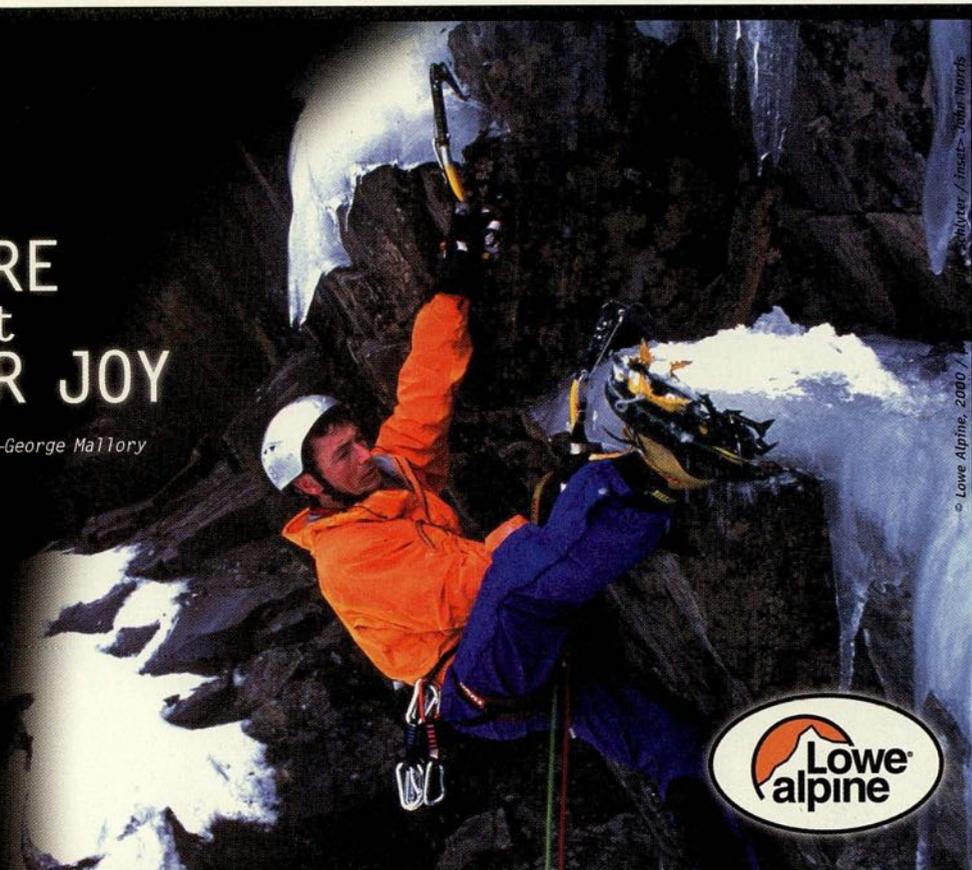
When Jeff Lowe used two figure-4s and a series of "horizontal situps" to cross this daunting roof at Vail, Colorado, he called them the wildest moves he'd ever done. Published shortly afterward in *Climbing*, the photographs of him pulling those moves may be the wildest we've ever printed. Shots of Johnny sport climber busting a big overhang are a dime a dozen. But in 1994 the idea of an ice climber pulling gymnastic rock moves was revolutionary. Before this ascent, mixed climbing was a scrabbly thing done on vertical rock where ice hadn't formed. Lowe showed it could be used to reach the freehanging stalactites and curtains that had been previously considered inaccessible. "Once you can do that the possibilities are endless ... beautiful," says modern mixed master Will Gadd today. "When I saw those photographs of Jeff on *Octopussy*, a whole new world opened up for me."

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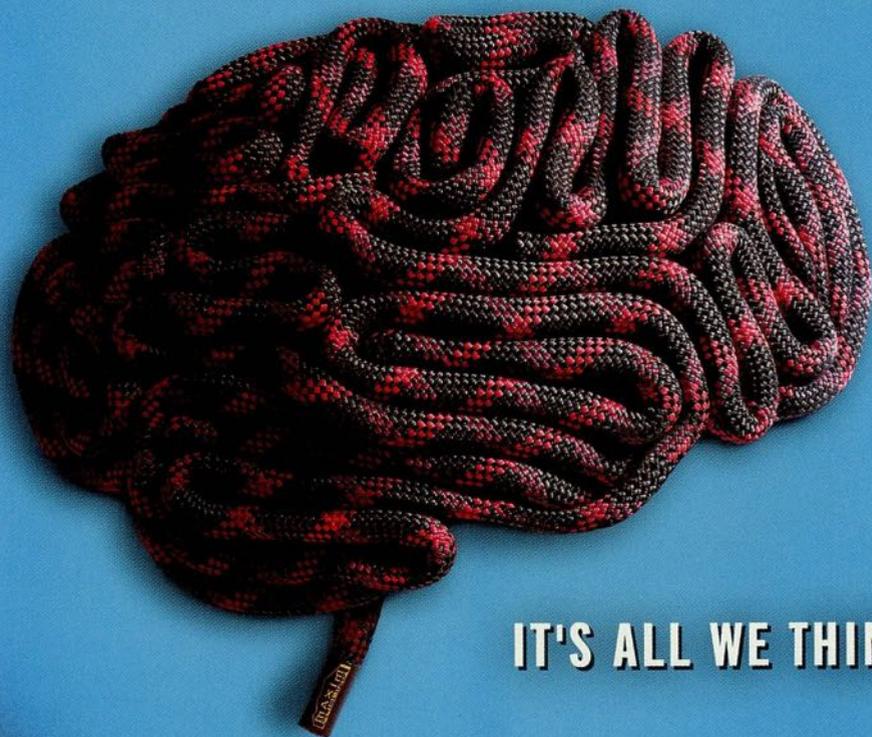
—George Mallory



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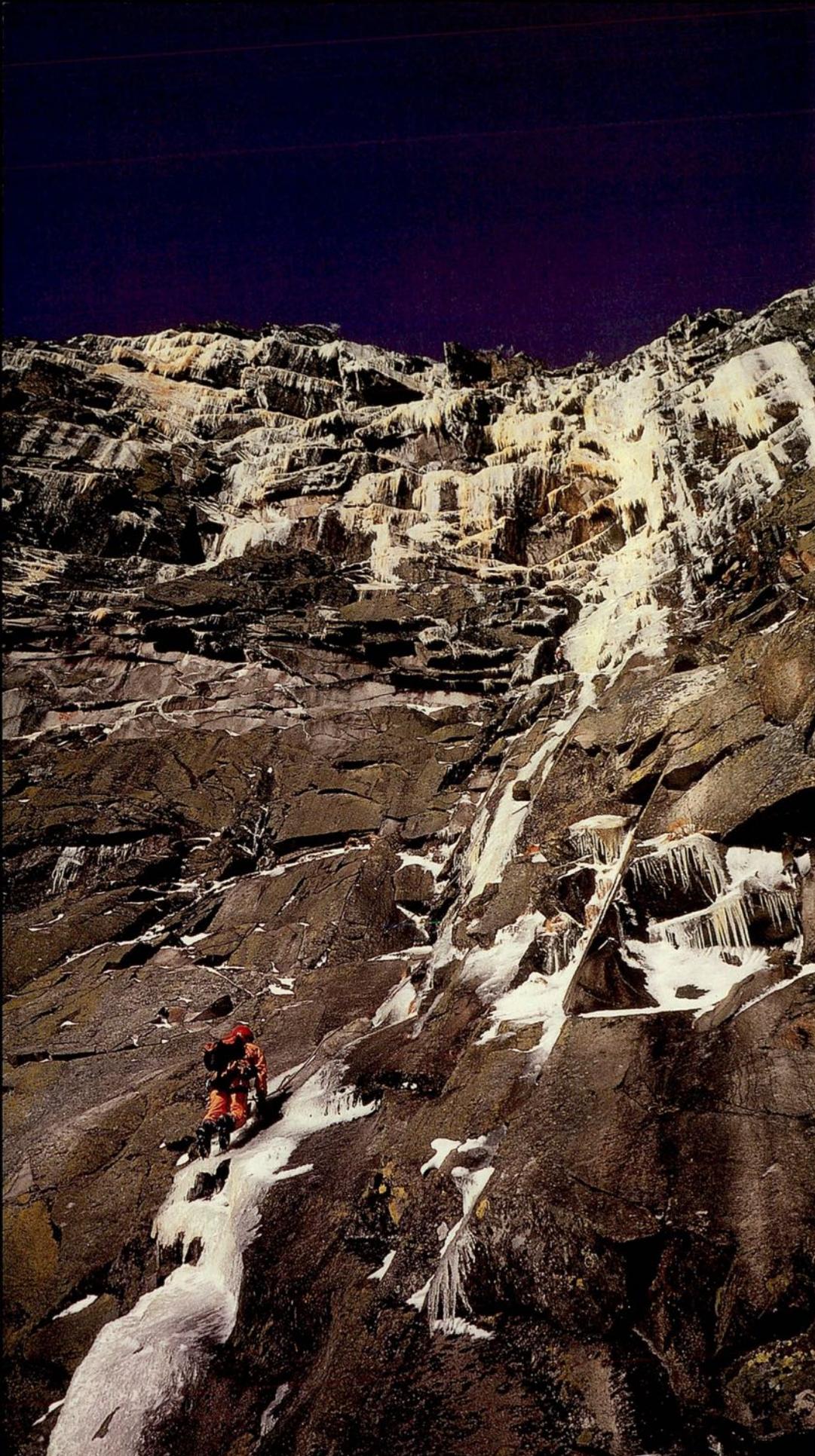
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Moments of madness

John Bouchard took boldness to a new level on Cannon Cliff

In a 1971 issue of *Ascent* magazine, Yvon Chouinard singled out the *Black Dike*, “a black, filthy, horrendous icicle 600 feet high,” on Cannon Cliff, New Hampshire, as one of the last unclimbed “plums” on the East Coast. The following winter, John Bouchard, an overconfident 19-year-old, met Chouinard’s challenge.

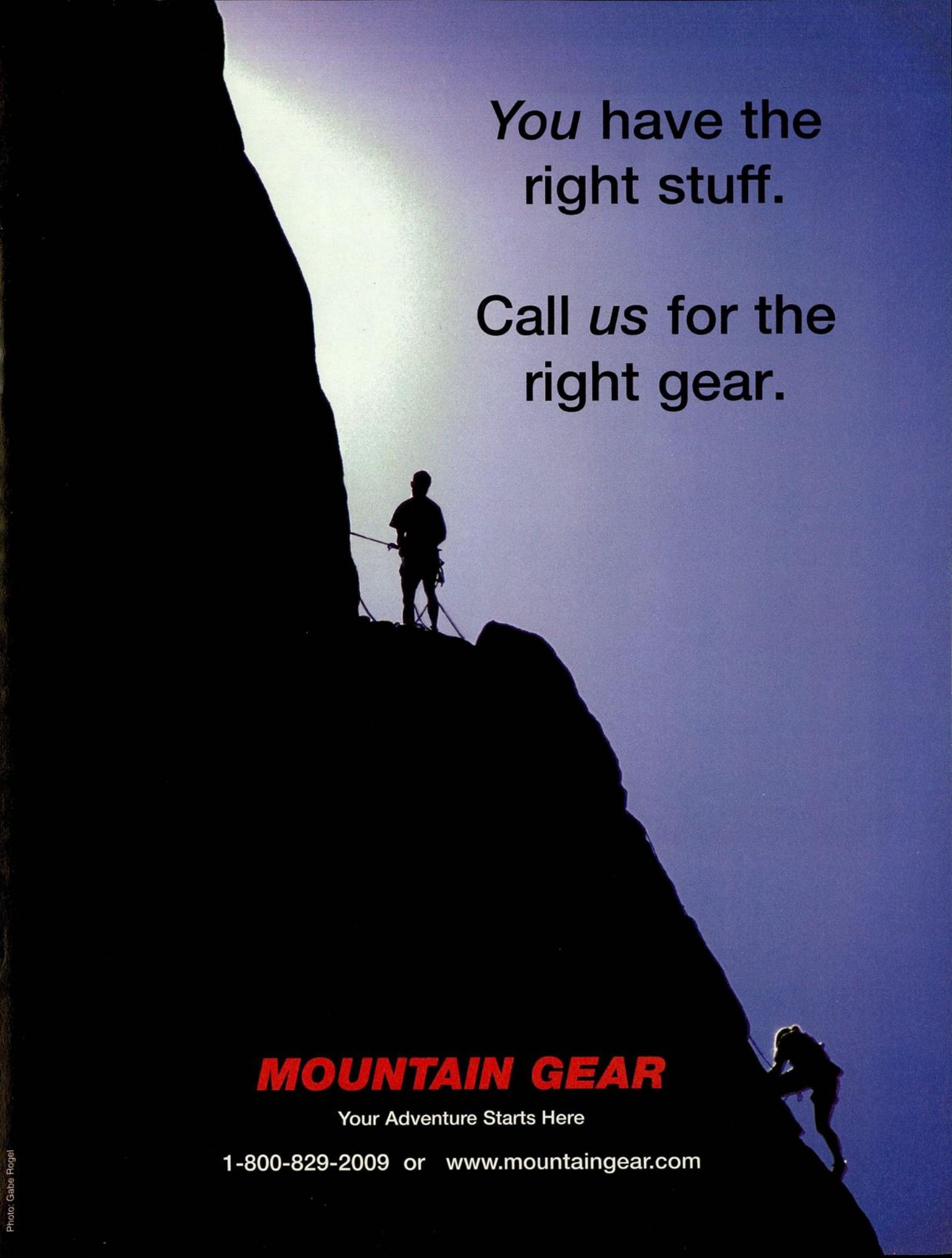
At 1 p.m. on December 18, he started up the unclimbed *Black Dike* alone (some experienced Northeast ice climbers had previously told the young Bouchard that he was so dangerous no sane individual would climb with him). Bouchard self-belayed at the first steep section 200 feet up, until his rope got stuck, forcing him to abandon his lifeline. Now totally committed, he broke a pick and dropped a mitten while chimneying up the crux dihedral. “I had never been on ice so steep and thin,” he later wrote. Near the top, with one hand a frozen club and only one fully functioning tool, he stood for half an hour in aiders terrified of weighting a sketchy pin, but even more terrified of getting benighted; the forecast called for temperatures in the teens that night. Just as darkness was about to engulf him he clawed his way over the top.

Today *Black Dike* (IV NEI 5-) is a must do for the ambitious intermediate climber. The same cannot be said of its equally classic neighbor, *Omega* (IV NEI 5+), whose futuristic first ascent by Bouchard and Rainsford Rouner in 1976 was almost as audacious as that of *Black Dike*. “I was climbing above myself,” says Bouchard (who went on to become a successful equipment manufacturer and one of America’s most accomplished alpinists). No kidding — 25 years after its first ascent *Omega*’s long, unprotected, unstable thin-ice smears, still evoke fear and trepidation among the best climbers.

Describing a recent testy ascent of *Omega*, a local ice guru John Sykes says, “We walked away shaking our heads, humbled. It was harder than anything I’ve done this year.”

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He doesn't need no stinking leashes (or ice either). Mauro "Bubu" Bole repeating the second pitch of *The Empire Strikes Back* (M10/11), Val di Cogne, Italy.

Star wars

Grade bickering and the next step

After picking up the mixed-climbing ball a couple of years ago, the Euros have run with it. The current Continental hot spot is the Val D'Aost region of northern Italy, home to several cutting-edge testpieces including Stevie Haston's five-pitch *The Empire Strikes Back* (M10/11 WI 7). Haston calls the unrepeated third pitch the psychological crux, "a free-hanging stalactite, WI 7 with no protection, death totally certain." But it's the second pitch — which he rated M11, making it the hardest mixed climb in the world — that has gotten all the attention. Since the first ascent in early 2000, Mauro Bubu Bole, Will Gadd, and Robert Jasper have redpointed the pitch, downrated it, and proclaimed their hardest mixed climbs harder. The downspray has been well documented; and to be honest, who really cares? What does matter is that routes like *The Empire Strikes Back* stand at the threshold of another paradigm shift in the sport. The best modern mixed climbers are now making first- or second-try ascents of overhanging rock routes that would bout top sport climbers in summer conditions. Applying these skills to the alpine arena will be at least as big a breakthrough as the first ascent of *Bridalveil Falls*, *Omega*, or *Octopussy*. Bring it on.



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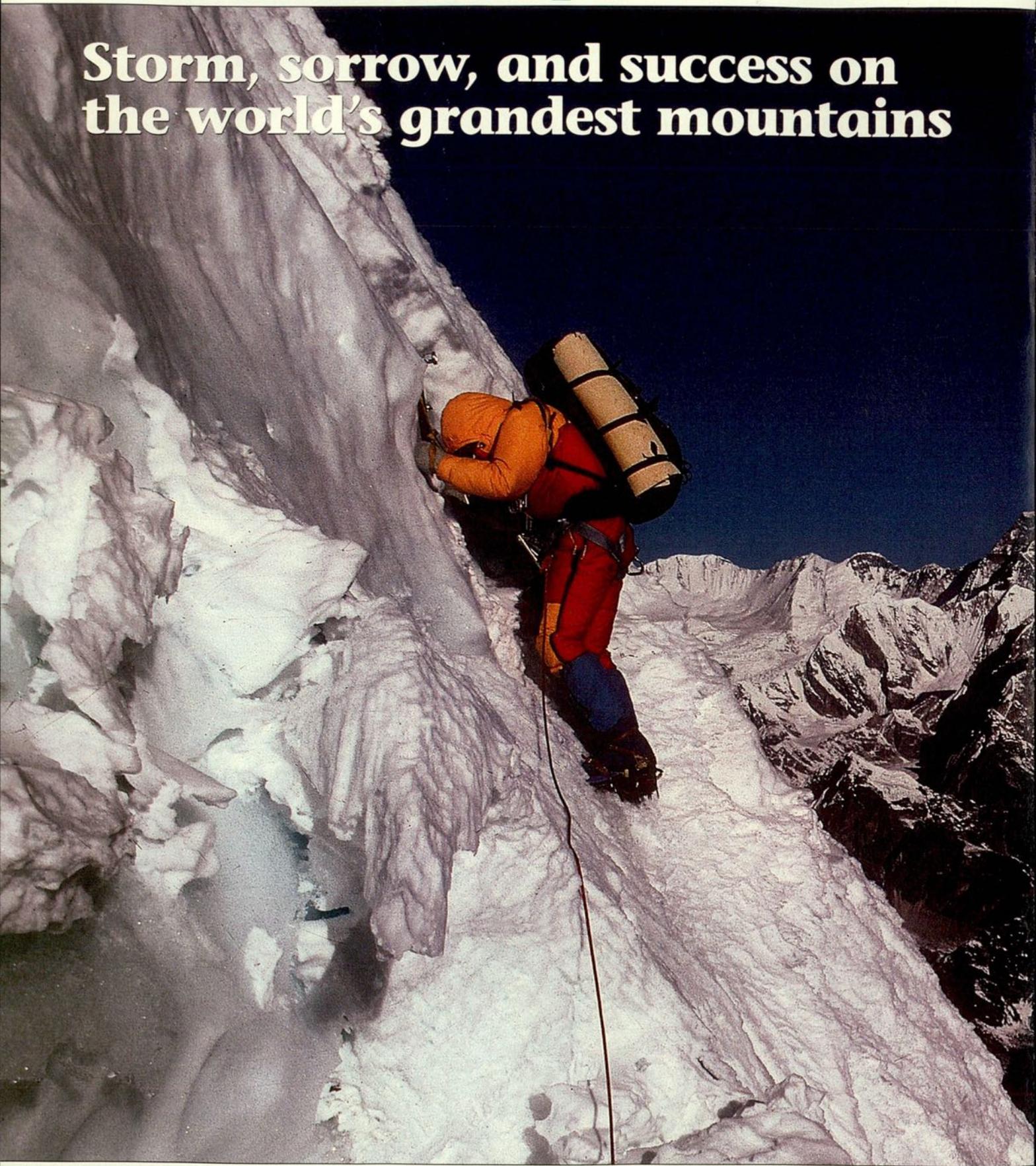


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Short and sweet

Going it alpine style on Ama Dablam in winter

The striking pyramidal architecture of Ama Dablam often elicits the moniker "The Matterhorn of the Himalayas." On the Himalayan scale, the "diminutive" mountain — at only 22,318 feet — is dwarfed by the more well-known Himalayan giants. But it is such smaller peaks in the Himalaya that offer unlimited potential for adventure and new routes.

In the winter of 1985, then-*Climbing*-Editor Michael Kennedy and one of America's most accomplished big-mountain climbers Carlos

Buhler made the first ascent of the mountain's steep Northeast Face.

They spent seven *cold* days on the face, where daytime temperatures dropped as low as -10 degrees F. Climbing alpine style, the two battled a steep ice rib in the center of the face, with the major difficulties consisting of steep water ice and verglassed rock.

The mountain's Southwest Ridge has become a trade route, but Kennedy and Buhler's route remains unrepeatable.



Carlos Buhler casts off on summit day during the first ascent of the Northeast Face of Ama Dablam, Nepal.

The Himalaya

Himalaya any style

It all comes down to how you play the game

ESSAY BY MICHAEL KENNEDY



MICHAEL KENNEDY

Living the dream. Mugs Stump photographed by the author on the West Face of Gasherbrum IV, 1983.

It was a simple photograph of a near-perfect pyramid set against an almost-black sky, its top trimmed off at a slight angle, with the highest point on the right. Steep ribs of rock and vast icefields plunged from its ridges, adorned with luminous wisps of cloud shimmering in the evening sun. To this young climber, just starting to peek beyond the provincial horizon of 1970s Colorado rock climbing, Ad Carter's classic black-and-white view of the west face of Gasherbrum IV in the 1975 *American Alpine Journal* was a glimpse of

perfection. And a call to action. "Some day I'll go there," I thought, dreaming as only the uninitiated can.

Mention Himalayan climbing to almost anybody and the first thing they'll ask, once they realize you're a climber, is whether you've been to Everest. It matters not that the world's highest mountain, tangled in fixed ropes and defiled with the debris of countless expeditions, its least-notable triumphs and tragedies endlessly regurgitated by a placid and unimaginative media, hasn't seen

a historically significant ascent since 1986 — Jean Troillet and Erhard Loretan's blazing day-and-a-half ascent of the North Face Direct (see "Three that count," page 83). To the non-climbing public, Everest is still the only mountain that really counts.

