

Red Rocks Climbing

Greg Barnes

SUPERTOPOTM

Contents

Acknowledgements	7	Black Orpheus Buttress	86
Introduction	11	Black Orpheus, 5.10a	88
Protect Red Rock Canyon	20	Solar Slab Wall	92
Free Climbing Ratings	22	Beulah's Book, 5.9	93
Cam Sizes by Brand	23	Johnny Vegas, 5.6 R	94
Understanding the Maps	24	Solar Slab Gully, 5.3	94
Red Rocks Overview Map	25	Solar Slab, 5.6	96
		Going Nuts, 5.6	96
Windy Canyon	27	Horndogger Select/Sundog, 5.10a	98
Windy Peak, East Face	28	Pine Creek & Juniper Canyons	101
Diet Delight, 5.9	29	Cloud Tower	102
Jackass Flats, 5.6	30	Crimson Chrysalis, 5.8	103
Blockade Runner, 5.8	30	Jackrabbit Buttress, South Face	106
		Geronimo, 5.6	107
Mud Spring Canyon	33	Rose Tower	108
Global Peak	34	Olive Oil, 5.7 R	109
Chuckwalla, 5.9	36	One-Armed Bandit, 5.7 R	110
		Jackrabbit Buttress, NE Face	113
Black Velvet Canyon	39	Aquarium, 5.9 R	114
Whiskey Peak	40	Mescalito	116
Frogland, 5.8	42	Cat in the Hat, 5.6	117
Unknown, 5.5	43	Mescalito, East Face CRAG	119
Schaeffer's Delight, 5.7	43	Y2K, 5.10b	120
Lazy Buttress, 5.6 R	43	The Next Century, 5.10d	120
Unknown, 5.8	43	Dark Shadows, 5.8	122
Whiskey Peak CRAG	46	Brass Wall CRAG	124
Only the Good Die Young, 5.11c	50		
Black Velvet Wall	52	Willow Springs Area	128
Prince of Darkness, 5.10c	54	Hidden Falls Wall CRAG	129
Dream of Wild Turkeys, 5.10a	55	Ragged Edges Wall CRAG	129
Yellow Brick Road, 5.10b	57	Case Face CRAG	133
The Gobbler, 5.10a	58		
Sour Mash, 5.10a	60	White Rock Spring	134
Overhanging Hangover, 5.10a	61	Angel Food Wall	135
Epinephrine, 5.9	62	Tunnel Vision, 5.7 R	136
Burlap Buttress, East Formation	66	Group Therapy, 5.7 R	137
Arrow Place, 5.9	67		
		Calico Hills	140
First Creek Canyon	69	The Gallery CRAG	143
Lotta Balls Wall CRAG	70	Magic Bus CRAG	144
Alcohol Wall CRAG	70	Great Red Book, 5.8 R	145
Oak Creek Canyon	75	Appendix	147
Eagle Wall	76	Climbs by Rating	148
Eagle Dance, 5.10c A0	77	Climbs by Name	150
Levitation 29, 5.11c	80		
Ringtail, 5.10d	84		

Warning!

Climbing is an inherently dangerous sport in which severe injuries or death may occur. Relying on the information in this book may increase the danger.

When climbing you can only rely on your skill, training, experience, and conditioning. **If you have any doubts as to your ability to safely climb any route in this guide, do not try it.**

This book is neither a professional climbing instructor nor a substitute for one. **It is not an instructional book. Do not use it as one.** It contains information that is nothing more than a compilation of opinions about climbing in Red Rocks. **These opinions are neither facts nor promises.** Treat the information as opinions and nothing more. Do not substitute these opinions for your own common sense and experience.

Assumption of Risk

There may be errors in this book resulting from the mistakes of the authors and/or the people with whom they consulted. The information was gathered from a variety of sources, which may not have been independently verified. Those who provided the information may have made mistakes in their descriptions. The authors may have made mistakes in their conveyance of the information in this book. **The authors cannot, therefore, guarantee the correctness of any of the information contained in this book.** The topographical maps, photo-diagrams, difficulty ratings, protection ratings, approach and/or descent information, suggestions about equipment, and other matters may be incorrect or misleading. Fixed protection may be absent, unreliable, or misplaced. **You must keep in mind that the information in this book may be erroneous, so use your own judgement when choosing, approaching, climbing, or descending from a route described in this book.**

DO NOT USE THIS BOOK UNLESS YOU [AND YOUR ESTATE] PROMISE NEVER TO TRY TO SUE US IF YOU GET HURT OR KILLED.

Disclaimer of Warranties

THE AUTHORS AND PUBLISHER WARN THAT THIS BOOK CONTAINS ONLY THE AUTHORS' OPINIONS ON THE SUBJECTS DISCUSSED. THEY MAKE NO OTHER WARRANTIES, EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR PURPOSE, OR OTHERWISE, AND IN ANY EVENT, THEIR LIABILITY FOR BREACH OF ANY WARRANTY OR CONTRACT WITH RESPECT TO THE CONTENT OF THIS BOOK IS LIMITED TO THE PURCHASE PRICE OF THE BOOK. THEY FURTHER LIMIT TO SUCH PURCHASE PRICE THEIR LIABILITY ON ACCOUNT OF ANY KIND OF NEGLIGENT BEHAVIOR WHATSOEVER ON THEIR PART WITH RESPECT TO THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK.