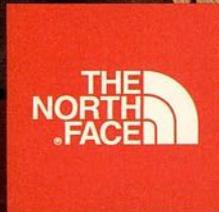
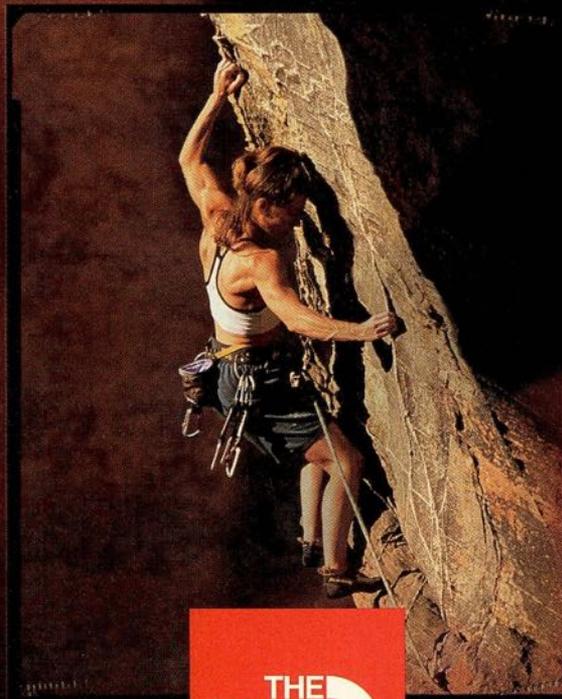
The importance of Everest to climbers, too, can't be understated. It goes hand-in-hand with our obsession with altitude and records and collecting, a world in which "real" Himalayan climbing is done on the 8000-meter peaks and anything lower is regarded as

(continued on page 109)

“In climbing, you’re trying to find the path of least resistance within the obstacle.”

LYNN HILL

Lynn Hill is not one of history's great women climbers. She's one of history's great climbers, period. In her career, she's won over thirty international competitions and was the first person to free climb the Nose of El Capitan. Oh, and she's also a member of The North Face athlete team. Her job? To inspire our product design, test the living daylights out of the stuff, then come back and help make it better. The North Face team never stops exploring and our design process never stops either. Athlete-tested equipment, footwear and apparel for men, women and children. From The North Face. Never stop exploring.



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Lynn Hill, Mr. Meat (5.12a/b), The Gallery, The Grampians, Victoria, Australia © 2001 Summit Gallery

The Himalaya



The stunning 7300-foot Golden Pillar of Spantik (7028 meters, 23,192 feet) in Pakistan, climbed in 1987 by Britons Mick Fowler and Victor Saunders in impeccable alpine style.

Gunning for the Gold

Brits show what's possible with a rope, a rack, and the packs on their backs

The Golden Pillar on Spantik is perhaps as noteworthy for its stunning beauty as for its difficulty and the fine style in which it was climbed. When Britons Mick Fowler and Victor Saunders approached the unclimbed north side of Spantik, they visually broke the daunting Golden Pillar into four sections: a 1300-foot rock tower; a 3000-foot, serpentine snow arete; a relatively small hanging glacier; and the business of the climb — a 4000-foot wall of golden marble, the same hard-to-protect rock that crops up on other Karakoram peaks (notably Gasherbrum IV).

Fowler and Saunders made two forays to the base of the upper pillar, where they cached gear. A couple of days after their second recon, the two made their final push, climbing with only the packs on their backs. They encountered sustained mixed climbing, with poorly protected slabs covered in powder snow and steep chimneys and grooves. On day four, Saunders led a steep, virtually unprotected chimney, then, frazzled, could find no belay anchors. In their place, he wedged himself across the chimney, and kindly requested that Fowler not fall. The day



Victor Saunders mixes it up with minimal protection during the first ascent of the Golden Pillar.

was capped by an agonizing hanging bivy — secured by a single nut and worsened by all-night snowfall.

Probing the final ramps on day five proved demoralizing — the rock was covered in snow and offered zero protection. “We had 100-foot runouts,” wrote Saunders in the 1987 AAJ, “and

lots, and lots of fear.” The climax of the climb came late that day: a Scottish Grade VI pitch capped by a huge, precarious serac. Day six involved plowing through thigh-deep snow and dodging lightning bolts. Then, all that remained was a testy two-day descent of the unclimbed Southwest Ridge of the mountain ...

MICK FOWLER (BOTH)



Sherpa Pasang Lama belays just above Camp IX on the 1939 K2 summit attempt.



Traversing to the Shoulder on the Abruzzi Spur.

So close 1939 "almost climb" beset by tragedy and controversy

K2 (8611 meters, 28,416 feet) is the world's second-highest mountain, but is its most difficult and deadly. The first ascent of this pyramid of ice and rock didn't come until 1954 (Italians), and the second until 1977 (Japanese). In 1978, an American team made the first oxygenless ascent, putting John Roskelley, Rick Ridgeway, Lou Reichardt, and Jim Wickwire (the latter using minimal oxygen near the top) on the summit.

But it was an "almost ascent" by an American team in 1939 (the era of wool and leather) that is one of the most impressive, and tragic, efforts on the mountain. Led by the German emigrant Fritz Wiessner, one of the most influential climbers in the first half of the 20th century, the team made strong progress up the *Abruzzi Spur*, establishing a series of stocked camps up to 25,450 feet (Camp VIII).

Then, Wiessner and Sherpa Pasang Lama forged on to make Camp IX at 26,200 feet, and on July 19, struck out on a summit bid. With Wiessner in the lead, the two climbed a steep icy couloir capped by an overhang that Wiessner climbed bare handed. Soon they faced only 800 feet of climbing on a snow ridge to the summit. Wiessner was feeling strong, and planned on climbing through the

night and descending in daylight the next morning. But Lama would have nothing of it, and Wiessner, respecting the wishes of his Sherpa partner, turned around. After a desperate struggle (in which Lama lost his crampons), they reached Camp IX at 2:30 a.m. The next day Wiessner decided to descend. At Camp VIII they found a distraught Dudley Wolfe, who was upset that no one had come from below to resupply that camp. Low on food and fuel, the trio decided to descend to Camp VII in order to resupply.

Just as they began descending, Wolfe slipped, pulling off Wiessner and Lama. All three shot down the slope. Somehow Wiessner self arrested, stopping Wolfe and Lama (after they'd fallen the length of the rope) — 60 feet above a 6000-foot precipice. Uninjured, the three continued to Camp VII, only to find it cleaned of food supplies and sleeping bags. They were dismayed. Wolfe decided to stay (keeping the only sleeping bag), presumably in order to remain in place for another summit bid.

But as Wiessner and Lama continued down the mountain, they found all camps had been stripped of supplies, and were forced to keep going. Finally, they staggered, nearly dead, into basecamp on July 24. (The events surrounding the stripping of the camps are complicated, and were the source of controversy for years.) Team member Jack Durrance and Sherpas

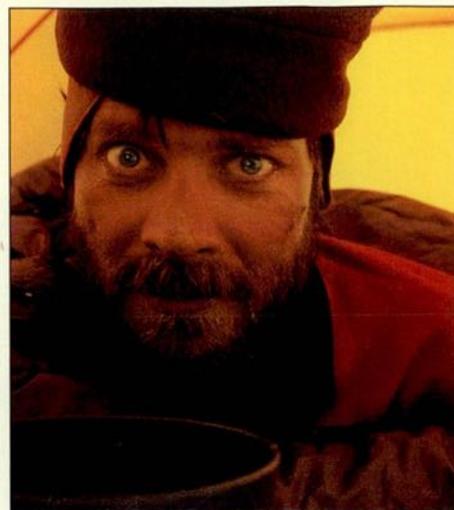


Fritz Wiessner's notations on upper sections of the *Abruzzi Spur*.

headed back up the mountain to rescue Wolfe, but Durrance didn't get far before becoming sick and going down. The Sherpas Pinsoo and Kitar made it to Camp VI but would go no farther alone. On July 28, Sherpas Pasang Kikuli and Tsering climbed 6800 feet from basecamp to Camp VI, a brutal effort. The next morning the Sherpas found Wolfe, lethargic and unwilling to move, and returned to Camp VI, where they were pinned for two days by a storm. Then, Kikuli, Pinsoo, and Kitar made another move to bring Wolfe down. Tsering waited for two nights with no sign of his friends or Wolfe, and descended the mountain. Another rescue attempt was thwarted by weather, and the team was forced to give up. Kikuli, Pinsoo, Kitar, and Wolfe were presumed dead. So ended one of the greatest attempts to climb a big mountain. It would be another 11 years before the first 8000-meter peak — Annapurna — was climbed.



Stephen Venables after surviving an open bivy at 28,200 feet following his successful summit bid on Mount Everest, via *Neverest*, a new route on the Kangshung Face.



Ed Webster safe at advanced basecamp after the epic three-day descent.



Neverest stretched a multi-national team to its limit.

ED WEBSTER (LEFT AND LOWER RIGHT), PAUL TEARE (UPPER RIGHT)

Neverest

New route extracts a toll

"Four against the Kangshung [Face]? You're mad." Those were the words of the famous Himalayan climber Charles Houston to Ed Webster and his three teammates regarding their bold plan to climb Everest's 10,000-foot east face, also known as the Kangshung Face. The small multi-national team included Ed Webster (USA), Stephen Venables (UK), and Paul Teare and Robert Anderson (CAN), and intended to climb in a minimalist style — without Sherpa support, radios, or bottled oxygen.

The lower part of the route was steep and technical, with overhanging ice and mixed climbing and 5.8 rock; the climbers fixed several thousand feet of rope on this lower

section. The route's objective dangers were considerable, with threatening serac blocks and avalanche slopes. After the crux 3000-foot pillar of technical climbing, the team busted a trail up a long snow slope to the South Col. Then, on May 12, 1988, Anderson, Venables, and Webster made a push for the summit (Teare descended with altitude illness). In deteriorating weather, the three reached the South Summit. Webster, experiencing hallucinations and fatigue, turned back and returned to the South Col Camp, as did Anderson.

As Webster and Anderson arose from the tent the next morning at 5 a.m., Venables stumbled in with the news that he had made the top, becoming the first Briton to summit

Everest without oxygen. What followed was a tortuous three-day descent, without food and with very little water, across dangerously loaded snow slopes, and with only one shared ice axe (the others had been dropped).

The three struggled into basecamp at the end of their reserves. Frostbite, a common result of climbing in the Himalaya, took its toll. "I now hated Everest. I couldn't bring myself to look up at it," wrote Ed Webster of his sentiments in basecamp. "I stared blankly at my fingertips. The ends were black and desiccated, hard to the touch. Images of sunny rock climbing in Eldorado Canyon appeared, then faltered, switching back and forth with the grim reality of my ruined fingertips. Tears flowed uncontrollably down my face."

Himalaya State of the Art

Three that count

It is a near-impossible task to reduce the dozens of noteworthy ascents made in the Himalaya over the past 30 years to three climbs that represent the state-of-the-art. Any such list will be arbitrary at best, given personal taste and a constantly shifting perception of what is sane, sensible, and possible. Nevertheless, an attempt:

North Face Direct, Mount Everest (8848 meters, 29,198 feet), Nepal/Tibet. FA: Erhard Loretan and Jean Troillet (Switzerland), August 28-30, 1986. Unrepeated.

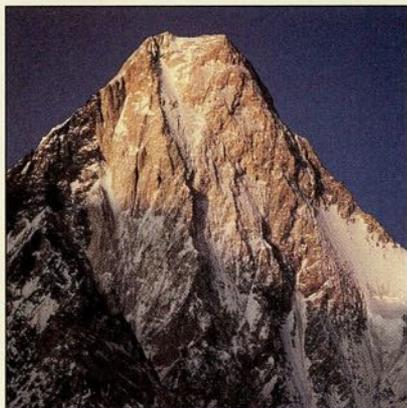
Taking advantage of a short spell of clear weather and abundant snow cover at the height of the monsoon, Loretan and Troillet raced up the North Face Direct in a day and a half, spent 90 minutes on top, and glissaded the entire route in five hours, in the process blowing away a century's worth of preconceptions about Himalayan climbing. They climbed unroped and oxygenless, largely at night, carrying only light sleeping bags, a stove, and minimal food to 7800 meters and virtually nothing above there.

This tour-de-force is the purest ascent of Everest in terms of style and spirit, rivaled only by Reinhold Messner's 1980 solo of the North Col/North Face. Both are unrepeated. There is still huge scope for the application of "night naked" style to the world's high peaks, although the sense of adventure and isolation epitomized by this approach may be difficult to achieve nowadays on the more popular 8000-meter routes. Climbing in winter, as Loretan, Troillet, and fellow Swiss Pierre-Alain Steiner did during their rapid December 1985 ascent of the East Face of Dhaulagiri, is one option. Another is tackling straightforward but dangerous faces on lower peaks, as Slovenians Marco Prezelj and Andrej Stremfelj showed during their October 22-23, 1992, ascent of the Southeast Face of Menlungtse (which was also the first ascent of the 7181-meter main summit). Speed, confidence, and a willingness to abandon all but the barest minimum of equipment and food will continue to pay dividends to those with the guts and experience to play this most demanding of Himalayan games.

West Face, Gasherbrum IV (7925 meters, 26,153 feet), Pakistan. FA: Wojciek Kurtyka (Poland) and Robert Schauer (Austria), July 13-26, 1985. Unrepeated.

This huge wall was the scene of several strong attempts in the early 1980s, all on the prominent rock rib just left of the center of the face (which eventually succumbed to a large Korean team employing fixed ropes and camps in 1997). Kurtyka and Schauer, climbing in pure alpine style, took a line further right on the face, enduring much difficult, unprotected climbing on shattered marble, poor belays, and atrocious bivouacs. The weather, unsettled for much of the climb, turned bad high on the mountain, trapping the pair for two days below the north summit; exhausted and hallucinating, they abandoned the traverse to the slightly higher main summit and headed down the Northwest Ridge, unclimbed at the time.

One of the hardest and boldest alpine climbs ever accomplished in the Himalaya, the West Face encompasses classic technical difficulties, uncertainty, and great length to a degree not often seen. Routes that are similar in scale and commitment include Kurtyka and fellow Pole Jerzy Kukuczka's brilliant traverse of the north, middle, and main summits of Broad Peak in July 1984, the Catalan route on the South Face of Annapurna I, climbed by Nil Bohigas and Enric Lucas in early October 1984, and Prezelj and Stremfelj's first ascent of the South Ridge of Kangchenjunga South in April 1991. All four routes are unrepeated.



The West Face of Gasherbrum IV (7925 meters), Pakistan, the site of perhaps the greatest alpine-style ascent ever.

As for the future, who knows what will happen when the young guns, their technical skills and willingness to climb non-stop honed in Yosemite, the Alps, Alaska, Patagonia, and the lower Asian peaks, apply a similar approach to the big mixed faces of the Himalaya. Perhaps Slovenian Tomaz Humar and Janez Jeglic's 1997 ascent of the West Face of Nuptse, or Humar's audacious 1999 solo of the South Face of Dhaulagiri, point the way.

Golden Pillar, Spantik (7028 meters, 23,192 feet), Pakistan. FA: Mick Fowler and Victor Saunders (United Kingdom), August 5-11, 1987. One repeat.

This stunning line, one of the most beautiful examples of mountain architecture in the world, gave the very experienced Fowler and Saunders full value for effort expended with its 3500-foot namesake pillar dishing up sustained mixed ground, much of it severely unprotected. (see "Gunning for the Gold," page 80). The route saw its only repeat in June 2000 in similar style by Prezelj, Manu Pelligier and Manu Guy (France), and Attila Oszvath (Hungary).

Although technically harder routes have been done on many of the lower Himalayan peaks (the lower Baltoro Glacier in Pakistan and the Gangotri region of India stand out), most ascend fairly secure big walls. The Golden Pillar combines an extraordinarily high level of technical difficulty with poor rock and minimal protection, attributes that relatively few climbers are willing to consciously seek. Better rock and somewhat reasonable protection characterize technical gems such as the visionary, if ephemeral North Face of Kwangde Lo (6187 meters), climbed in late autumn 1982 by Jeff Lowe and David Breashears (United States), and the stunning North Face of Changabang (6864 meters), climbed in spring 1997 by Fowler and fellow Brits Steve Sustad, Andy Cave, and Brendan Murphy. Fowler and Sustad fell on the summit ridge, their injuries preventing them from completing the final day to the top, and Murphy was killed in an avalanche on the descent, underscoring the risks of such high-stakes climbing.

There are virtually limitless possibilities for routes similar to those on Spantik, Kwangde Lo, and Changabang, especially on the hundreds of sub-7000-meter peaks. Only by limiting our use of bolts, fixed ropes, and other technological aids and tactics, which reduce the level of commitment, skill, experience, and spirit required, will climbers be able to match the brilliance of their forebears.

— MK

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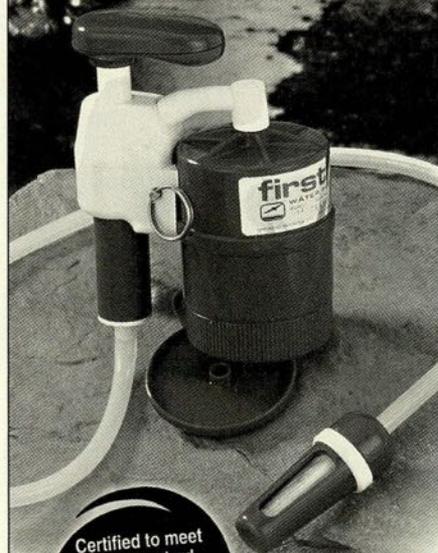
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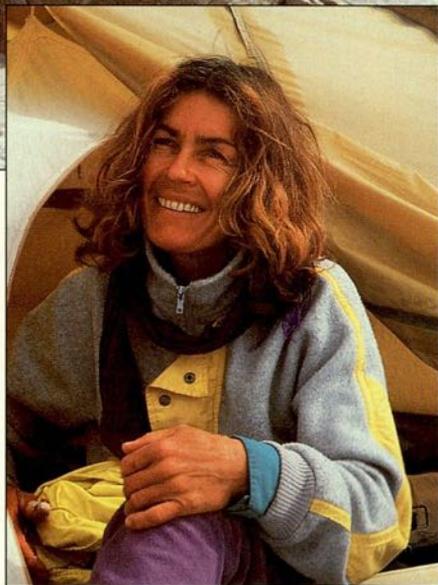
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Wanda Rutkiewicz, perhaps the greatest woman mountaineer of all time (inset), and at basecamp below the north face of Kangchenjunga, where she perished.

The Magic Wanda Himalayan hardwoman left an unmatched legacy

At 3:30 a.m. on the morning of May 12, 1992, Wanda Rutkiewicz of Poland and Carlos Carsolio of Mexico stumbled out of an ice cave at 7900 meters, bound for the summit of Kangchenjunga (8598 meters) in Nepal. Carsolio soon outdistanced Rutkiewicz, who was moving unusually slowly, and reached the summit at 5 p.m. He met Rutkiewicz a few hours later, resting inside a wind hole, where she had stopped to bivouac. Aside from her down suit, she had a headlamp, extra gloves, and goggles, but no sleeping bag, food, or stove. She planned to go for the summit the next morning.

"She showed in her eyes determination to reach the summit," said Carsolio later. "I think she felt this was her last chance to climb Kangchenjunga." He said he would spend the night at Camp IV then wait for her at Camp II

(6890 meters); Camp IV contained no more food or fuel.

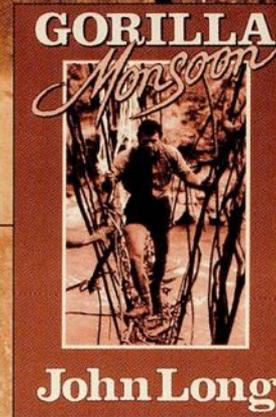
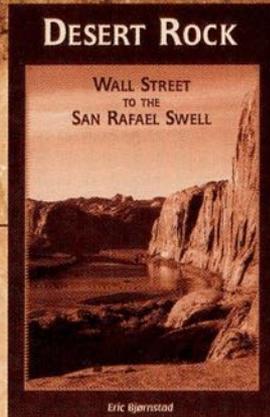
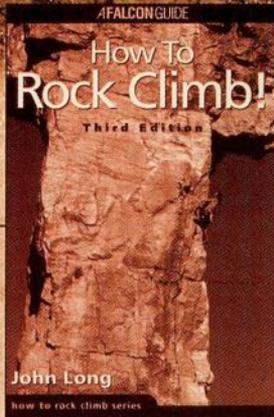
That was the last time Rutkiewicz was seen.

While perhaps not well known to many climbers, Wanda Rutkiewicz might be the greatest female alpinist ever. She was 49 years old at the time of her death. Kangchenjunga would have been her ninth 8000er; her others included Everest (her first) and K2 (first female ascent). In 1975, she (as team co-leader) made the first ascent of Gasherbrum III (7952 meters), at the time the highest unclimbed mountain. No other woman has come close to topping her Himalayan record.

Rutkiewicz was also a proponent of all-women expeditions. In 1985, she led the first all-women's ascent of Nanga Parbat (8125 meters), her second 8000er. Wrote Carlos Buhler: "She felt that expert climbing skills could only be learned by fully shouldering the responsibilities and consequences of one's own decisions."

FALCON GUIDES

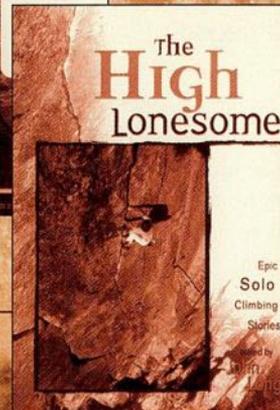
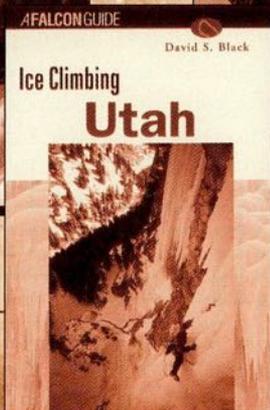
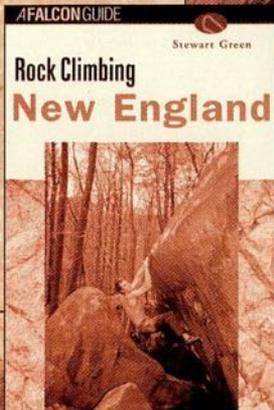
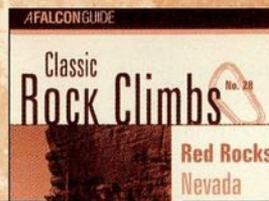
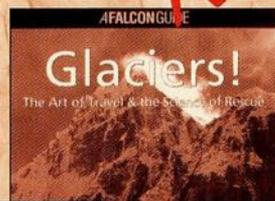
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Anatoli Boukreev fixing rope for clients during the famous 1996 climb that ended in disaster.

Inevitable?

The 1996 Everest tragedy

"This Everest is no longer my Everest ...," wrote Reinhold Messner in 1999. "Yet it remains the most prestigious peak in the world, apex of all vanities." Indeed, the mountain is a far cry from the one Messner soloed back in 1980 without seeing a soul. Commercial expeditions guiding clients — some nominally experienced, paying in the neighborhood of \$60,000 for the privilege — have gained a stronghold, and some critics say that the 1996 disaster on the mountain was inevitable.

The image above has become almost a sym-

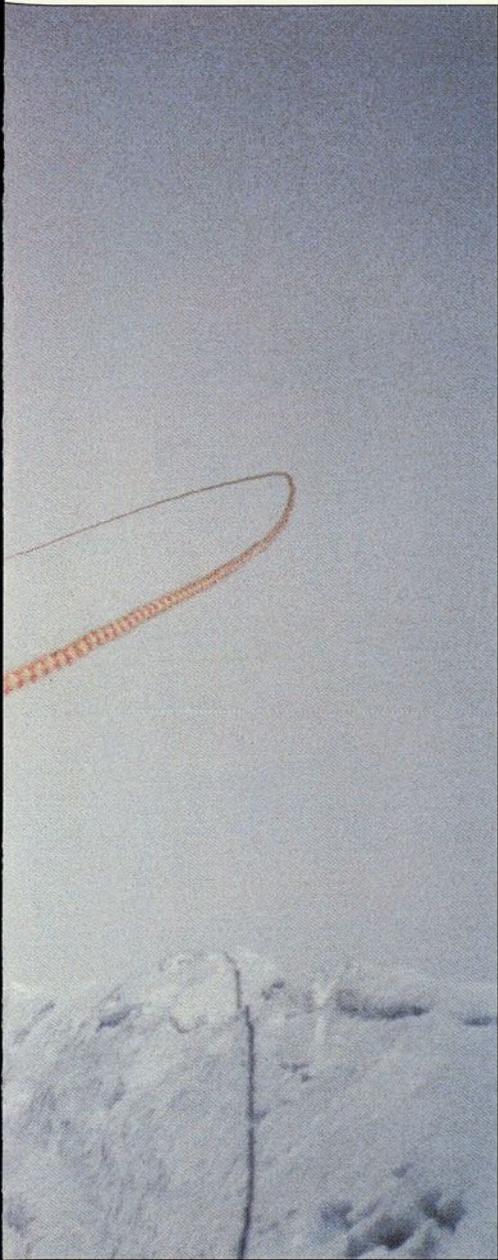
bol of the impending disaster. Neal Beidleman, the man behind the camera, says it has been published in around 100 magazines and newspapers. In the photograph, Anatoli Boukreev fixes rope for clients on the morning of May 10, 1996, just below the Hillary Step. Beidleman and Boukreev were both guides working for Scott Fischer's Mountain Madness guide service, which was operating alongside the New Zealander Rob Hall's company, Adventure Consultants, and a Taiwanese group. Both Fischer and Hall were strong climbers and experienced guides.

On the morning of May 10, the various groups straggled out from the staging zone

of Camp IV at 8100 meters. Despite plans to avoid such an occurrence, bottlenecks occurred at the rock steps along the Southeast Ridge, putting the climbers behind schedule. No one seemed unusually alarmed. Twenty-four people eventually reached the summit, while others turned back. Then, late in the afternoon, the clouds lowered as a storm moved in. Things quickly got out of control, and people, most of them exhausted, out of oxygen, and ill-prepared for a high-altitude open bivy, were strung out along the ridge.

On the morning of May 11, the handful of climbers who had made it back to the South

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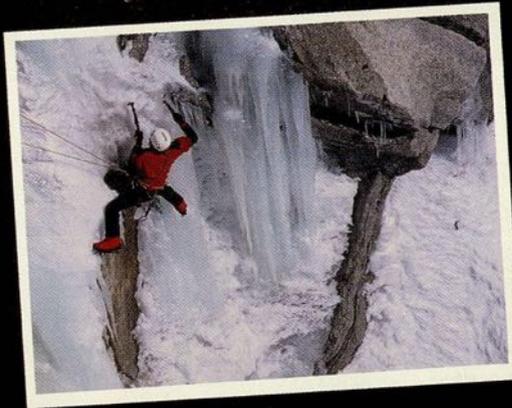


Col camp that stormy night awoke to find seven people missing, including the leaders of the three trips. In the end, both Fischer and Hall perished, along with clients Yasuko Namba, Doug Hansen, and another guide Andy Harris.

The story of the Everest tragedy is complicated and disturbing, the subject of Jon Krakauer's best-seller, *Into Thin Air*. Perhaps one of the most wrenching details is the satellite-radio conversation Hall had with his pregnant wife back home, after he had been pinned at 8500-plus-meters for nearly two days. His last words: "Sleep well, my sweetheart. Please don't worry too much."

WILD THINGS

Guide Christophe Beaudoin
on the Areté des Cosmiques,
Chamonix, France.
Photo: Mark F. Twight

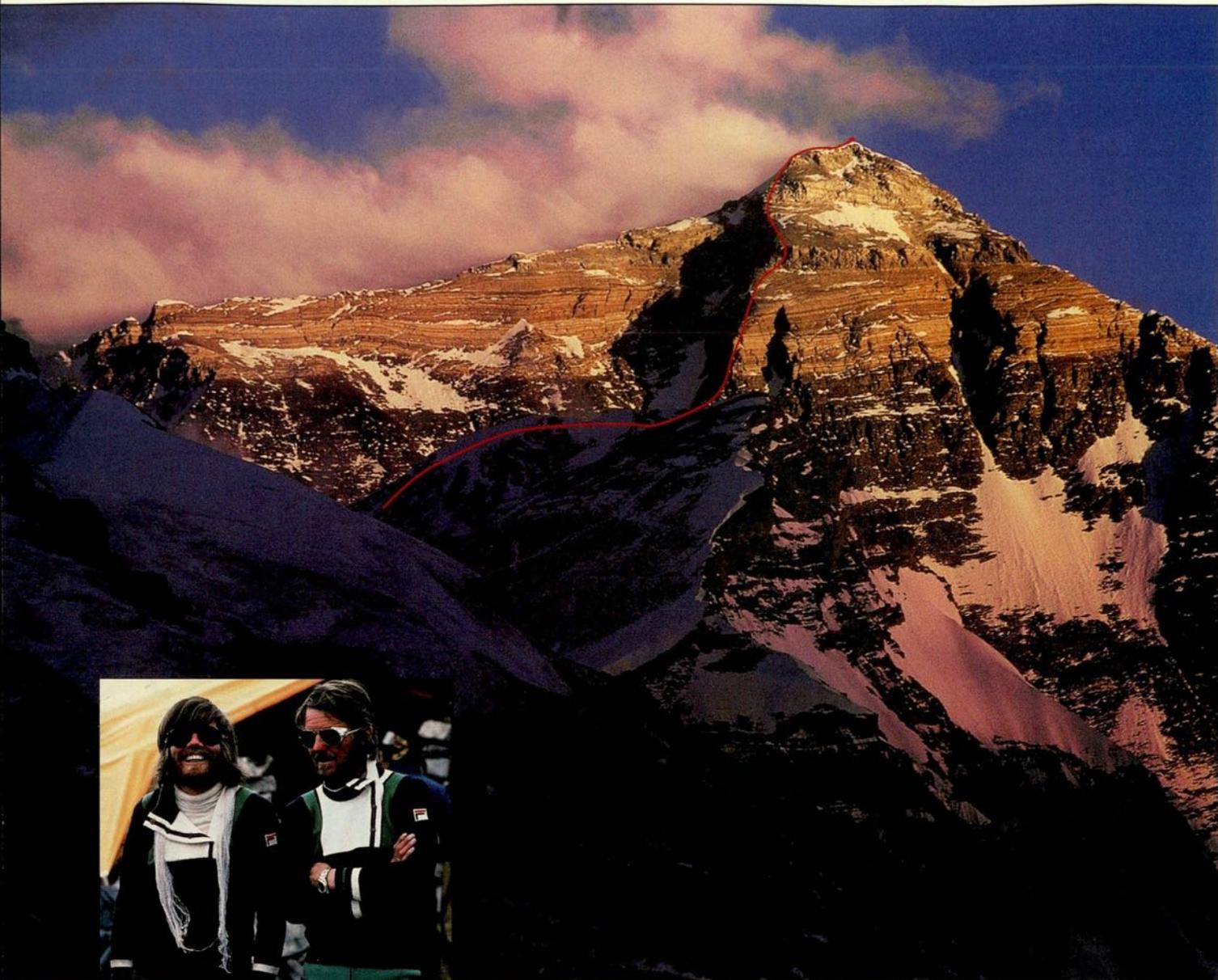


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Reinhold Messner and Peter Habeler in 1978 after making the first ascent of Everest (8846 meters) without sucking supplemental oxygen; and Messner's 1980 solo-ascent route on the North Face.

By fair means

Messner, Habeler debunk Everest myth with oxygenless ascent

"Pundits appeared saying ... that we might just possibly reach the summit of Everest without [oxygen] masks, but we certainly would not make it back down again. And if we did, it would be as mental vegetables," writes Reinhold Messner in his *All Fourteen 8000ers*.

So it was with some angst that he and the Austrian Peter Habeler set off, in 1978, on yet another bold climb together. Their partnership was already legendary — in 1975, Messner and Habeler had made the first alpine-style ascent of an 8000-meter peak, the Northwest Face of

Hidden Peak (8068 meters, 26,625 feet), which was only the second ascent of the mountain (the first was accomplished by an American team led by Nicholas Clinch in 1958).

To minimize the time spent above 8000 meters on Everest — often referred to as the "Death Zone" — Messner and Habeler planned to climb from the South Col at 7900 meters to the 8848-meter summit and back in a day, an elevation gain of 3100 feet, rather than employing the common tactic of bivying at 8500 meters before going for the top. On May 8, the pair rather uneventfully climbed to the summit in eight hours. On the descent, however, Messner struggled. Snow blindness

caused him intense agony that evening, and he was able to make out only outlines of objects the following day. The pair eventually made it back to basecamp safely, and with apparently no brain damage, disproving their doubters.

Always seeking to improve style and push beyond what was considered possible, Messner, in 1980, took his crusade one step further, soloing the North Face of Everest, completely unsupported, in a blazing three days, naturally without oxygen. He, of course, then went on to become the first person to climb all 14 of the 8000-meter peaks, but it is Messner's adherence to alpine style and his unsupported solos for which he will ultimately be remembered.

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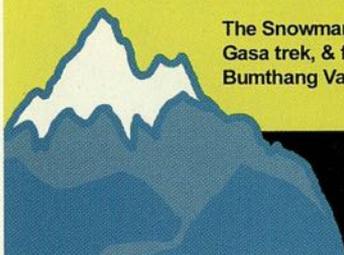
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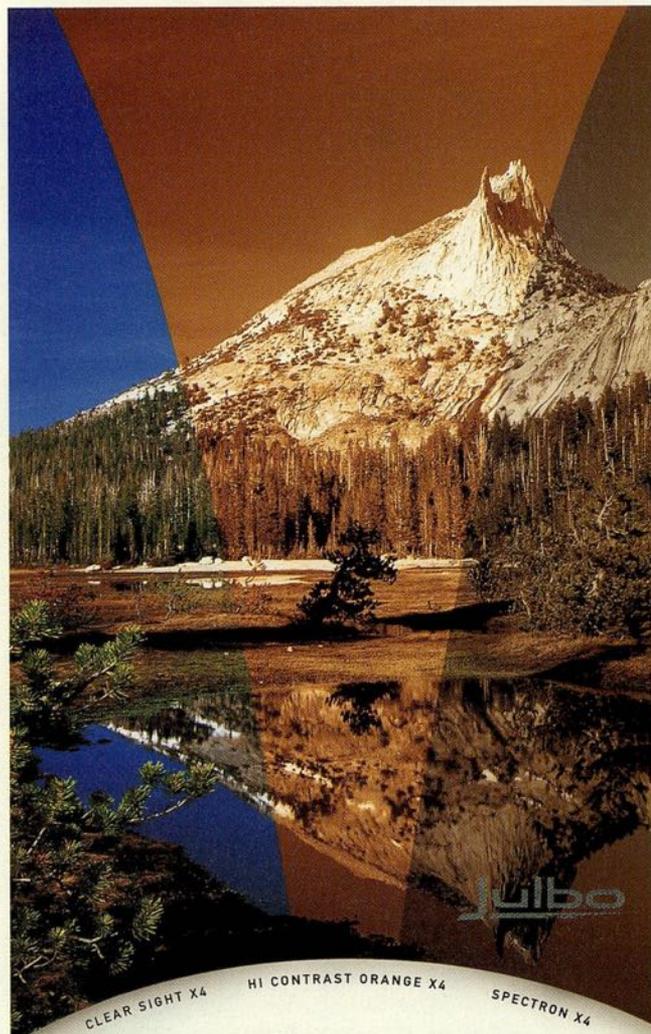
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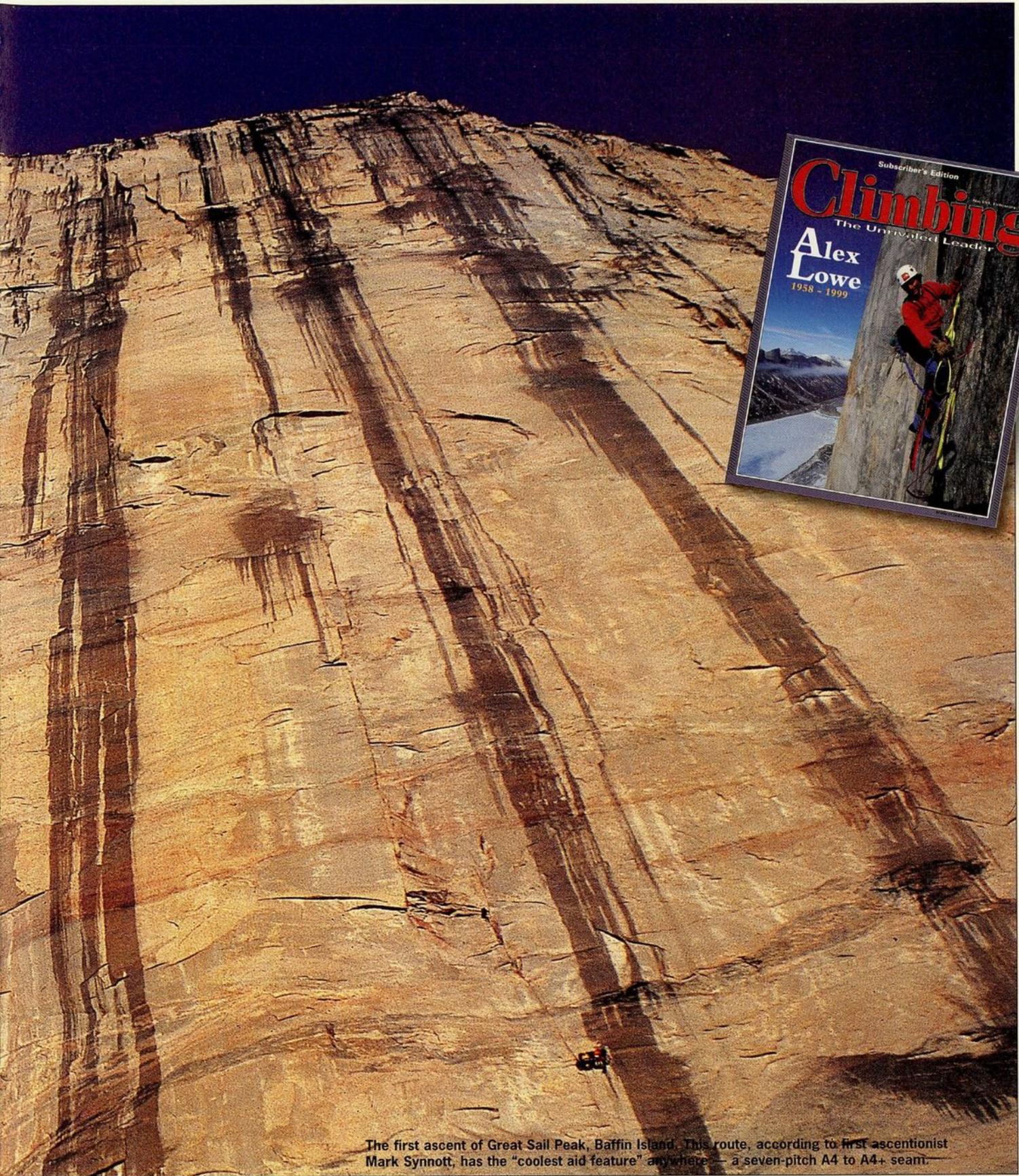
Anchors away

Nailing Baffin Island's wide open faces

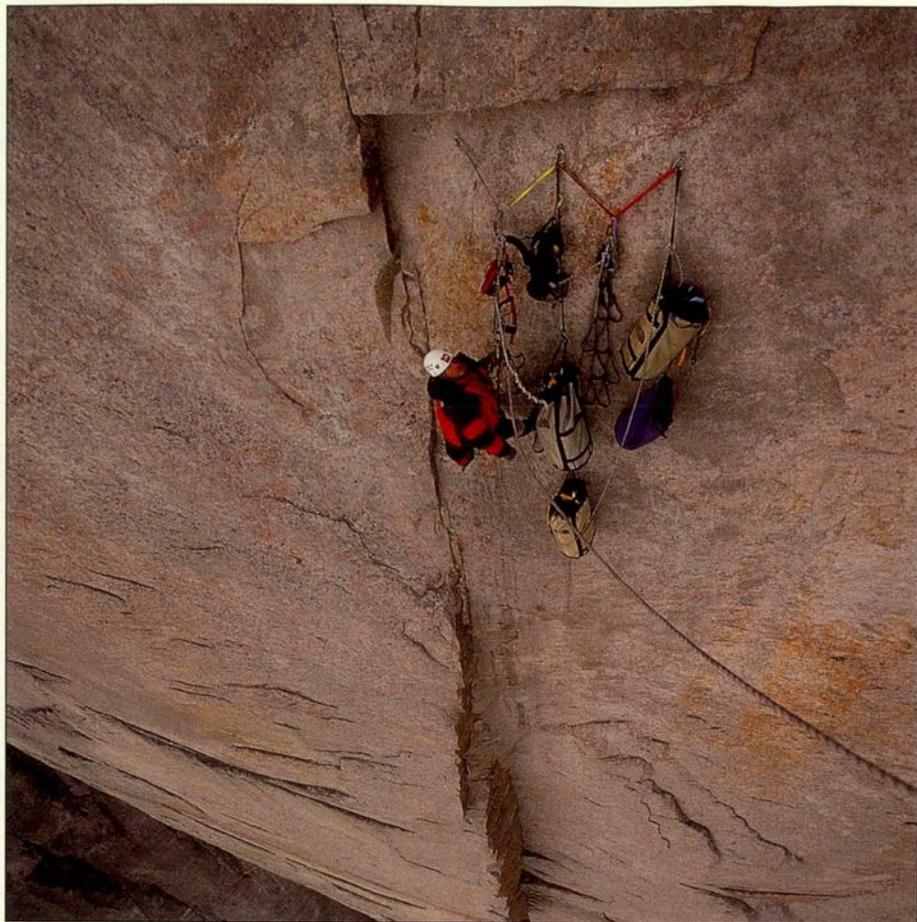
Besides the confines of Yosemite Valley, Baffin Island is the world's best-known and arguably most popular big-wall destination. Here, on the largest of the Arctic archipelago in northeastern Canada, Grade VIs are so plentiful they are borderline anonymous and you find at least four Grade VIIs — the highest concentration of such caliber walls anywhere.

While the familiar formations — Mount Thor, Asgard, Turnweather, and Bredidablik — line the Weasel Valley, there are at least 27 other nearby fjords, and many, such as Sam Ford Fjord, are a big-waller's jackpot. Scattered among these fjords are at least a dozen El Caps — several that are larger still — and unlimited Half Domes. Most are unclimbed and unnamed.

In the Stewart Valley, several hundred miles northwest of the Weasel Valley, lies the stark 3800-foot cliff of Great Sail Peak, first climbed by Mark Synnott, Greg Child, Alex Lowe, and Jared Ogden in 1998. Scaled for a *National Geographic* feature and a film for *National Geographic Explorer*, the route provided adventure worthy of the coverage. Spending 20 plus days on the route, the foursome encountered a seven-pitch seam of continuous A4 and A4+ that was, says Synnott, the "coolest aid feature I've seen anywhere." The climb *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash* checked in at VI 5.10 A4+. Tragically, Alex Lowe died the following year in an avalanche on Shishapangma, an 8000-meter peak in the Tibetan Himalaya. *Climbing* ran this cover of him hooking on Great Sail Peak as a tribute (right).



The first ascent of Great Sail Peak, Baffin Island. This route, according to first ascensionist Mark Synnott, has the "coolest aid feature" anywhere — a seven-pitch A4 to A4+ seam.



MARK SYNNOTT

Punching the clock, Baffin Island style. Jared Ogden doing his duty on *Rum, Sodomy, and the Lash* (VI 5.10 A4+), Baffin Island, during the first ascent in 1998.

Dream big Escaping on the world's great escapes

ESSAY BY MARK SYNNOTT

A jagged spike of ice-encrusted orange granite pierces a chaotic, crevassed glacier. Twenty-thousand feet above sea level in Pakistan's Karakoram mountains, clouds swirl around Nameless Tower's snow-capped summit. Spindrift sifts down the vertical 3000-foot walls. There is no walk up this peak, no routes except those that tackle the sheer unrelenting walls. Rock spires, I realized over a decade ago, are exactly the type of formations I want to climb.

Although I had only been climbing for a few months when I came across the photo of Nameless Tower, the peak struck a chord that even today vibrates in my soul. Looking at that photo back then, I got nervous just knowing that such a rock existed, because right then and there I realized I was staring at my destiny. Finally, I had a worthy outlet for all of my pent-up adolescent energy — big-wall climbing.

I was lucky enough to share this dream with my best friend and neighbor Simon Ahlgren (a.k.a. Mo Chi), and together we set out on the so-called "alpine apprenticeship." Older climbers in our home state of New Hampshire told us that there would be a lot of suffering to suck up on much lesser routes before we could even contemplate climbing Nameless Tower. "Severe penalties will be paid," they warned us, "by anyone who jumps the gun." Nonetheless, Mo Chi and I were chomping at the bit to get started.

First we had to scrap together some gear. Our first score was swami belts that we cut out of the back seat of a burnt-out, abandoned VW Bug. We then found a Gold Line rope at a garage sale and scarfed two 'biners from the closet of a friend who had attended NOLS.

We learned valuable lessons right away. For example: It's possible — though hateful — to bivy in winter without a sleeping bag or tent.

Also, single-point hammocks are preferable to the back-yard net variety for hanging bivies. And squirrels, though lean and hard to catch, make a tasty stew.

One of the best pieces on our rack was a Forrest "Titon," a T-shaped thing better suited to popping bottle caps than catching falls, but this didn't stop us from attempting 5.8s and 5.9s at places like Crow Hill and Cathedral Ledge. We slammed pro every two feet, fell frequently, and by June were headed west in Mo Chi's overloaded and highly unreliable 1971 BMW 2002.

Luckily, this smoke machine blew the master cylinder head a half mile from his house and we ended up on a Greyhound for the long cross-country haul. A month later we finally hitchhiked into the Valley. We had \$87 between us.

We must have looked like dirtbags,

(continued on page 102)



S7

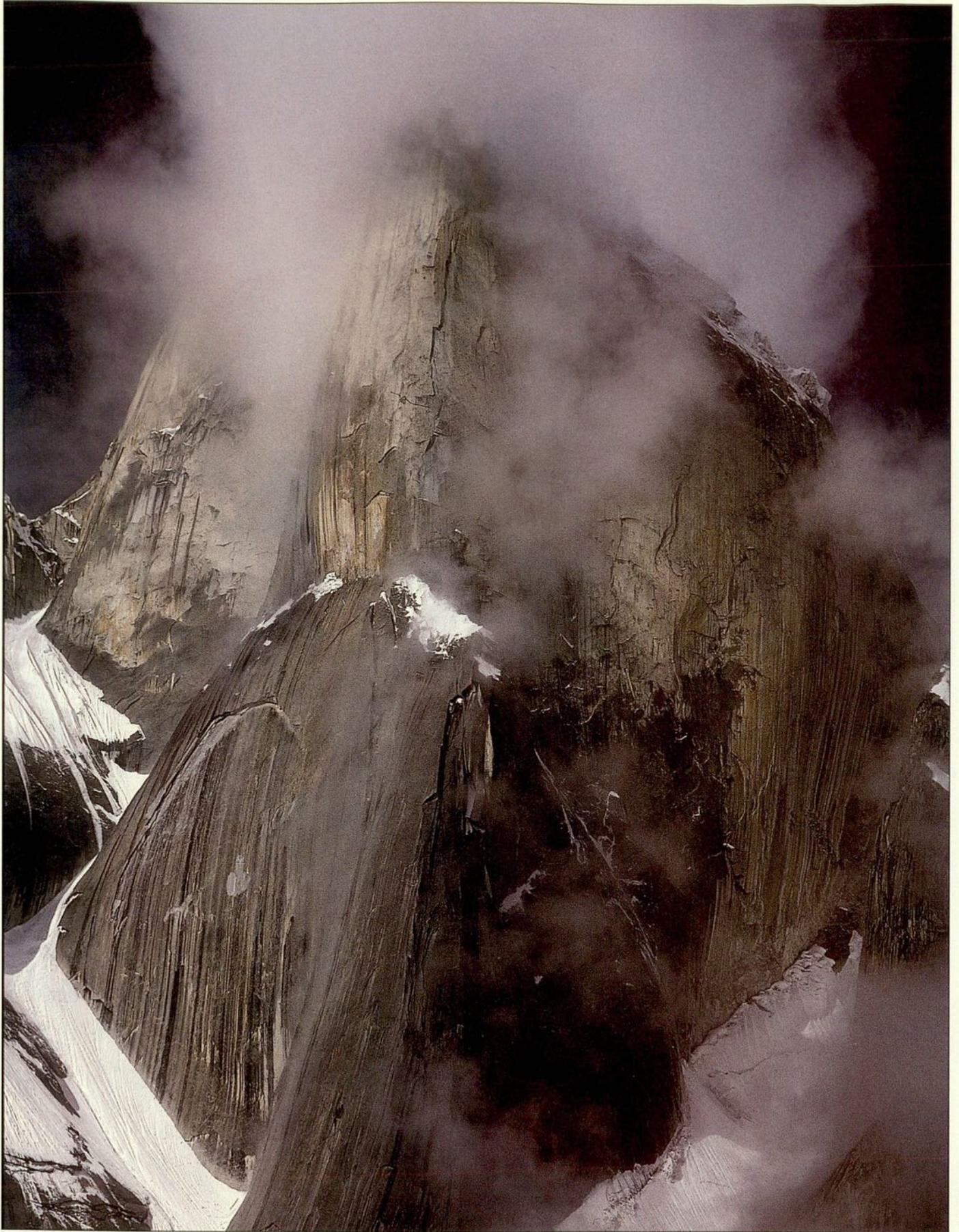
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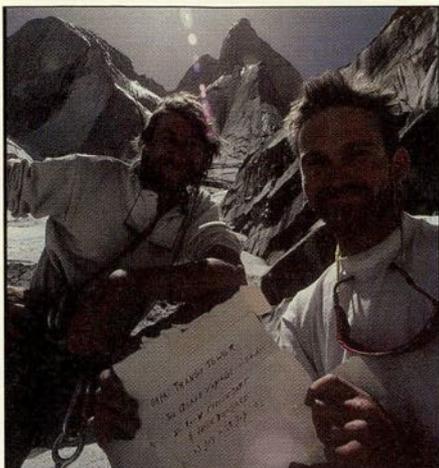
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Big Walls



The Great Trango Tower. Only two routes, *The Grand Voyage* (VII 5.10 A4+ W13) and the *Norwegian Buttress* (VI 5.10 A3), ply this 5000-foot face.

ACE KVALE



ACE KWALE

John Middendorf and Xaver Bongard after their first ascent of *The Grand Voyage*. The note is written in blood.

Two for Trango

The baddest show on earth

The Great Trango Tower in the Karakoram is one of the world's largest, most impressive, and most serious walls. Rising to over 20,000 feet, the 5000-foot granite face is a shooting gallery of exfoliated flakes cast loose by frost-wedging and ice blocks calved by summit-ridge seracs.

This could explain why a face of this stature only has two routes. The first climb, the *Norwegian Buttress* (VI 5.10 A3) went straight up the *Nose*-like prow. Over 20 days in 1983 the Norwegians Hans Christian Doseth, Stein Aasheim, Dag Kolsrud, and Finn Daehli slugged their way up the wall. After 15 days the foursome grew desperately low on food. Kolsrud and Aasheim rappelled, giving Doseth and Daehli a shot at the summit.

Five days later Doseth and Daehli completed the route, raising the bar for high-altitude, big-wall climbing. The duo, however, failed to return to basecamp. A helicopter search located their bodies at the foot of the upper pillar, presumed casualties of a failed rappel anchor.

In 1992, John Middendorf and Xaver Bongard established their *Grand Voyage* (VII 5.10 A4+ WI 3), starting left of the Norwegians' route and crossing it to the right at roughly two-thirds height. Climbing capsule style, Middendorf and Bongard spent 18 days on the wall, three of them pinned in a fierce storm just 400 feet below the summit rim. When the weather lifted, the two dashed for the summit, climbing six technical ice and mixed pitches and completing what may be the most difficult big wall on earth. On the final rock outcrop just below the summit Middendorf and Bongard discovered fixed pins and slings — mute testimony to the sometimes-high price of success.

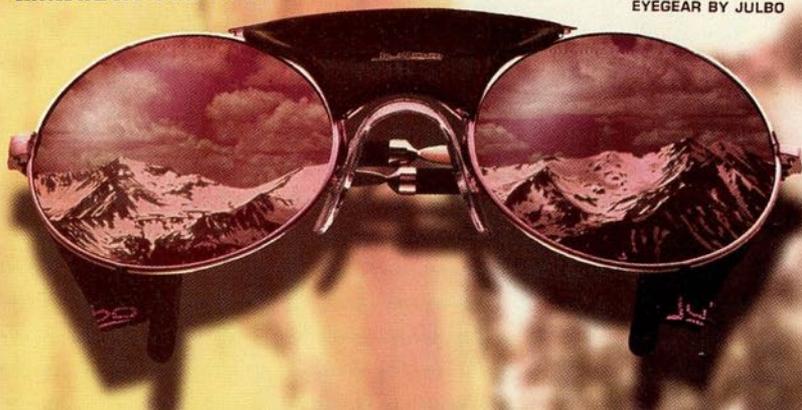
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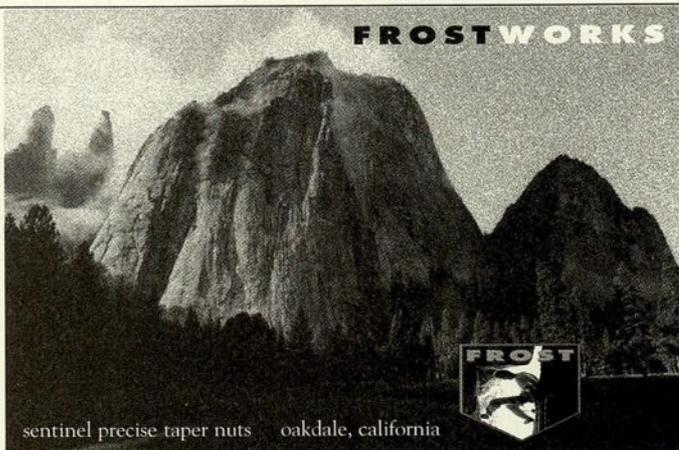


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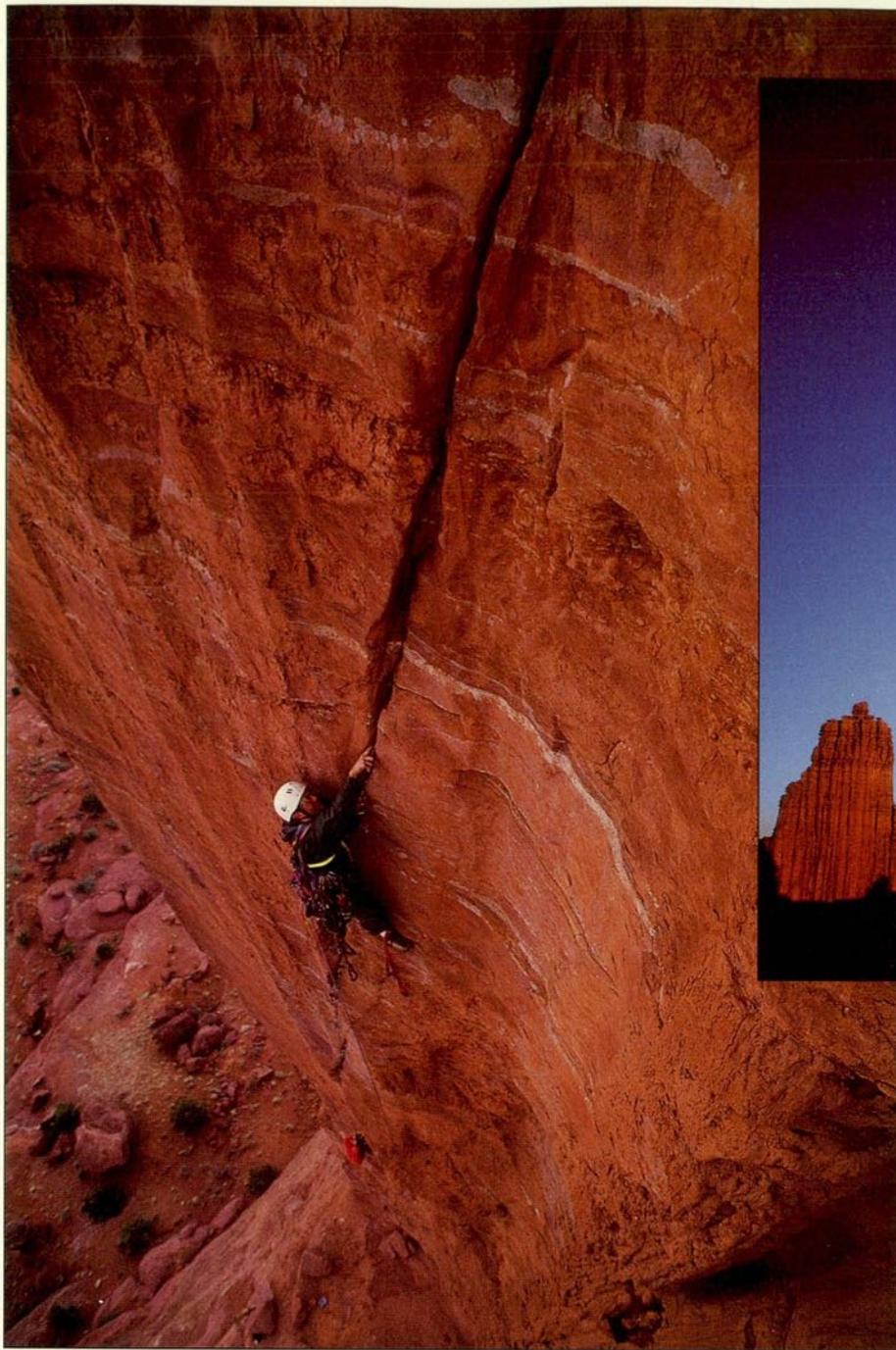
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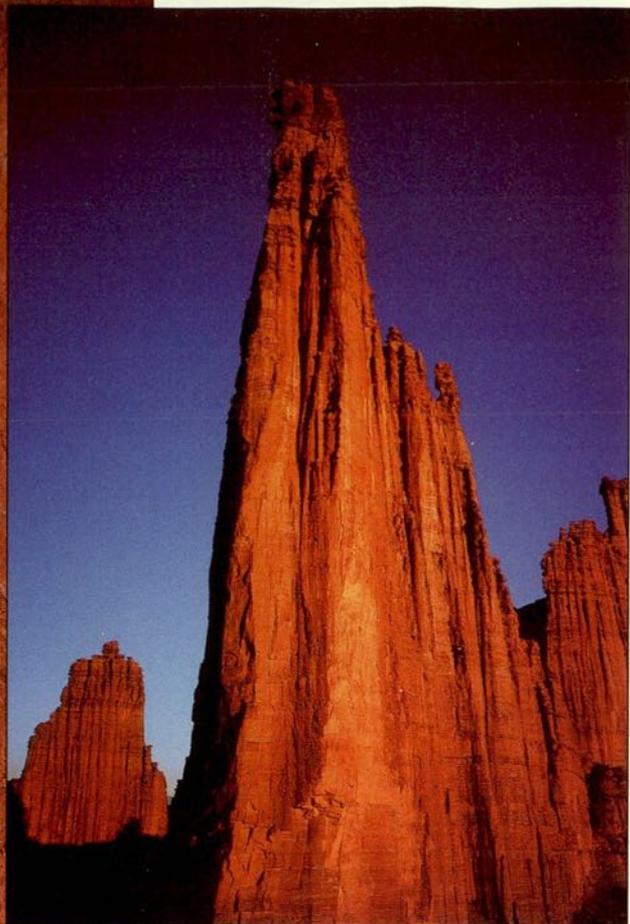
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sentinel precise taper nuts oakdale, california



Tony Sartin on the route's second pitch. Above him lies the infamous "mud curtains," and their mandatory free climbing.



GREG EPPERSON (LEFT); DUANE RALEIGH

The Devil, you say? The striking Sundevel Chimney takes the Titan's plumb line.

The Titan

King of the wild frontier

Though only 900 feet tall, the Titan outside Moab, Utah, strikes terror in the hearts of the most hardened big waller. Comprised of decaying sandstone caked with an icing of dried mud, every one of the formation's six routes — *Finger of Fate*, *World's End*, *Sundevel Chimney*, *Scheherazade*, *Naked Lunch*, and *Wasteland* is a devilish undertaking. Bolts, once solid, mysteriously pry themselves from the stone. The rasp-like rock gnaws unsuspectingly on ropes. Entire dihedral systems

collapse in a roar of dust and blocks.

In spite of — or perhaps because of — the Titan's mischievous ways, climbers have been drawn to the tower since its first ascent by legends Layton Kor, Huntley Ingalls, and George Hurley. In 1962 the trio pioneered the spectacular *Finger of Fate* route, a mixture of aid and free moves that is more akin to hard alpine than rock climbing. At one point on the ascent Kor half jokingly turned to his compatriots and told them "We're all going to die up here." Although Kor was no stranger to loose and crumbling rock, this was his only route in the

Fishers. Oddly, Hurley returned four years later and claimed the route's second ascent.

On the flank opposite the *Finger of Fate* lies Harvey T. Carter's masterpiece, *Sundevel Chimney* (V 5.9 A3). This line, shown here, is the Titan's most trafficked "old-school" aid route. Three pitches of discontinuous blade and Arrow cracks lead to the route's mud-crusting namesake — a 400-foot chimney. In the chimney, mandatory free moves between ancient bolts keep stimulation high. Rumor has it that certain climbers bang pins straight into the mud curtains. Psychological protection for psychos.

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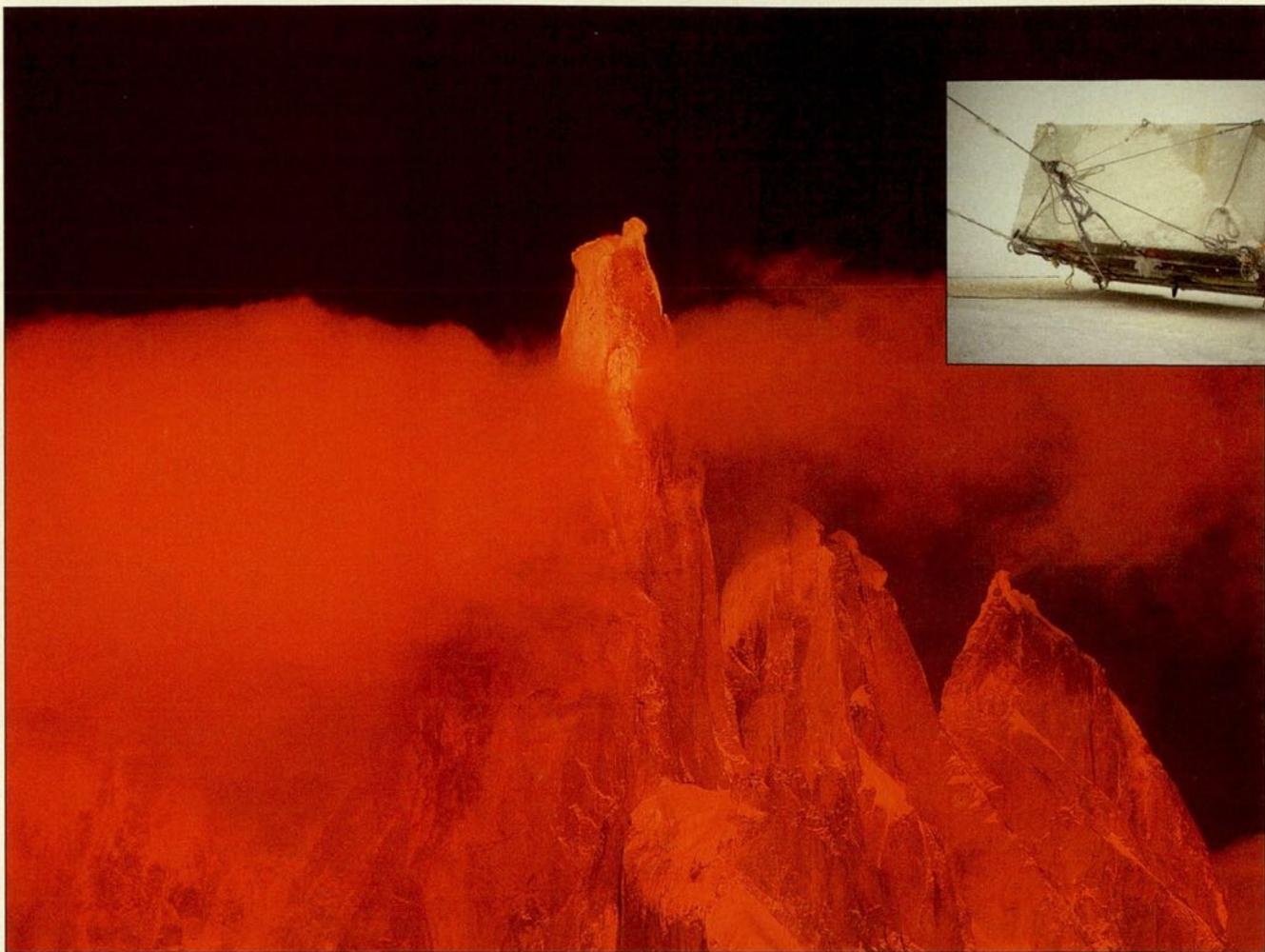
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Big Wall State of the Art



The south and east faces of Cerro Torre, Patagonia, in typical conditions. Inset is the 300-pound aluminum bivy box hauled up *Infinito Sud* as protection from ice- and rockfall — and Patagonia's notoriously unstable weather.

The baddest of the big

The Grand Voyage (VII 5.10 A4+), Karakoram, Pakistan. FA: John Middendorf, Xaver Bongard, 1992. Unrepeated.

A ground-breaking ascent for its time and still widely considered one of the greatest big-wall climbs of all time. After fixing ropes up a dicey couloir exposed to ice- and rock-fall, Middendorf and Bongard committed to a capsule-style ascent, spending 18 days on 44 pitches of with free sections up to 5.10 and an aid crux of A4+. Just below the rim of the wall, they endured a vicious storm, but persevered and climbed the final section of mixed ground to become only the second team to reach the east summit of Great Trango (20,444 feet) — and the only ones to get there and back alive.

Infinito Sud (VII 5.10 A4), Cerro Torre, Patagonia. FA: Ermanno Salvaterra, Roberto Manni, Piergiorgio Vidi, 1996. Unrepeated.

Over 5000 feet high, radically overhanging, and subject to some of the worst weather in the world, the south face of Cerro Torre may be the most difficult big wall on

earth. Adding to the dangers, a massive snow ledge at two thirds height constantly sheds rocks and ice, which pummel the wall's lower flanks. On the first ascent, the team employed a 300-pound aluminum bivy box — the only structure that could withstand the constant pounding from rock, ice, and storms. Winching the box upward, the three spend 24 days on the wall, eventually grinding to a halt just 300 feet shy of the summit. Despite not reaching the top, theirs was one of the greatest big-wall efforts of all time.

Reticent Wall (VI 5.9 A5), El Capitan, Yosemite, California. FA: Steve Gerberding, Scott Stowe, Lori Reddle, 1995. Numerous repeats.

Although the difficulty of this climb has been diminished by recent ascents, at the time of its first ascent the *Reticent Wall* was likely the most technically difficult aid climb in the world. When Kevin Thaw, Chris Kalous, and I did the second ascent in 1997, we found that the A2 pitches were harder than most A5 pitches on El Cap's older routes. The crux A5 pitch, first led by Steve Gerberding, is a testament to the boldness, creativity,

and commitment of this unsung hero of big-wall climbing. The pitch involved a full ropelength of copperheads, beaks, and hooks, and included no rivets or drilled enhancements of any kind.

Most of the world's biggest and hardest rock walls have been climbed. Consequently, the future for big-wall climbing isn't in climbing bigger or more technically difficult walls, but it is merging big-wall climbing with alpine climbing in the high peaks. Some examples of this futuristic style include the north face of Masherbrum (7821 meters). This 3000-foot big wall sits atop a 6000-foot alpine face that is guarded on all sides by large and active seracs. Just reaching the base of the wall will be an incredibly committing and dangerous alpine route. The north face of Jannu offers a similar challenge, with a 7500-foot ice-encrusted rock headwall that tops out at 25,294 feet. Though this face isn't as sheer as the ones on Baffin Island or the Trango Towers, climbing it will necessarily involve portaledge, haulbags, fixed ropes, and long sections of aid climbing.

HEINZ ZAK; ERMANNINO SALVATERRA

— MS

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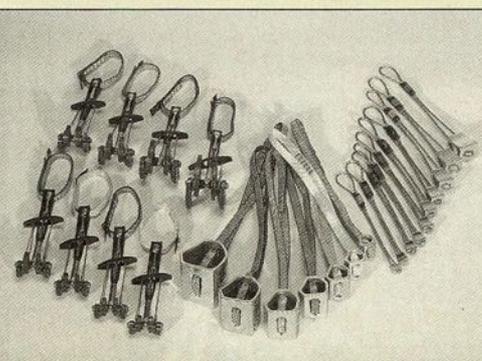
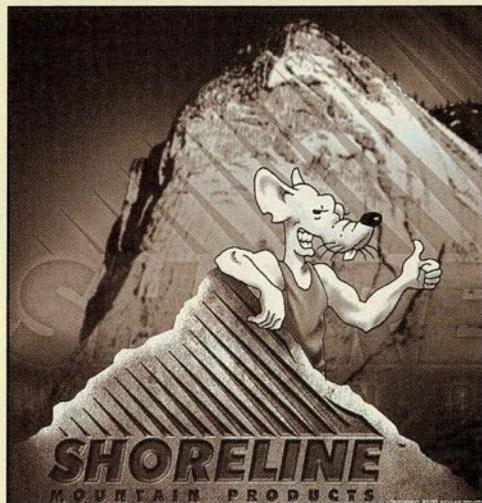
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If *Native Son* (VI 5.9 A4) is El Cap's steepest route, then its fifth pitch, "The Wing" (shown here), is the steepest of the steep. For 70 feet your feet dangle two to three feet away from the wall.

The race for space

Gunning for El Cap's last independent line

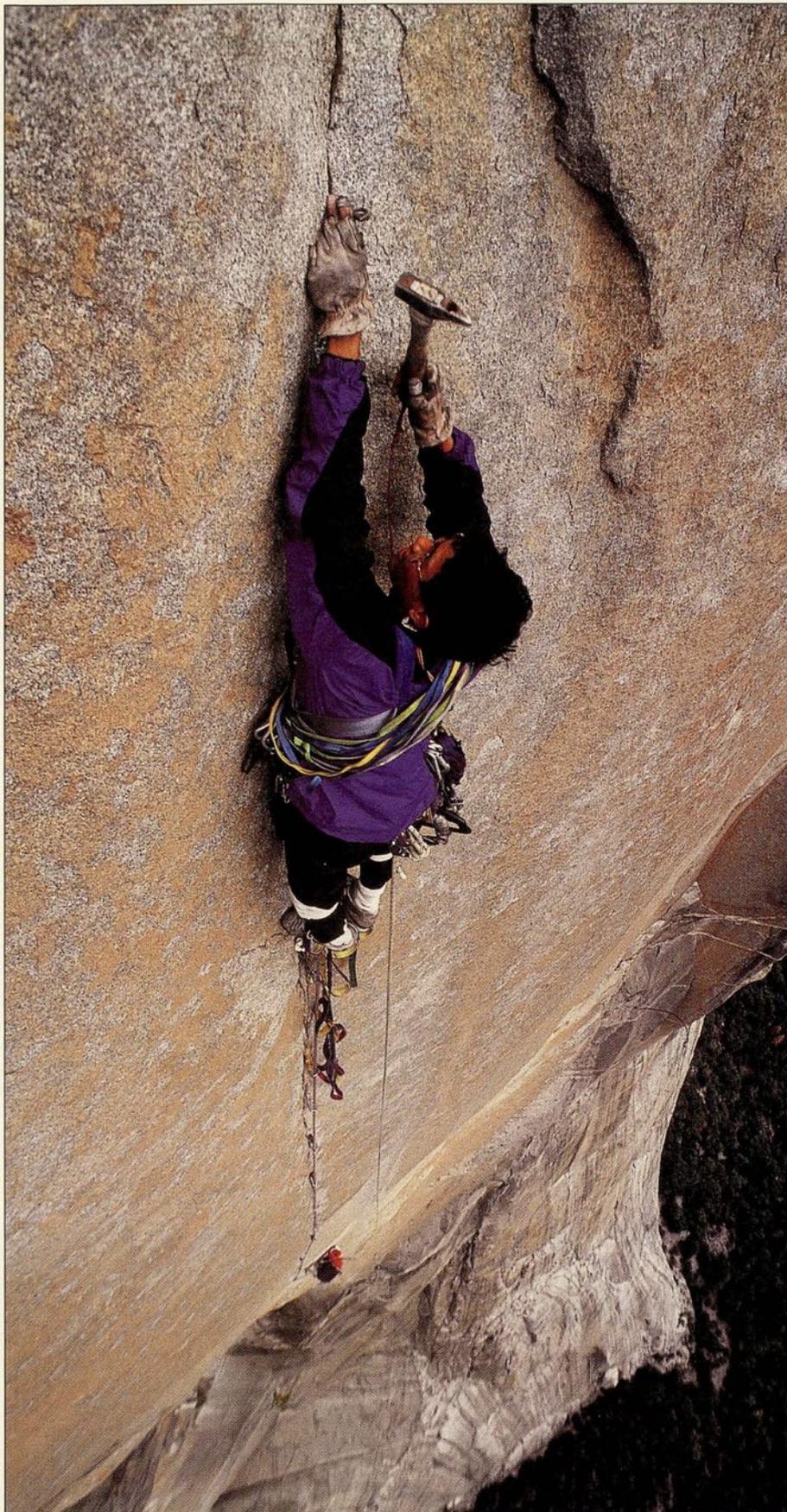
A lot has changed on El Cap since Warren Harding drove his last bolt home on the final headwall pitch of the *Nose* in 1958. For one, practically every crack, flake, seam, and edge on the 3000-foot by one-mile wide wall has felt the gentle caress of cold steel. For another, there are some 100 routes and variations.

The last of the independent lines to fall was *Native Son* (VI 5.9 A4), climbed by Walt Shipley and Troy Johnson in 1987. Originally, two teams, Shipley and Johnson, and Randy Leavitt and

Rob Slater, had designs on the new route. When Shipley and Johnson found out through the Yosemite grapevine that Leavitt and Slater were keen for the same line, they immediately began fixing ropes. Two days later Leavitt and Slater began their line, climbing slightly to the right of Shipley and Johnson. Both teams gunned for the wall's most prominent feature, a 300-foot hollow pillar dubbed the "Golden Finger of Fate."

With a two-day head start, however, Shipley and Johnson easily gained the flake first,

climbing a thin crack on the left, and topping out after 15 new pitches. When Leavitt and Slater reached the Golden Finger, they climbed its right side, a knifeblade to 24-inch 5.11 offwidth crack — "The Levittator" — that Leavitt kneejammed and handstacked. Their line, *Scorched Earth* (VI 5.11 A5), quickly gained a reputation for its hard aid and mandatory free climbing. Tragically, Slater died in a storm high on K2 in 1995. Shipley drowned in a kayaking accident in 1999.



MARK SYNNOTT (LEFT), GREG EPPERSON

Pete Takeda on pitch 14 of *Sunkist* (VI 5.9 A3+). This 1978 Dale Bard and Bill Price creation takes a thin crack section to the left of El Cap's *Shield* headwall.

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Dream big

(continued from page 92)

because some self-proclaimed "wall pirates" immediately took us under their wing. They introduced us to the groveling scene and helped us to find suitable subterranean accommodations.

ledge" halfway up, either. After we pulled off the DNB by the skin of our teeth, the wall pirates eased up on the sandbagging, and our crowning achievement that summer was the *Regular Northwest Face* on Half Dome. This

IF SOMEBODY HAD TOLD US THEN THAT WE WERE HEADED FOR A CERTAIN OUTCOME, WE WOULD HAVE ASKED TO SEE WHAT THEY WERE SMOKING.

To us, the Valley was like Disneyland without adult supervision. We'd wake up each day and our toughest decision was whether to climb or sit by the Merced and sip malt liquor. Our biggest climb before arriving in the Valley was an eight-pitch 5.8 on Cannon Cliff called *Moby Grape*, so we were totally unprepared, even for the Grade V trade routes. The wall pirates were nice enough to recommend the DNB, a 17-pitch 5.10 with difficult route finding on Middle Cathedral, as an introductory big wall.

It was no picnic hauling our army duffel up the slabs, and we never found that "killer bivy

took us two tries and cost me all of the skin on my pinkie, but we did it.

One thing that surprised us at the time was that many of the older Yosemite climbers were lamenting the loss of the good old days in Camp 4. Apparently the scene was dead, the community gone, the good times and hard living a thing of the past. This struck us as strange because these were exactly the things that sucked us so deep into the scene. Mo Chi and I would return for the next seven summers.

During this time, certain big-wall climbs outside the Valley motivated us, serving as

examples of what we one day hoped to achieve. Peter Boardman and Joe Tasker's ascent of the West Face of Changabang was one. Part alpine route, part big wall, this climb required hanging bivies in sub-zero temperatures, and for its era was the most technically difficult climb in the Himalaya.

The *Grand Voyage* (VII 5.10 A4+), a 5000-foot alpine big wall on Great Trango, was another (see sidebar). For Mo Chi and me this ascent epitomized big-wall climbing's extreme limit.

Shortly thereafter, I tore the cover off an A5 catalog — a beautiful shot of Great Trango's east face — and posted it prominently in my bedroom. Below it, I scribbled "The future of Yosemite Valley will be as a training ground for a new generation of super alpinists who will venture forth to climb the most aesthetic and difficult big walls on the face of the earth," a quote from Yvon Chouinard in the 1970s vintage *Vertical World of Yosemite*. I spent a lot of time staring at that photo, imagining myself up on that face.

Many things in life are intangible, forever just beyond grasp, but not climbing. Climbing is real — the mountains are just sitting there,



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waiting to be climbed. Be it bouldering or Himalayan peaks, all you really need is the motivation for adventure. And when you are finally there, perched on the wall you've been dreaming about for years, you can't help but find a strong feeling of self-actualization. For me, achieving goals and living dreams has a way of turning chaos and anarchy into meaning and order. It's comforting to know, that to a certain extent, I control my destiny.

By the time I was ready to put up my own first ascents, I realized that climbing the walls was the easy part. The real crux was getting the money. Having successfully avoided a major post-college pitfall — the real job — and lacking a trust fund, I gravitated toward carpentry, a trade well suited to the transient, Subaru-dwelling climbing bum. Work two months, climb two months, etc. With all of your possessions packed into your vehicle, life offers incredible freedom, but little opportunity for financial improvement. When I signed up to join an expedition to the remote and relatively unexplored east coast of Baffin Island in 1995, I had no idea where I would get the cash. Thankfully, someone was looking out for me. A month before the expedition, my car was parked at one of the trailheads in Rocky

Mountain National Park. It rained that night, and by morning the parking lot was a virtual skating rink. The "Scrapmobile" was fortuitously located on the downhill side of the lot. When I returned, not one but two vehicles had smashed into mine. The people who hit me were well insured and honest, and the check from the insurance company was just enough to float the trip.

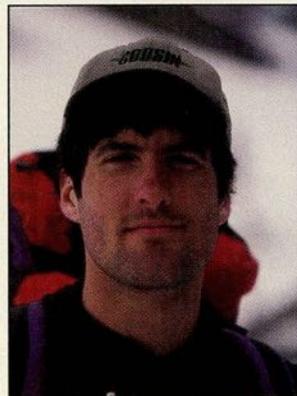
Mo Chi was so jealous that he actually drove his car up to the same lot, hoping for a similar windfall. He had no such luck and missed the Baffin trip.

Recently, I've found myself defending big-wall climbing. Big-name climbers — people whom I respect and have tried to emulate — say that big-wall climbing is an enterprise with a "certain" or "guaranteed" outcome. As someone who has spent the last 10 years dedicated to the sport, I can only say that my experiences run contrary to those arguments. Take Shipton Spire. August 1997: Jared Ogden and I spent a week pinned at our high camp by a storm. When the weather cleared, we blasted for the summit with a light rack, no bolt kit, no stove, no packs. We climbed 1500 feet of technical terrain and

topped out at 10:30 p.m. If somebody had told us then that we were headed for a certain outcome, we would have asked to see what they were smoking.

Ultimately, regardless of the type of climbing we choose, we all seek a similar experience — adventure. This is what has drawn me back to the mountains again and again. I've had some great big-wall adventures in the last 10 years. Not everything has worked out perfectly, but when does it? Along the way I've learned a lot about myself, mainly that the only thing that counts toward success is determination. My determination to climb Nameless Tower still burns. I've seen it twice now, and even held the permit for it in 1999. One thing I do know for certain — it's not going anywhere.

Mark Synnott is a senior contributing editor for Climbing.

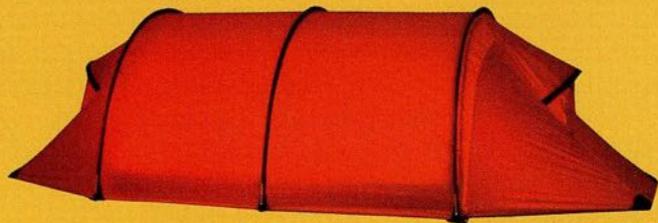


The author, Mark "Scrappy" Synnott.

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Improbability drive

(continued from page 66)

baseball bat or hockey stick lacks a certain something compared to an ice tool. My dad likes to tell the story of a policeman coming into the Calgary Mountain Equipment Co-op brandishing an ice tool and saying, "I can't make these illegal, but I better never see one in a bar." Twenty years later I watched a frustrated competitor in the Ice World Cup hurl a tool toward the ground only to have it hit a judge in the head. The policeman's words echoed from the past. Ice climbing gear is as functionally sexy as the spoilers on a Formula 1 race car and as potentially lethal as the claws on a grizzly. When I strap it on I know I'm about to attempt something serious and real.

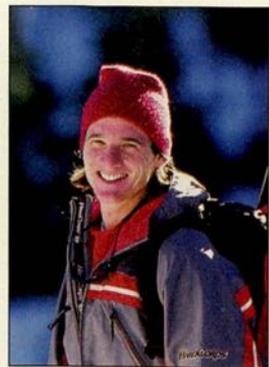
Modern gear also makes the game more fun. Even basics like clothing are better. Until 10 years ago, my favorite ice-climbing pants were a pair of 12-pound Army Surplus woolens. They could easily gain 20 pounds after a wet lead. There was a plus to this in that you could butt-slide in a frozen suit of armor on the descent, but synthetics really do make the experience more enjoyable. While the cold will always be a worthy enemy, I have learned how to dress in almost nothing while walking and climbing and then pile on dry layers, mitts, and a down jacket at the belays. I used to think the "screaming barfies" were just part of the experience; I remember days when I would lean against the ice sobbing like an infant from the pain as the blood forced its way back into my hands. Last year I never experienced the barfies; in fact, I never got very cold despite climbing only in thin Windstopper gloves in sub-zero temperatures. Our gear is better, but we are also better at adapting to the environment. We are evolving, and so are the opportunities in ice and mixed climbing.

Last week, when I should have been writing this article, Kim and I returned to *Curtain Call* — but the curtain had fallen, which means an incomplete ascent at best. However, a thin smear of ice led to a 20-foot horizontal roof from which the final curtain used to dangle. I'd looked at this line 10 years ago as an aid route, but lacked the vision to think of it as a free possibility. Kim and I found the smear to be perfect one- to six-inch-thick blue ice for 60 feet to the roof, where a cunning overlap broke through to the ice. It went at M7, finishing a full 400 feet off the deck on surreal icicles. I had to laugh and dangle by one tool at the lip; perhaps Weiss felt the same incredulous joy when he climbed the original *Curtain Call*. Part of the attraction of ice and mixed climbing is that what looks impossible is often feasible, if you commit.

In the last five years mixed lines like this have gone in at a rabid pace all over the high-latitude countries of the world. My introduction to mixed climbing came when I saw a photo of Jeff Lowe riding the massive freehanging drip of *Octopussy* at Vail, Colorado. I'd always dreamt of climbing icicles like those hanging from my house — an even more improbable form of ice climbing — and Lowe had shown me the reality. I feel incredibly lucky to have experienced the golden age of mixed climbing as a result. I have had the pleasure of climbing with Lowe often in the last decade, and at this year's Ouray Ice Festival (no one would have believed such a thing even remotely possible 20 years ago!) we drank and talked of the present and future of mixed climbing. In our conversation we decided that it is really about the line. It can be one pitch or 100, but mixed climbing offers some of the wildest possible lines up the cold crags and mountain faces. A drip of ice here, a stalactite there, a rock roof with a crack, a good line is the sum of its parts. Putting too much emphasis on drytooling difficulty is perhaps a closed-end game; at a certain point, you might as well just do it in the summer when your muscles are warm. Hard short routes are a worthy end goal, but for me the longer routes are even more improbable and hence more desirable, an ice-climber's distortion of the Heisenberg uncertainty principle: You don't know what's there until you look, but by looking you change what's up there.

I always love watching the faces of tourists as they watch us ice climb. I know what they are thinking, for I feel it myself whenever I start climbing up pure blue ice: "I can't believe this works!" The first flowers are poking up through the ground as I write this, but I much prefer the first icicle of the season hanging from my roof. May your summer be short.

A native of Canada, eh, Will Gadd is one of the world's best mixed climbers and was the overall winner of the first Ice-Climbing World Cup in 2000. Though sponsored by the high-octane energy drink Red Bull, the naturally hyperactive Gadd doesn't "need wings;" he's got his own. This summer he plans to fly his paraglider from coast to coast across the USA.



It's In Each
Of Us...



Ice State of the Art



Glacial caves provide the hardest pure ice climbing on the planet. Will Gadd surfs "the tube" of a giant frozen wave.

The top ice, adventure, and mixed climbs

Writing about the best, hardest, or whatever is basically like holding an open can of dog food while surrounded by a pack of starving dogs; you can throw the can and the pack will fight over it for a bit, but eventually they will come after you. I have my Mace ready ... here goes:

Mixed difficulty: *Brennivin* (M11), Iceland; and *The Empire Strikes Back* (M11), Italy.

Brennivin is still the hardest mixed route I've climbed, followed closely by Stevie Haston's *The Empire Strikes Back*. On *Brennivin* a 60-foot ice pillar leads to a 15-foot horizontal roof followed by the crux — camping another 15 feet laterally on bad holds. With more ice it could be as easy as M9; in dryer conditions it could be much harder. After the mixed crux there's another 100 feet of very thin, overhanging, wind-blown ice for the complete experience. Haston's *The Empire Strikes Back* is a five-pitch route. While to my knowledge there's been no complete ascent of all the pitches, the total route is undoubtedly very hard. Haston climbed the very dangerous third pitch a few days before the M11 technical-crux second pitch, as the temperatures were warming up and he felt it might fall down; it did, eliminating the possibility of a one-push redpoint ascent. Those who have "repeated" *Empire* have only done the first and second pitches. Other contenders include Robert Jasper's *White Out* (M10) and *Tomahawk* (M10+/M11), which he says are harder than the second pitch of *Empire*. Mauro "Bubu" Bole felt his new route *Mission Impossible* was harder than *Empire*, but Haston downrated it to M10+; my only comment is that sponsored climbers (including me) can talk trash as well as any NBA guard. Time will tell.

Pure ice: glaciers and competition routes.

The problem with natural ice routes is that they fall down once they reach a certain level of difficulty so the future of difficult pure ice climbing is either in glacial caves or on man-made routes. In Austria there is a glacial ice cave where Thomas "Steini" Steinbrugger and friends train very, very hard on wild sweeps of overhanging ice. I suspect there's no pure ice climbing harder than this. Competition routes definitely offer the most difficult pure ice climbing outside of seracs or

glacial caves; the final route at the Festiglace in Quebec this year climbed an ice roof that several people felt was WI 8+ thanks to boundary lines. (Rich Marshall of Golden, Colorado, was the only climber to top out the route despite the presence of many top Europeans and North Americans.)

Best ice ascents/routes:

Bruce Hendricks' 1992 on-sight, solo first ascent of the long, sustained, and remote *Blessed Rage* (VWI 6 5.7, 800 feet), in Yoho National Park, Canada, is hands-down the best ice effort ever in terms of the line, style of ascent, and difficulty. Guy Lacelle, Jeff Marshall, Ezio Marlier, and others also deserve credit for bold solo linkups such as the *Weeping Wall* and *Polar Circus* in a day. Mark Twight and Randy Rackliffe's one-day ascent of the 1900-foot *Reality Bath* above the Icefields Parkway in 1988 must also be included in any list of best ascents. In the last 10 years there have been a host of new WI 6 and so-called WI 7 routes, but I've yet to see one harder than what was done in the 1980s or early '90s. I don't count the free-hanging icicles on pre-protected mixed routes; they are hard but almost never the crux.

Adventure/mixed: the future as seen on *Rocketman*.

First off, routes that use aid don't qualify in this category; that's alpinism or mountaineering. Style of ascent matters, to quote my friend Mark Twight out of context. *Rocketman*, a nine-pitch route across from *Riptide* in the Canadian Rockies, epitomizes this style of bold, hard free climbing. Although only rated M7+, the first free-ascentionist Raphael Slawinski says, "*Rocketman* was one of the best days of climbing I've ever had. It's way out in the alpine, and there's just miles of hard ice and mixed climbing." The future here is wide-open; there are dozens of lines in the Rockies, Alps, Dolomites, Alaska, and even the Himalayas that will be pushed by those who can climb free no matter what the conditions. Watch the young and the dangerous; they will achieve what we only laughed at. This category holds the greatest promise for advancement in any form of climbing.

—WG

Climbing
MAGAZINE



MARCH 2001

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(continued from page 54)

power. Big-wall photos, though scenically spectacular, showed little more than some gripped-out, grime-faced dirtbag hanging on gear, ropes, hooks, and a million other complicated accoutrements clipped off willy-nilly. Mountaineering pictures captured the less-than-thrilling aspect of walking up steep snow. And sport-climbing photos ... well, those just plain sucked. Bouldering it had to be, and I flung myself at the boulders in the kind of obsessive frenzy that only a testosterone-choked teenager could sustain.

Bored by the threadbare curriculum at my inner-city high school, I spent class time sketching out every move on my latest project

ble reveal their secrets. Some of my favorite problems are ones which I initially turned away from — lines like Hueco's *Center El Murray*, which tore all the muscles in my lower back when I tried to thrash my way up it sans footwork. When I returned a year later, worked the drop-knee, and skied up and right to that big hueco, victory was all the sweeter for having once been unattainable.

I've never left bouldering behind, maybe because it was so much a part of my formative years at the rocks, such an essential learning experience. Fourteen years into my climbing career, I feel like bouldering still teaches me — from being forced by a funky

BOULDERING IT HAD TO BE, AND I FLUNG MYSELF AT THE BOULDERS IN THE KIND OF OBSESSIVE FRENZY THAT ONLY A TESTOSTERONE-CHOKED TEENAGER COULD SUSTAIN.

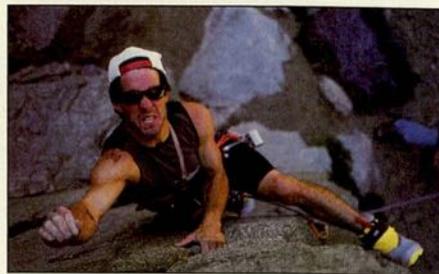
at U-Mound (Albuquerque's premier, super-crimpalicious bouldering venue), marking the hours until I could jump into my car and jam out to the boulders again. Each hold named and diagrammed, the boulder problems demanded my attention. Homework, girls, and personal hygiene were secondary distractions; sticking the "sleazy knob" and latching the "turtle head" were primary.

If I failed on a problem, I returned to my well-thumbed climbing porn for inspiration, drooling over photos of the *45° Wall* and *White Rastafarian* as I stroked imaginary holds in my mind's eye. I went back again and again to my U-Mound projects — until I eventually mastered the moves, until sheer animal determination made my fingers strong enough to compensate for my helter-skelter footwork. I was Kauk matching on the *Lightning's* bolt hold as I pulled off my latest V1 coup, Godoffe on *Big Boss* when I shook my way up a slabby V0 highball, Gill levitating through the *Left Eliminator* when I pulled off an elementary two-foot lunge.

Nevertheless, bouldering can be extremely frustrating. There's always someone stronger itching to burn you off, always one move you're either too weak or too chicken-shit to execute, always one problem you'll never get up. Yet success, when it comes, is immensely rewarding. In the space of minutes, hours, and sometimes days, moves that seemed impossi-

sequence to invent crafty new moves like inverted heel-hooks, to mustering the fortitude to crimp down until blood blisters sprout under my fingernails.

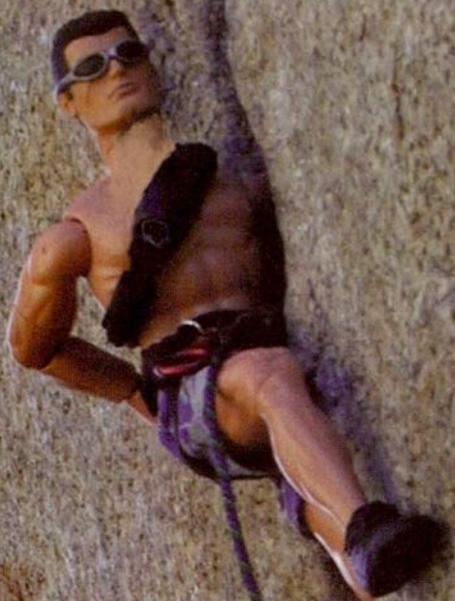
So, even though it bruises my heels, swells my fingers to the size of bloated sausages, and riddles my creaky old elbows with white-hot flare-ups of tendonitis, I continue to boulder. I have no choice. Bouldering is freedom, an escape not only from the vicissitudes of life but also from other climbers — the huddled masses in rock gyms, the spray lords at sport crags, the bumlbers and sandbagging gremlins at trad areas. I'm still trying to re-create those transcendent moments of weightlessness to which those early bouldering photos inspired me. And I'll never stop, so long as I can still bend my fingers into a crimp.



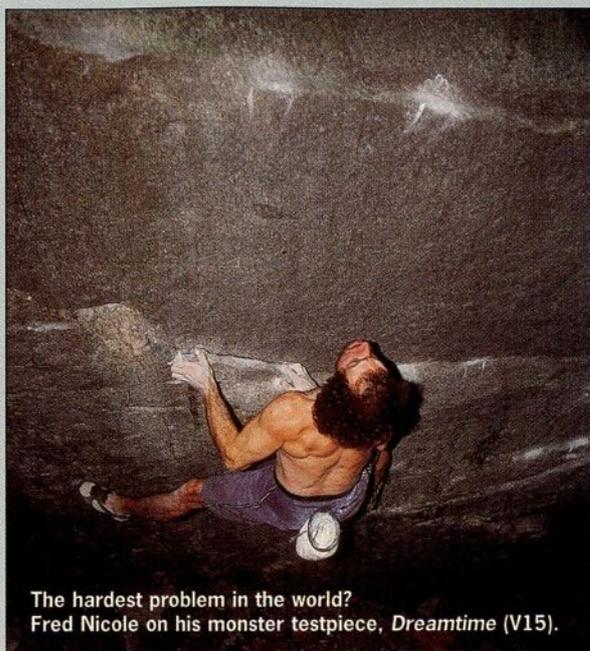
PETE TANEDA

Matt Samet is a contributing editor for Climbing Magazine, and can usually be found cranking double-digit sickness through out the Colorado Front Range.

**You Can
Feel It
Inside...**



Bouldering State of the Art



The hardest problem in the world?
Fred Nicole on his monster testpiece, *Dreamtime* (V15).

Limits of power

Ask top climbers to help you sort problems by order of difficulty and you'll soon find yourself arranging them in circles. Read carefully: Chris Sharma called *The Mandala* harder than *Slashface*. Dave Graham says *Spectre* is harder than *The Mandala*. Fred Nicole says *Goldfish Trombone* is harder than *Spectre*. And Sam Edwards insists *Slashface* is harder than *Goldfish Trombone*. Twenty years into the future, if the bouldering popularity continues to grow, then few climbers will concern themselves with ranking these lines — top climbers will be flashing them all as warm-ups for their V17s.

Where will these new testpieces be found? Fontainebleau? Bishop? A dank woodie in Sheffield? The next generation's hardest problems might be found anywhere by mobile boulderers. If considered a single bouldering area, the small country of Switzerland now has the world's densest concentration of hard problems (20 from V13 to V15). Tomorrow the leader might be Hampi, India; Rocklands, South Africa; or even somewhere in Patagonia. A world of adventure exists out there, and the spirit and joy of bouldering will always found by those who immerse themselves in the moment.

***Dreamtime* (V15).**
First ascent: Fred Nicole, October 2000.
Repeats: none. Location: Cresciano, Switzerland.

This 45-degree overhanging, 20-plus-move problem may not have a single move harder than V11, but after starting from the sit-down — as for this version — you'll be lucky to have the juice to be cranking V1 by the time you get to the crux dyno 10 moves in. Nicole has backed his claim to the world's first V15 by repeating every hard problem he seriously tries, from Australia to California. "V15," says Nicole, "is a reality."

***Eve Rave* (V14).**
First ascent: Fred Nicole, May 2000.
Repeats: none. Location: Grampians, Australia.

Ultimate boulder problems come in many forms. Out in Australia at the recently developed bouldering area of the Grampians, they come long and sustained on iron-

hard, quartz-rich sandstone. This 30-plus-move power-endurance problem may be the world's ultimate long problem. Beginning at a jug, halfway out the roof of the now-famous Millenium Cave, you'll utilize every type of hold from pinch to crimp, before turning the lip after about 25 feet of climbing. Only for the last few moves will you be more than six feet from the ground.

***Fatman Assis* (V14).**
First ascent: Fred Nicole, December 1999.
Repeats: one. Location: Fontainebleau, France.

This brutal, short roof followed by a slopy sandstone lip-encounter upstaged the original *Fatman* by adding a single — but desperate — move, a stab into a one-finger fingerlock, onto the original problem's start. Burly? Just a little. Check out the photo in *Climbing* No. 194's *World Service* and note Nicole's right forearm — the size of a NFL football. The original

Fatman was the first V13 in the forest, climbed by Jacky Godoffe in 1993. Despite its rather arbitrary start, it soon became the most sought-after problem in all of France, and has since served as a right-of-passage for bouldering all-stars from Dave Graham to Klem Loskot. But only Sebastian Frigault has matched Nicole's logical initiation to the sit-start game by beginning at the lowest possible underclings.

***Wrestling with an Alligator* (V14).** First ascent: Klem Loskot, October 1999.
Repeats: none. Location: Malta Valley, Austria.

Loskot was so inspired by his all-out battle with this slippery problem, an ass-beating rising traverse on the 45-degree face of a smooth granite block, that he named it after a quote by Muhammad Ali before his famous Rumble in the Jungle heavyweight bout with George Foreman. A half dozen desperate moves in a row make up the bulk of this fight, which is sure to be over, one way or another, in a matter of seconds. "You got to be fast, precise, and damn weird," says Loskot. On one move, your right hand holds a wide slopy ledge — like the back of the great lizard — while your left is still under the belly of the boulder, choking the guts. The right hand then windmills over, delivering a violent whap to the creature's head. Match the blocky hold — as though squeezing shut the very jaws of the alligator — and immediately campus powerfully up leftward to escape the beast.

***Nothin' But Sunshine* (V14).** First ascent: Dave Graham, September 2000. Repeats: None. Location: Rocky Mountain National Park, U.S.A.

Bring spotters and a magnifying glass for this gently overhanging line up a proud, 20-foot north-facing wall on a giant angular boulder. The problem features some impossibly small holds and a nightmare landing of jagged talus. It took several weeks of climbing on the crimp, storm-washed stone for Graham to ascend this line, which he describes as "definitely the hardest problem I've done. At least a grade harder than *Spectre*." The bountiful stacked blocks of green-black gneiss at 9000 feet in Colorado's famous mountains caused Graham to declare "The Park" the future of hard bouldering in America.

— Wills Young



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The rebel yell

(continued from page 26)

my climbing experiences encourage a warrior's attitude. Even within the subculture I sense a growing gulf. I use climbing to fight the monotony and alienation of industrialized life, and to validate myself. The ruthless scrutiny of the mountains keeps me from believing in capacities I don't possess. In another age, I'd use combat as the auditor to prove myself to myself. Peace leaves certain men unfulfilled — if this weren't so, they would not challenge themselves

great ability dictated a Spartan code others found unreasonable. Although I hold certain ideals sacred — I won't place bolts or siege a route — and I try to accomplish my goals without tarnishing them, I know what kind of pressure will make me crack. Under a constant threat, ideals weaken as will and muscles flag. I learned that I'll trade away an ethical stance in order to survive. I know how much it takes to bend me and wish that others could resist as long. I use alpinism to

FOR SOME, CLIMBING TAKES THE PLACE OF BATTLE.

with life-threatening activities to help determine their identity — and for some, climbing takes the place of battle. My struggle is the same that's been waged since the beginning of consciousness in man, since blood-soaked hunters came back to the cave and tried to settle in to "normal," tribal life. Following victory in war, the horseman has trouble relinquishing the reins and those on foot are uncomfortable with the evident disparity of power.

Many alpinists have been misunderstood, Walter Bonatti among them. As a climber he was cold and calculating, determined and patient. An extraordinarily intelligent man, he was calm under stress, and a perfectionist who was always dissatisfied. The media put him on a pedestal, apart from other alpinists. Granted, he was better than most, but his goal was provocation not superiority. He hoped his words and actions would propel fellow climbers to overcome their own best efforts. He believed the heroes of the day were "against rather than for this flat, tired, consumptive world," preferring to risk death "in order to escape into the pure solitude of a mountain, an ocean, a desert." To Bonatti, decadent society, "where nothing is fixed or defined," deprived men of the standards by which they might otherwise measure themselves. The lack of authentic values in the modern world disturbed him.

My world is decades older than Bonatti's. Messner came, fought the good fight for alpine-style ethics and "fair means," then retired. He inspired many but his standards were too strict for the perpetually evolving world of climbing. Today, what he believed right is considered wrong by some or at least open to question. Rucksacks full of techno-courage are commonplace. Ethics are, at best, ephemeral, at worst, convenience. Man's mutable rules make it difficult for the modern climber to define him or herself. As Messner discovered, it takes a good deal of self-control to maintain strict ethics. His

explore chaos, and don't always like the personal shortcomings I find within.

When I communicate my uncertainty and fear, and efforts to overcome self-imposed limitations, people often misunderstand. They ask why I write about such painful experiences or why I chose them at all. I understand that their climbing reality is different from mine. Perhaps it's a hobby rather than a lifestyle, maybe without the risk or lethality that I know. On one hand, the critics and I are human, and similar, so we should be able to communicate. On the other hand, I've seen "attack ships burning off the shoulder of Orion," and if they haven't experienced the same thing our eyes can never meet. They can't walk in my shoes and I'll never walk in theirs without remembering what I've seen.

I began climbing mountains in anti-Establishment outrage. But Establishment is chameleon and today I consider certain climbing styles, attitudes, and ethical positions wicked enough to raise a standard against. Ever a punk, I treat alpine-style ethics as rebellion: against an acquisitive climbing culture, against collectors for whom a summit or rating supersedes experience itself. I'm not talking about something new. I'm simply burning the minimalist torch great men like Winkler, Bonatti, and Messner carried before. Their shoulders were big and strong. Maybe the modern world doesn't have room for them but it will be a sad day when alpinism becomes homogenized, when adventure is a commodity, and when demands for political tact drown out the rebel yell of the man on horseback.



Mark Twight is the author of *Extreme Alpinism* and a frequent contributor to *Climbing*.

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Himalaya any style

(continued from page 78)

a consolation prize. Hence the abiding fascination with becoming the first of one's nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, or a combination thereof, to ascend one or many of the world's 8000-meter peaks. Guided climbs, clean-ups, or other benefit expeditions have become commonplace, even expected paths to these mountains. And if one aspires to become a sponsored athlete or successful outdoor filmmaker, photographer, writer, or media personality, it is almost imperative to have Everest or K2 or some other 8000er on your résumé.

Almost in spite of the excessive attention we pay to them, these great mountains have been the setting for some of the most astounding Himalayan climbs ever made, and no doubt will always play a role in our evolving history. The prescient 1957 first ascent, in alpine style, of Broad Peak by Austrians Herman Buhl, Kurt Diemberger, Marcus Schmuck, and Fritz Wintersteller; Tom Horbein and Willie Unsoeld's visionary first ascent of the West Ridge and traverse of Everest in 1963 with the large American team that made the third ascent of the mountain; Reinhold Messner (Tyrol) and Austrian Peter Habeler's eye-opening alpine-style second ascent of Hidden Peak in 1975; Messner's cathartic 1978 solo of the Diamir Face of Nanga Parbat; the numerous new routes and winter ascents the late Polish climber Jerzy Kukuczka made in becoming the second person (after Messner) to climb all 14 8000-meter peaks — the list goes on and on, bound by the common threads of adventure, exploration, and extraordinary physical and psychological challenge.

But it is among the hundreds of "lesser" mountains in Nepal, Pakistan, India, and Tibet that the spirit and future of Himalayan climbing truly lie. Here the scope for adventure, style, and imagination is limitless. The classic ridges and faces, many offering only moderate technical difficulty but requiring a high level of fitness and experience to ascend safely and efficiently, will inspire generations to come. The granite monoliths of the Baltoro, Gangotri, and areas yet to be discovered will continue to offer amazing vertical adventures for those whose speed, stamina, and technical skills have been finely honed in Yosemite and Patagonia. Winter ascents, state-of-the-art mixed climbs, speed ascents, difficult free climbs, high-altitude traverses, even old-fashioned exploration of the few remaining blanks

on the map all have the potential to provide a magnificent sense of isolation, commitment, and satisfaction for those willing to stray from the beaten path.

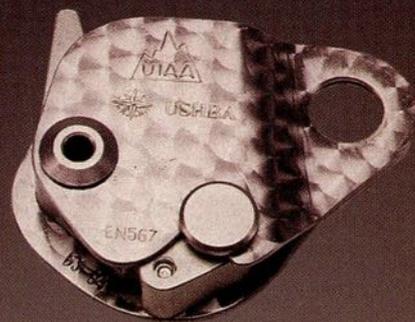
In the end, what we climb matters far less than how we climb it, and the experiences we gather while doing so. Fixed ropes and camps, bolts, photographers, portaledges, guides, satellite phones, oxygen, Sherpas, websites — all have their place, but they can turn what should be a spiritual experience into an exercise in vertical freight hauling. Only by minimizing our dependence on such technology, by consciously calling forth all the honesty and humility and determination and spirit we can muster, will we step beyond our self-imposed limits and expectations. So by all means, approach the Himalaya in a manner that suits your experience and desires. Just remember to leave the mountains as you found them and appreciate the efforts of those with whom you share a passion for high places.

It was 1983 before I finally went to Gasherbrum IV with fellow dreamer Mugs Stump. An extended winter had left the Karakoram blanketed in snow, and the nearly continuous storms that summer played havoc with our ultimately futile attempt on the West Face. We got sick on the approach, did some hard and scary climbing, carried a few huge loads, endured the frustration and boredom of weeks of bad weather in basecamp, and spent many days pinned down by storm near our high point, counting the squares in the yellow Ripstop of the Bibler I-tent. In short, we experienced all of the deprivations common to Himalayan climbing. Was it worth it? Of course, if for no other reason than to be so far above the Baltoro for so long, enveloped in the gauzy embrace of clouds very much like those in Ad Carter's photo, still dreaming of that magical face and an infinity of climbs on the horizon.

Michael Kennedy is the former publisher and editor of Climbing, and has several Himalayan ascents — no 8000ers, mind you — to his credit, including the first ascent of the Northeast Face of Ama Dablam and the Northeast Pillar of Thalay Sagar.



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High hopes

(continued from page 38)

lip. Just placing gear — putting hexes into the slope parallel crack — looked superhuman, valiant. You couldn't miss the stark beauty of line, or the sense that the shot was a time capsule from a fleeting age. The affected blue bandana, painters' pants, and swami belt spoke of a culture that played by its own rules and tested them on tilted planes of Yosemite granite.

When I first spun, wide-eyed, through the twisting roads of the Yosemite Valley, I could recite by rote the names and grades of the major routes and formations. The monoliths emerged and receded in the windshield like a granite tide. My soon-to-be-ex-girlfriend found my knowledge — mostly quotes from *Yosemite Climber* — astonishing and vaguely disturbing.

It took a long time, but I finally gave the roof crack a go. A group of friends and I rapped into the alcove overlooking the manzanita-lined Lower Merced Canyon. *Separate Reality's* roof jutted out in a granite board two feet thick. The roof crack split the entire sheet — you could walk on the level top and see straight through to whoever happened to be struggling on it below. The Escher-like geometry was disconcerting.

I racked up and soon struggled out the approach into the three-inch jams at the start of the roof proper, jammed out the ceiling and tentatively stabbed my toe into the roof crack. My torso and psyche felt tense and jerky, like a machine completely out of synch. It was as if I'd been programmed over the years to know what to feel as I climbed the route. My expectation of a great struggle short-circuited my ability. I lowered off and never went back.

That is the power of an image. A potent photo cracks open doors to inspiration, exhilaration, or sorrow. A photo can equally represent truth or falsehood, or one's mind can create them (I later realized that Diegleman had placed his gear by dropping hexes through the crack from above). Over the years, I've been stunned by rock-climbing photos brilliantly depicting cutting-edge difficulty and human drama against a backdrop of natural beauty. We look and are engaged, wishing.

My copy of *Yosemite Climber* had been gradually parted out like the components of a

used Volkswagen. Pieces had started out hanging in my high school locker. I'd stare at them when the milieu of school became too much to bear. The photos later seeded corkboard murals in a series of college dorm rooms, then eventually snippets were scissored out to decorate a parade of drab apartments. *Separate Reality* was always the centerpiece of a now mobile collage. The photo's edges were pinholed, dog-eared, and skinned from countless applications of scotch tape. Eventually the book was reduced to two hard covers joined by a cracked spine. I finally tossed the whole mess into a dumpster as I left the last roach-filled apartment. The photo and the book had served their purpose anyway — I was moving to Yosemite.



Pete Takeda lives in Boulder. Author of *Pete's Wicked Book* (published by Climbing), he lived in Yosemite for six years.

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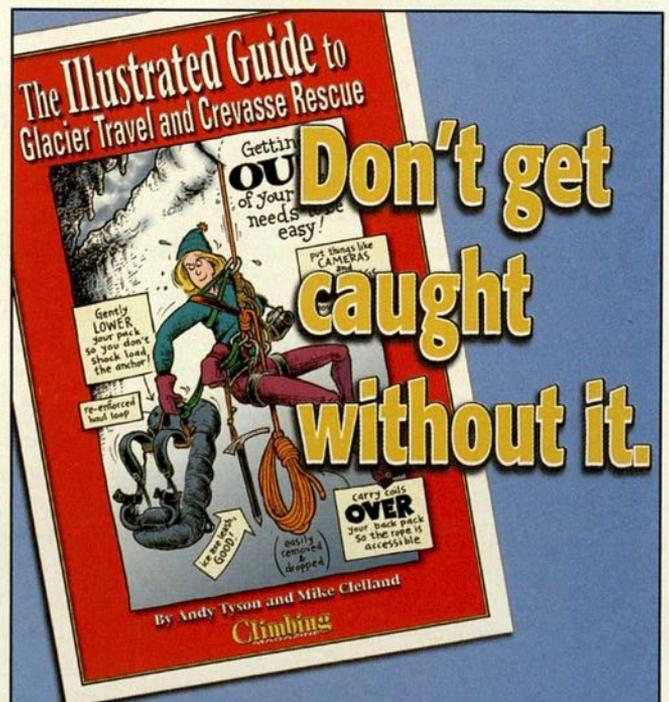


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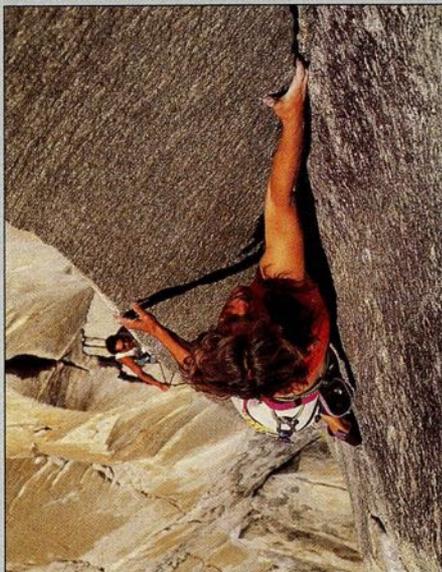
Rock State of the Art

World's greatest rock climbs

Rock climbing is the core of our sport. Advancements in this branch of climbing resonate throughout each facet of the game. The majority of climbers practice roped free climbing, whether sport, plastic, or trad. The following climbs represent the state of the art. Each has classic appeal and a prominent place at the leading edge of difficulty. Each has a solid established reputation, backed of course, by tons of spray.

Extended Rock Climb *Nose* (VI 5.13+), *El Capitan*, Yosemite Valley. FFA: Lynn Hill. Unrepeated.

Lynn Hill freed the *Nose* of El Capitan, probably the best-known rock climb in the world, in September 1993, setting an unequalled standard. Though individual crux pitches have seen repeats — the Great Roof pitch only once, on toprope — no man or woman has free climbed the route in its entirety. The 31-pitch *Nose* officially sports four pitches of 5.12, one of 5.13, and one of 5.13+, but repeat attempts of various crux passages spur speculation of higher grades. Yuji Hirayama, who has on-sighted 5.14, checked out the *Nose* as a primer for an on-sight attempt of the *Salathé* in September



Lynn Hill on the ferocious corner pitch (5.13? 5.14?) of *The Nose*.

1997, and thought the Great Roof clocked in at 5.14a. Scott Burk, after leading the crux Changing Corners pitch, believed 5.14b. Hill's original grade for the section was 5.13c. If new estimations hold true, the *Nose* might well be the most difficult extended free climb in the world. Says Hill, "It might be a hard climb to rate because of factors like length, temperatures, and tricky cruxes." Regardless of grade, the gauntlet is cast. Hill, who returned in September 1994 and free climbed the *Nose* in a day, says, "People might do it faster, but somebody definitely needs to on-sight it."

Besides an ultimate end, long free climbs on sunny accessible crags like El Capitan may well provide training for remote free walls. Recent hard free or almost free routes in the Karakoram Himalayas, Greenland, and Kyrgyzstan point to contemporary applications of high-standard extended free-climbing tactics.

Traditional Rock Climb *Equilibrium* (E10 7a/5.14a R/X), Burbage South, Derbyshire, England. FA: Neil Bentley. Unrepeated.

Neil Bentley's February 2000 "headpoint" (ascent of a runout route after toprope preparation) of this test-piece is the latest in a continuum of "last great" grit-stone problems. Though John Dunne's *Divided Years* (E10) and recent *Breathless* (E10) lay claim to equal or possibly harder grades, their relative isolation bumps them into the backseat. *Equilibrium* is 15 minutes from sipping tea in Sheffield, a town with more climbers per capita than any in the world, and has seen many more

climbers who confirmed its reputation as "viciously hard." The bold square-cut arete was first topoped at 5.14b by Ben Moon in 1993. The climb resisted all other challengers until, after a year and a half of sporadic work, Bentley eked out a toprope ascent using a clever new sequence. His first headpoint attempt misfired. Bentley popped from below the V11 deck-fall crux, stopping inches from the ground after a 40-footer. Two weeks later, he screwed up his nerve, and pulled the trigger, completing the first ascent of *Equilibrium*.

Headpointing may be seated in the gray zone of ethical purity, but gritstone-style headpointing has pushed the limits of traditional climbing, claiming top honors in absolute difficulty. With climbers on-sighting E7 (5.12+/13- R/X), head-points on gritstone are proving to be stepping-stones and training for the hardest trad routes in the world. The British climber Leo Houlding cut his young teeth on gritstone edges. He went on to achieve a near on-sight second ascent of *El Nino* (VI 5.13c A0) in 1999 in one of the finest efforts in rock climbing.

Sport Climbing *Akira* (9b/5.15b?), Les Eaux Claires, France. FA: Fred Rouhling. Unrepeated.

When the French climber Fred Rouhling climbed *Akira* in 1995, he suggested a grade of

9b, a full letter grade harder than any then known. Wolfgang Gullich's 1991 testpiece *Action Direct*, today considered benchmark 9a/5.14d, was at the time the only confirmed contender for 8c+/9a. Only four other routes, including Rouhling's own *Hugh* from 1993, claimed the world standard of 9a. Rouhling's suggestion of 9b was met with utter disbelief. Many top sport climbers doubted that Rouhling climbed the route. After an initial visit, J.B. Tribout didn't believe Rouhling had completed the crux moves. Rouhling, however, has repeated the crux — which boulders out an enormous roof — several times in ensuing years. Top climbers, including Tribout and international bouldering competitor Timy Fairfield, agree that Rouhling is one of the best climbers in France and that his *Akira* is a true standard-setting route.

Tribout says, "As for Fred's grade of 9b I don't know — personally I think it's gone quite quickly from 8c+ to 9b, but *Akira* is harder than what already exists." Last fall, Japan's Yuji Hirayama and Dai Koyamada tried and failed on *Akira*. They pronounced the grade correct. If the grade is ever confirmed, then *Akira* was and still might be years before its time.

The standards, attitudes, and difficulty in hard bouldering and leading-edge sport climbs are converging to the point that top sport climbers like Klem Loskot use bouldering grades to describe their latest red-points. Sport-climbing grades should follow the meteoric rise in bouldering standards. The spillover from elevated levels of absolute difficulty and harder on-sight levels will supercharge all facets of free climbing.

— PT

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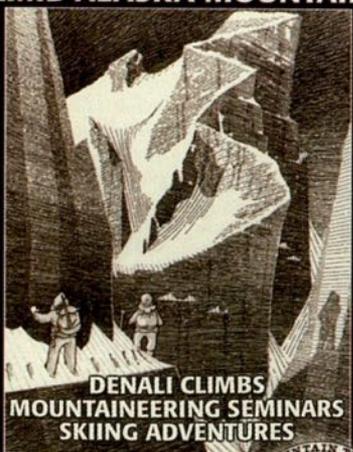


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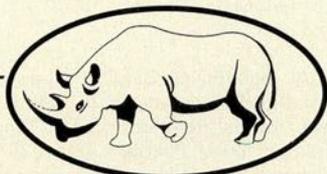
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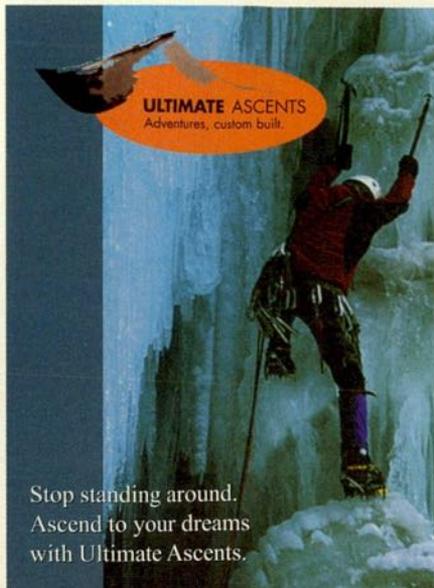
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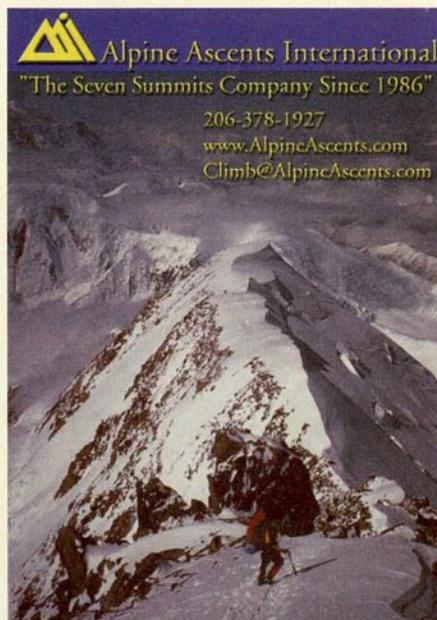
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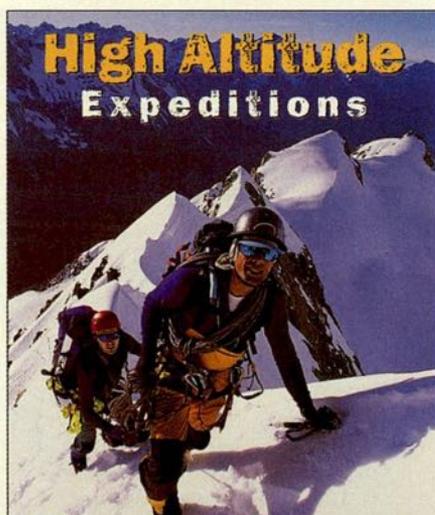
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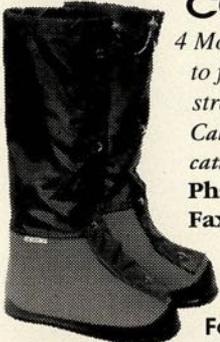
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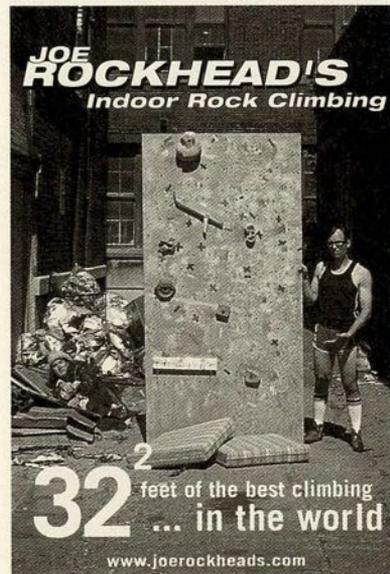
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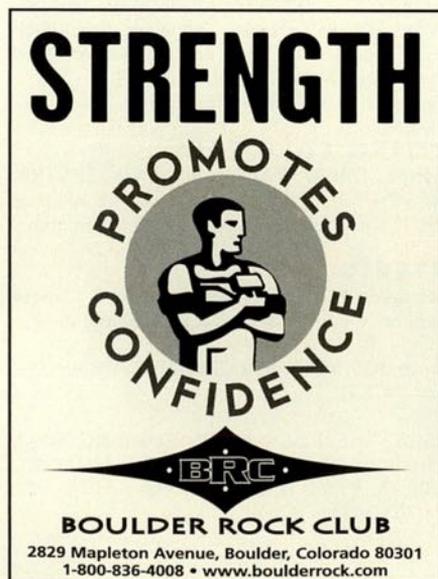
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Evansville. VERTICAL EXCAPE. (812) 479-6887; www.verticalexcape.com

Fort Wayne. EARTH ADVENTURES. 1804 W. Main Street; (877) EAU-GEAR; (219) 424-1420; www.earthadventures.com

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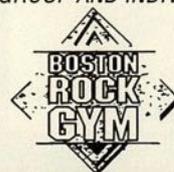
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Las Vegas. POWERHOUSE INDOOR CLIMBING CENTER. 8201 W Charleston Ave.; (702) 254-5604.

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Dover. DOVER INDOOR CLIMBING GYM. 47 Broadway, Dover, NH; (603) 742-7848; www.doverclimb.com

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All Outdoors
210 DW Hwy. South
Nashua, NH 03060
(603) 888-6573
aogear.com

Boulder Morty's
25 Otterson Street
Nashua, NH 03060
(603) 886-6789
Fax: (603) 882-0003
www.bouldermortys.com
ken@bouldermortys.com

International Mountain Equipment
2733 Main Street
North Conway, NH 03860
(603) 356-7013
www.ime-usa.com

Ragged Mountain Equipment
Route 16-302, Box 130
Intervale, NH 03845
(603) 356-3042
www.raggedmountain.com

Summers Backcountry Outfitters
16 Ashuelot Street
Keene, NH 03431
(603) 357-5107
Fax: (603) 357-4728
avs.com/summers

New Jersey
Campmor Inc.
www.campmor.com
AOL Keyword: CAMPMOR
customerservice@campmor.com
(800) CAMPMOR
(800-226-7667)
Catalog: PO Box 700-CL1
Saddle River, NJ 07458

Ramsey Outdoor Store
226 Route 17 North
Paramus, NJ 07652
(201) 261-5000
www.ramseyoutdoor.com

Ramsey Outdoor Store
1039 Route 46 West
Ledgewood, NJ 07852
(973) 584-7799
www.ramseyoutdoor.com

New Mexico
The D.O.M.E.
(Dynamic Outdoor Mountain Experience)
3801-A Arkansas Avenue
Los Alamos, NM 87544
(505) 661-3663
Fax: (505) 662-7939
www.domemountainshop.com
dome@trail.com

Mountains & Rivers
2320 Central S.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87106
(505) 268-4876

Sangre De Cristo Mountainworks
328 S. Guadalupe, Suite 1
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 984-8221

Taos Mountain Outfitters
114 South Plaza
Taos, NM 87571
(505) 758-9292
www.taosmountainoutfitters.com

Wild Mountain Outfitter
541 W. Cordova Road
Santa Fe, NM 87501
(800) 988-1152

New York
All Outdoors
35 Van Dam Street
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
(518) 587-0455
all-outdoors.com

American Terrain
175 East Post Road
White Plains, NY 10601
(914) 682-3971
Fax: (914) 682-8928
Aterrain@aol.com
www.americanterrain.com

High Peaks Cyclery/High Peaks Mountain Adventures
331 Main Street
Lake Placid, NY 12946
(518) 523-3764
www.highpeakscyclery.com

Lake Placid Mountaineering
132 Main Street
Lake Placid, NY 12946
(518) 523-7586
Fax: (518) 523-7588
www.gearx.com

Liverpool Sportcenter/Nippenose
125 First Street
Liverpool, NY 13088
(315) 457-2290
Fax: (315) 457-0011

The Mountaineer
Route 73
Keene Valley, NY 12943
(518) 576-2281
Fax: (518) 576-4352
www.mountaineer.com

Rock and Snow
44 Main Street
New Paltz, NY 12561
(914) 255-1311
Fax: (914) 255-1360
www.rocksnow.com

Saratoga Outfitters
268 Broadway
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
(518) 584-3932
www.saratogaoutfitters.com

Tent And Trails
21 Park Place
New York, NY 10007
(212) 227-1760
www.tenttrails.com

Wildware Outfitters
171 The Commons
Center Ithaca
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 273-5158,
Fax: (607) 273-3774
wildware.com

North Carolina
Black Dome Mountain Sports
140 Tunnel Road
Asheville, NC 28805
(828) 251-2001
(800) 678-2367
www.blackdome.com
www.outdoorauktion.com

Diamond Brand Outdoors
Highway 25
Naples, NC 28760
(800) 459-6262
(828) 684-6262
info@diamondbrand.com
www.diamondbrand.com

Foot Sloggers
139 South Depot Street
Boone, NC 28607
(828) 262-5111
Fax: (828) 265-0459
footsloggers@helicon.net
www.footsloggers.com

Jesse Brown's Outdoors
4732 Sharon Road, Suite 2M
Charlotte, NC 28210
(704) 556-0020
Fax: (704) 556-9447
www.jessebrown.com

Looking Glass Outfitters
33 New Hendersonville
Highway at the entrance to
Pisgah National Forest
Pisgah Forest, NC 28768
(828) 884-5854
joecbry@citcom.net

Sun & Ski Sports #88
Concord Mills
8381 Concord Mills Blvd.
Concord, NC 28027
(704) 979-6500
Fax: (704) 979-6520
sunandski.com

Tier One Outfitters-Adventure Race Pro-Dealer
2725 Raeford Road
Fayetteville, NC 28303
Toll Free: (888) 642-1975
Ph: (910) 433-282
tierone@fayetteville.net

Ohio
Benchmark Outfitters
4550 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43220
(877) 459-1333
benchmarkoutdoors.com

Benchmark Outfitters
9525 Kenwood Road #24
Blue Ash, OH 45242
(513) 793-9453
benchmarkoutdoors.com

Benchmark Outfitters
2910 Vine Street
Clifton, OH 45219
(513) 221-6700
Fax: (513) 221-2704
benchmarkoutdoors.com

Beartooth Mountaineering
5200 Monroe Street
Toledo, OH 43623
(419) 842-0137
www.4beartooth.com

Newman Outfitters
6025 Kruse Drive
Solon, OH 44139
(440) 248-7000

Newman Outfitters
20180 Van Aken Blvd.
Shaker Heights, OH 44122
(216) 283-8500

Sun & Ski Sports
7565 Kenwood Road
Cincinnati, OH 45236
(513) 745-0099
Fax: (513) 745-0167
sunandski.com

The Trailhead
1914 South Union
Alliance, OH 44601
(330) 823-1849
Fax: (330) 823-7106
www.TrailheadOutdoor
Outfitters.com

The Wilderness Shop
18636 Detroit Avenue
Lakewood, OH 44107
(216) 521-9100
1798 Coventry Road
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118
(216) 321-4731
www.WildernessShop.com

Wilderness Shop
1888 Mentor Avenue
Painesville Township,
OH 44077
(440) 357-6114
www.WildernessShop.com

Oklahoma
Sun & Ski Sports
10109 North May
Oklahoma City, OK 73120
(405) 755-7400
Fax: (405) 751-9672
sunandski.com

Sun & Ski Sports
6808 Memorial Drive
Tulsa, OK 74133
(918) 254-0673
Fax: (918) 254-6210
sunandski.com

Oregon
Ashland Outdoor Store
37 3rd Street
Ashland, OR 97520
(541) 488-1202
Fax: (541) 488-7752
www.outdoorstore.com

Climbers Choice International
726 Rossanley Drive
Medford, OR 97501
(800) 704-3891
Fax: (541) 770-9283
staff@climberschoice.com
www.climberschoice.com

Climb Max
2111 SE Division
Portland, OR 97202
(503) 797-1991
Fax: (503) 797-1992
climbmax.net

McKenzie Outfitters
475 Valley River Center
(800) 289-9292
(541) 343-2300
Eugene, OR 97401
www.mckenzieoutfitters.com

Mountain Shop
628 N.E. Broadway
Portland, OR 97232
(503) 288-6768
www.mountainshop.net
mtshop@teleport.com

Mountain Supply
834 Colorado Street
Bend, OR 97701
(541) 388-0688
Fax: (541) 388-7895

Oregon Mountain Community
60 N.W. Davis Street
Portland, OR 97209
(503) 227-1038
Fax: (503) 274-8506

Redpoint Climbers Supply
975 Smith Rock Way
Terrebonne, OR 97760
(541) 923-6207
(800) 923-6207
www.goclimbing.com

Rockhard
Smith Rock State Park
9297 N.E. Crooked River Drive
Terrebonne, OR 97760
(541) 548-4786

U.S. Outdoor Store
219 S.W. Broadway Blvd.
Portland, OR 97205
(503) 223-5937
Fax: (503) 223-9375
www.usoutdoor.com

Pennsylvania
Appalachian Trail Outfitters
29 S. Main Street
Doylestown, PA 18901
(215) 348-8069
www.paddlesport.com
paddle@paddlesport.com

Army and Navy Store
3400 Plaza Drive
Reading, PA 19605
(610) 921-0251
Fax: (610) 921-8488
www.armyandnavystore.com

Blue Mountain Sports
34 Susquehanna Street
Jim Thorpe, PA 18229
(800) 325-4421
(570) 599-4421
bluem@ptd.net
www.bikejimthorpe.com

Exkursion

4037 William Penn Highway
Monroeville, PA 15146
(412) 372-7030
www.exkursion.com

Mountain Dreams Intl.

5500 Walnut Street, Shadyside
Pittsburg, PA 15232
(800) 553-0991
Fax: (412) 621-4891
www.mountaindreams.com

The Mountaineer Supply Company Inc.

HC 63 Box 7D
Donegal, PA 15628
Toll Free: (877) 90-CLIMB
(724) 593-6060
Fax: (724) 593-6061
www.mountaineergear.com

Nestor's Wilderness Travel

99 N. West End Blvd.
Quakertown, PA 18951
(215) 529-0100
(215) 529-9959
www.nestors.com

Nestor's Wilderness Travel

2510 MacArthur Road
Whitehall, PA 18052
(610) 433-4060

Philadelphia Rock Gym

422 Business Center
Oaks, PA 19456
(610) 666-7673
Fax: (610) 666-9559
prg@ix.netcom.net
philrockgym.com

Top Of The Slope Inc.

100 S. Main Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701
(570) 822-6627

Wildware Outfitters

Camp Hill Shopping Mall
(717) 737-2728
Fax: (717) 737-2625
995 Peiffers Lane
(717) 564-8008
Harrisburg, PA
(800) 548-8008
www.wildware.com

Rhode Island

Rhode Island Rock Gym

210 Weeden Street
Pawtucket, RI 02860
Ph: (401) 727-1704
Fax: (call first) (401) 727-8251
www.rhodeislandrockgym.com

South Carolina

Adventure Carolina

1107 State Street
Cayce, SC 29033
(803) 796-4505
adventurecarolina.com

Rocks and Rope

218 Pendleton Street
Greenville, SC 29601
(864) 271-9557
Fax: (864) 271-9849
www.rocksandrope.net

Sunrift Adventures

1 Center Street
Travelers Rest, SC 29690
(Greenville Area)
(864) 834-3019
Fax: (864) 834-2679
www.sunrift.com

Trout Outdoors

515 D Highway 501
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577
(843) 946-9555
www.troutoutdoors.com

South Dakota

Adventure Sport

900 Jackson Blvd.
Rapid City, SD 57702
(605) 341-6707
Fax: (605) 341-1140

Granite Sports-Sylvan Rocks

301 Main
Hill City, SD 57745
(605) 574-2121 or 2425
info@sylvanrocks.com
www.sylvanrocks.com

Tennessee

CBC Adventures

125 N. Kingston Street
Wartburg, TN 37887
(423) 346-2222
cbcadventure@highland.net
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Cumberland Transit

2807-C West End Avenue
Nashville, TN 37203
(615) 321-4069
www.ctransit.com

Extreme Outdoors LLC

185 Inman Street
Cleveland, TN 37311
Ph: (423) 728-4810
Fax: (423) 728-3709
www.wildernessthing.com

J.B. Myers Outdoors

405 Vann Drive
Jackson, TN 38305
(901) 664-5667
www.jbmyers.com
salesstaff@jbmyers.com

Outdoors Inc.

5245 Poplar Avenue
(901) 767-6790
1710 Union Avenue
(901) 722-8988
833 N. Germantown Pkwy.
(901) 755-2271
Memphis, TN
www.outdoorsinc.com

River Sports Outfitters and The Climbing Center

2918 Sutherland Avenue
Knoxville, TN 37919
(865) 523-0066
(Climbing ctr) (865) 673-4687
RiverSportsOutfitter.com

Rock Creek Outfitters

100 Tremont Street
Chattanooga, TN 37405
(423) 265-5969
Fax: (423) 265-5971
www.rockcreekoutfitters.com

Sun & Ski Sports

501 Opry Mills Drive
Nashville, TN 37214
(615) 514-3300
sunandski.com

Texas

Good Sports

12730 IH 10 West, Suite 300
San Antonio, TX 78230
(210) 694-0881
Fax: (210) 694-4137
tommy@goodsports.com
www.goodsports.com

Mountain Hideout

14010 Coit Road
Dallas, TX 75240
(888) 272-8040
(972) 234-8651
Fax: (972) 234-8668
5643 Lovers Lane
Dallas, TX 75209
(888) 613-6806
(214) 350-8181
www.mountainhideout.com

Mountain Sports

2025 West Pioneer Parkway
Arlington, TX 76013
(817) 461-4503
www.mountainsports.com

Sun & Ski Sports

2438 W. Anderson Lane
Austin, TX 78757
(512) 467-2782
(512) 467-2822
sunandski.com

Sun & Ski Sports

Baybrook Square
Shopping Center
1355 West Bay Area Blvd.
Webster, TX 77598
(281) 286-7770
sunandski.com

Sun & Ski Sports

13411 San Pedro Avenue
San Antonio, TX 78216
(210) 494-0429
Fax: (210) 494-1922
sunandski.com

Sun & Ski Sports

3000 Grapevine Mills Pkwy.,
Anchor A
Grapevine, TX 76051
Ph: (972) 874-0560
sunandski.com

Sun & Ski Sports

900 Gessner
(Memorial City Mall)
Houston, TX 77024
(713) 464-6363
Fax: (713) 461-4319
sunandski.com

Sun & Ski Sports

5503 F.M. 1960 West
Houston, TX 77069
(281) 537-0928
Fax: (281) 893-1806
sunandski.com

Sun & Ski Sports

5000 Katy Mills Circle #505
Katy, TX 77494
(281) 644-6040
(281) 644-6046
sunandski.com

Sun & Ski Sports

6100 Westheimer #126
Houston, TX 77057
(713) 783-8180
Fax: (713) 783-9199
sunandski.com

Wart's Climbing Shop and Paintball Gear

4019 VanBuren Avenue
El Paso, TX 79930
(915) 562-7515
Fax: (915) 562-7515

Whole Earth Provision Company

2410 San Antonio Street
(512) 478-1577
1014 North Lamar Blvd.
(512) 476-1414
Austin, TX 78705
www.citysearch.com/aus/
wholeearth

Whole Earth Provision Company

2934 South Shepherd
(713) 526-5226
6560 Woodway Drive
(713) 467-0234
Houston, TX 77098
www.citysearch.com/aus/
wholeearth

Whole Earth Provision Company

5400 East Mockingbird Lane
Dallas, TX 75206
(214) 824-7444
www.citysearch.com/aus/
wholeearth

Whole Earth Provision Company

255 East Basse, Suite 510
San Antonio, TX 78209
(210) 829-8888
www.citysearch.com/aus/
wholeearth

Utah

Black Diamond Equipment Retail Store

2092 East 3900 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84124
(801) 278-0233
blackdiamondequipment.com

Black Diamond Equipment Retail Store

3701 Washington Blvd.
Ogden, UT 84403
(801) 627-5733
blackdiamondequipment.com

Cedar Mountain Sports

925 South Main
Cedar City, UT 84720
(888) 586-4949
www.cedarmountainsports.com

Hurst's

160 North 500 West
St. George, UT 84770
(435) 673-6141
(435) 628-3380
jhurst@hurststores.com

Maple Leaf Industries

480 South 50 East
Ephraim, UT 84627
(800) 671-5323
Fax: (435) 283-6872
www.mapleleafinc.com
maplelf@cut.net

Mountainworks

2494 North University Parkway
Provo, UT 84604
(801) 371-0223
www.utahclimbing.com

Outdoor Outlet

1062 East Tabernacle
St. George, UT 84770
(800) 726-8106
Fax: (435) 628-3620
www.outdooroutlet.com

Pagan Mountaineering

88 E. Center Street
Moab, UT 84532
Ph: (435) 259-1117
Fax: (435) 259-1119

Rim Cyclery

94 West 1st North
Moab, UT 84532
(435) 259-5333
Fax: (435) 259-7217
www.rimcylery.com

Utah Mountain Sport

(dba International Mountain Equipment)
3265 East 3300 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84109
(801) 484-8073
imeutah@networld.com
www.imeutah.com

Wasatch Touring

702 East 100 South
Salt Lake City, UT 84102
(801) 359-9361
Fax: (801) 534-0905
wtouring@xmission.com
www.xmission.com/~wtouring/

Vermont

Adventure Outfitters

97 Main Street
Brattleboro, VT 05301
(802) 254-4133
Fax: (802) 254-1134
www.wildwater.com

Climb High

2438 Shelburne Road
Shelburne, VT 05482
(802) 985-5056
www.climbhigh.com

Climbers Corner

105 Briggs Street
Burlington, VT 05401-5304
Ph: (802) 657-3232
Fax: (802) 657-3222
info@climberscorner.com
www.climberscorner.com

Mountain Sports and Bike Shop

580 Mountain Road
Stowe, VT 05672
(802) 253-7919
(800) 682-4534
www.mountainsportsvt.com

Outdoor Gear Exchange

191 Bank Street
Burlington, VT 05401
(802) 860-0190
Fax: (802) 860-0169
www.gearx.com

Virginia

Blue Ridge Outdoors

125 North Main Street, Suite 100
Blacksburg, VA 24060
(540) 552-9012

Blue Ridge Outdoors

4362 Electric Road
Roanoke, VA 24014
(540) 774-4311

Extreme Outfitters

4807-A Shore Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23455
Ph: (757) 363-0909
Fax: (757) 363-5811
www.tacticaledge.com

Mountain Trails

212 East Cork Street
Winchester, VA 22601
(540) 667-0030
mntntrail@shentel.net
www.mountain-trails.com

Outdoor Adventures Ltd.

4721 Plank Road
Fredericksburg, VA 22407
(540) 786-3334
www.outdooradventures.net
info@outdooradventures.net

Peak Experiences

11421 Polo Circle
Midlothian, VA 23113
(804) 897-6800
www.peakexperiences.com

Wild River Outfitters Inc.
3636 Virginia Beach Blvd.
Virginia Beach, VA 23452
(757) 431-8566
www.wildriveroutfitters.com

Washington

Alpine Experience
408 Olympia Avenue NE
Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 956-1699
Fax: (360) 956-1448
alpinex.com
info@alpinex.com

Backpacker's Supply
5206 S. Tacoma Way
Tacoma, WA 98409
(253) 472-4402
www.marmotmountain.com

Cascade Crags
2820 Rucker Avenue
Everett, WA 98201
(425) 258-3431
Fax: (425) 258-4159
www.cascadecrags.com

Feathered Friends
119 Yale Avenue N.
Seattle, WA 98109
(206) 292-2210
Fax: (206) 292-9667
www.featheredfriends.com

Marmot Mountain Works
827 Bellevue Way N.E.
Bellevue, WA 98004
(425) 453-1515
www.marmotmountain.com

Mountain Gear
North 2002 Division Street
Spokane, WA 99207
(509) 325-9000
(800) 829-2009
Fax: (509) 325-3030
www.mgear.com

The North Face
1023 First Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104
(206) 622-4111
Fax: (206) 622-2033
www.thenorthface.com

Second Bounce
513 North 36 #G
Seattle, WA 98103
(206) 545-8810
Fax: (206) 545-9397

Summit Haus
5 miles outside
Mt. Rainier National Park
Box W
Ashford, WA 98304
Ph: (360) 569-2142
Fax: (360) 569-2982

West Virginia

Adventures Edge
137 Pleasant Street
Morgantown, WV 26505
(304) 296-9007
Fax: (304) 292-2295
jmanilla@sbcc.com

Blue Ridge Outdoors
101 E. Wiseman Avenue
Fayetteville, WV 25840
(304) 574-2425
Fax: (304) 574-2563

Gendarme
Behind Buck Harper's Store
Seneca Rocks, WV 26884
(304) 567-2600
www.thegendarme.com

Wisconsin

Erehwon Mountain Outfitter
7948 Tree Lane
(at Mineral Point Road)
Madison, WI 53717
(608) 833-9191

Life Tools Adventure Outfitters
930 Waube Lane
Green Bay, WI 54304
(920) 339-8484
lifetls@aol.com
www.lifetls.com

Vertical Stronghold
719 W. Frances Street
Appleton, WI 54914-2365
(920) 734-0321
www.climbwithus.com

Wheeler's Campground
E. 11329 Highway 159
Baraboo, WI 53913
(608) 356-4877

Wyoming

All Terrain Sports
412 Grand Avenue
Laramie, WY 82070
(307) 721-8036

Cross Country Connection
222 S. Second Street
Laramie, WY 82070
(307) 721-2851

Gear Revival, Inc.
854 Broadway
Jackson, WY 83001
Ph: (307) 739-8699
Fax: (307) 739-4583
gearrevival@rmisp.com

Sunlight Sports
1251 Sheridan Avenue
Cody, WY 82414
(307) 587-9517
(888) 889-2463
www.sunlightsports.com

Teton Mountaineering
170 North Cache
Jackson, WY 83001
(307) 733-3595
(800) 850-3595
www.tetonmntn.com

Wild Iris Mountain Sports
333 Main
Lander, WY 82520
(307) 332-4541
(888) 284-5968
www.wildirisclimbing.com

Puerto Rico

Aventuras Tierra Adentro
268 Pinero Avenue
University Gardens
San Juan, PR 00927
(787) 766-0470
Fax: (787) 754-7543

CANADA

Alberta

Coast Mountain Sports
#817 10th Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T2R 0B4
Ph: (403) 284-2444

Mountain Equipment Co-op
830 10th Avenue S.W.
Calgary, AB T2R 0A9
(403) 269-2420
http://www.mec.ca

Mountain Equipment Co-op
12328 - 102 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5N 0L9
(403) 488-6614
http://www.mec.ca

Mountain Magic Equipment

224 Bear Street
PO Box 1901
Banff, AB T0L 0C0
(403) 762-2591
(800) 661-0399
mountainmagic@banff.net
www.mountainmagic.com

Vertical Earth
1249 Kensington Road NW
Calgary, AB T2N 3P8
Ph: (403) 283-0076

British Columbia

Altus Mountain Gear
137 W Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1P4
Ph: (604) 876-5255
Fax: (604) 876-3961

Coast Mountain Sports
664 Park Royal North
W. Vancouver, BC V7T 1H9
(604) 926-6120

Coast Mountain Sports
#195-1600 15th Ave
Prince George, BC V2L 3X3
ph: (250) 563-9914

Coast Mountain Sports
2201 West 4th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V6K 1N9
ph: (604) 731-6181

Coast Mountain Sports
#103-4700 Kingsway
Major 1
Burnaby, BC V5H 4M1
Ph: (604) 434-9397

Far West Industries
Unit 100, 2463 Hwy. 97 North
Kelowna, BC V1X-4J2
(250) 860-9010
Fax: (250) 860-0145
www.farwestcanada.com

Mountain Equipment Co-op
130 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1P3
(604) 872-7858
http://www.mec.ca

Mountain Equipment Co-op
Mail Order Dept.
130 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1P3
(800) 663-2667
(604) 876-6221
http://www.mec.ca

Ray's Sports Den
399 Main Street, Suite 101
Penticton, BC V2A 5B7
(250) 493-1216
www.raysportsden.com
rays@vip.net

Robinson's Sporting Goods
1307 Broad Street
Victoria, BC V8W 2A8
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(250) 385-3429
Fax: (250) 385-5835
www.robinsonsootdoors.com
robinsonssportinggoods@home.com

Valhalla Pure Outfitters
#805 - 1200 Hunter Place
Squamish, BC V0N 3G0
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(604) 892-9092
Fax: (604) 892-9094
www.valhalla-pure.com

Vertical Reality Sports Store

37835 Second Avenue
Squamish, BC V0N 3G0
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Fax: (604) 892-8223
www.genevaonline.com/
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vertreality@genevaonline.com

Manitoba

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Winnipeg, MB R3J 0G8
(204) 832-4675

Nova Scotia

The Trail Shop
6210 Quinpool Road
Halifax, NS B3L 1A3
(902) 423-8736
Fax: (902) 423-8710
www.trailshop.com
tsainfo@trailshop.com

Valhalla Pure Outfitters
10-100 Susie Lake Crescent
Halifax, NS B3S 1C7
Ph: (902) 450-1532
Fax: (902) 450-1531
www.valhalla-pure.com
vpoinfo@valhalla-pure.ns.ca

Ontario

Adventure Attic
1056 King Street West
Hamilton, ON L8S 107
(905) 528-3397

Adventure Guide Inc.
382 King Street North
Waterloo, ON N2J 2Z3
(519) 886-3121
http://www.advguide.com

Mountain Equipment Co-op
366 Richmond Road
Ottawa, ON K2A 0E8
(613) 729-2700
http://www.mec.ca

Mountain Equipment Co-op
400 King Street West
Toronto, ON M5V 1K2
(416) 340-2667
http://www.mec.ca

Quebec

La Cordee
2159 Rue St. Catherine
Montreal, PQ H2K 2H9
(800) 567-1106
Fax: (514) 524-5081
www.lacordee.com

La Randonnee
292 King West
Sherbrooke, PQ J1H 1R1
(888) 566-8882
Fax: (819) 566-0258
pleinair@interlinx.qc.ca

Yukon

Coast Mountain Sports
208A Main St
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2A9
(867) 667-4074

Valhalla Pure Outfitters
201 B Main Street
Whitehorse, YT Y1A 2B2
(867) 668-7700
Fax: (867) 668-7798
info@valhallayukon.com
www.valhallayukon.com

BRAZIL

Kanyon Outdoor Sports
EQN 406-407, Block A
Shop 162
Brasilia CEP 70855.000
(5561) 349-7835
kanyon@terra.com.br

DENMARK

Friluftsland
Frederiksgade 16
8000 Aarhus C
Denmark
Ph: 45 86 18 18 86
Fax: 45 86 18 18 57

HONG KONG

Hong Kong Mountaineering
Training Center
1/F Flat B On Yip Bldg,
395 Shanghai Street, Monkong
Kowloon
852-2-38-481-90
Fax: 852-2-770-7110

INDONESIA

Rhino Outdoor
JI RS Fatmawati, No. 4A
Jakarta, 12430
62 21 7664454
Fax: 62 21 7669146

MEXICO

Vertimania Guadalajara
Av. la Paz No. 2308 Loc. 4
Col. Reforma Zona Minerva
Guadalajara, Jalisco
Ph: (523) 616-5371
Fax: (523) 630-2291
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Vertimania Satellite
Fedrico T. de la Chica No. 11-B
Cd. Satellite 53100
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Ph: (52) 5393-2613
Fax: (52) 5393-8426
Email:
vmaniasat@vertimania.com.mx

Vertimania Mixcoac
Av. Patriotismo No. 899 Loc. 1 y 2
Col. Insurgentes Mixcoac
Mexico, D.F.
Ph: (52) 5615-5229/5230
Fax: (52) 5235-4659
Email:
vmaniamix@vertimania.com.mx

SWEDEN

Tierra Stockholm
Sasquatch AB
Vasagatan 19-21
11120 Stockholm,
46 8 411 74 00
Fax: 46 8 545 146 16
www.sasquatch.se

SWITZERLAND

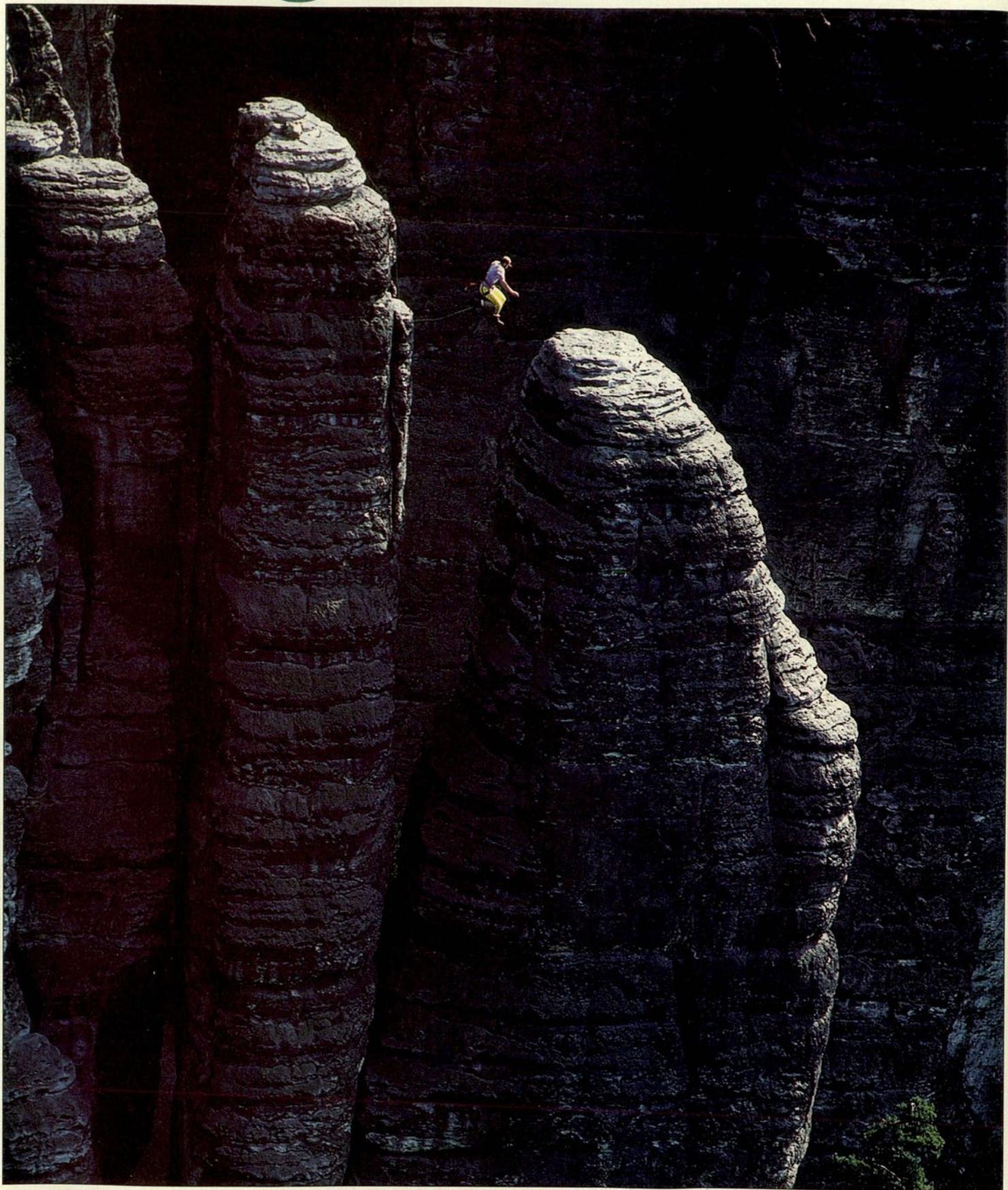
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CH-5000 Aarau
062 824 84 18
Fax: 062 824 84 38
www.unterwegs.ch
unterwegs@unterwegs.ch

UNITED KINGDOM

Peglers Expedition Advisers & Suppliers
69 Tarrant Street
Arundel
West Sussex BN18 9DN UK
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Fax: 44 019 03 883 565Z
www.peglers.co.uk

Eyewitness

Parting Shot



Thomas Weber demonstrates the venerable art of tower jumping, Elbsandstein, Germany. Photo: Heinz Zak

OS 2 R E V E R S O



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- use with single or double ropes

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