Acknowledgements

First, a BIG thanks to all the climbers—folks like George and Joanne Urioste, Joe Herbst, Randy Grandstaff, Mike Ward, Mike Clifford, and many others—who spent so much time and effort establishing all the great Red Rocks climbs. We often take routes for granted, but without the pioneering efforts of climbers going into uncharted vertical terrain, risking loose rock and the truly unknown, there wouldn't be rock climbing as we know it.

SuperTopo is a team of climbers who are equally motivated to avoid real jobs, climb a lot, and as a result, be poor. Sarah Felchlin is the Managing Editor and Designer and organizes the production of each book. Greg Barnes is our top author who has endless Red Rocks climbing beta permanently wired into his head. Randy Spurrier is the force behind the SuperTopo web site. Larry DeAngelo is the SuperTopo Red Rocks historian. David Safanda is a pro designer who helps keep SuperTopo looking slick. Chris McNamara is the publisher who spends way more time thinking about guidebooks than anyone should.

Thanks to those helping replace old bolts all around Red Rocks: Dan McQuade, Mike White, Jack Hoeflich, Mark Limage, George Urioste, Lawrence Garcia, Karin Wuhrmann, Matt Schutz, Rick Podetke, Gary Fike, Laura Snider, Barry Hutten, and too many others to name.

Thanks to Jed Botsford and Patrick Putnam for being responsible and friendly links between the climbing community and the land managers, and to all those involved with the Las Vegas Climbers Liaison Council. Thank you to Bruce Bindner for the Crimson Chrysalis topo. A special thanks to Gene Malone for helping copyedit the book.

Thank you to all of the people who emailed in feedback: Andrew Barnes, Adrian Burke, Trevor Jones, Ken Klis, Rapahel Lagrange, Jeff Larsen, Richard Kim Miller, Cherie Moulin, Jonathan Peischl, Joe Ramos, William Segal, Rafael de Santiago, Florence Scholl, and Xavier Wasiak.

And a huge thanks to everyone out there in the climbing community. I want to say thanks to my many partners, to the great folks I run into climbing all over the place, and to all the people who fight to keep access open for rock climbing in an overly litigious society. I think we often don't think about just how friendly, supportive, and interesting climbers are as a group. Thanks to the whole climbing community for just being downright fun to hang out with.

– Greg Barnes

ACCESS: It's every climber's concern

The Access Fund, a national, non-profit climbers' organization, works to keep climbing areas open and to conserve the climbing environment. Need help with closures? Land acquisition? Legal or land management issues? Funding for trails and other projects? Starting a local climbers' group? CALL US!

Climbers can help preserve access by being committed to leaving the environment in its natural state. Here are some simple guidelines:

- **ASPIRE TO CLIMB WITHOUT LEAVING A TRACE**, especially in environmentally sensitive areas like caves. Chalk can make a significant impact on dark and porous rock—don't use it around historic rock art. Pick up litter, and leave trees and plants intact.
- **DISPOSE OF HUMAN WASTE PROPERLY**. Use toilets whenever possible. If toilets are not available, dig a “cat hole” at least six inches deep and 200 feet from any water, trails, campsites, or the base of climbs. *Always pack out toilet paper*. On big wall routes, use a “poop tube” and carry waste up and off with you (the old “bag toss” is now illegal in many areas).
- **USE EXISTING TRAILS**. Cutting across switchbacks causes erosion. When walking off-trail, tread lightly, especially in the desert where cryptogamic soils (usually a dark crust) take thousands of years to form and are easily damaged. Be aware that “rim ecologies” (the cliff top) are often highly sensitive to disturbance.
- **BE DISCREET WITH FIXED ANCHORS**. *Bolts are controversial and are not a convenience—don't place them unless they are really necessary*. Camouflage all anchors. Remove unsightly slings from rappel stations (better to use steel chain or welded cold shuts). Bolts sometimes can be used proactively to protect fragile resources—consult with your local land manager.
- **RESPECT THE RULES** and speak up when other climbers don't. Expect restrictions in designated wilderness areas, rock art sites, caves, and in sensitive wildlife areas such as nesting sites for birds of prey. *Power drills are illegal in wilderness areas and all national parks*.
- **PARK AND CAMP IN DESIGNATED AREAS**. Some climbing areas require a permit for overnight camping.
- **MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE**. Leave the boom box and day-glo clothing at home. The less climbers are seen and heard, the better.
- **RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY**. Be courteous to land owners. Don't climb where you're not wanted.
- **JOIN THE ACCESS FUND**. To become a member, make a tax-deductible donation of \$25.

THE ACCESS FUND

*Keeping climbing areas open and
conserving the climbing environment*

P.O. Box 17010
Boulder, CO 80308





A deadly bolt more than 20 years old ... one of several thousand on popular climbs throughout the United States.



A new bolt rated to over 5,000 pounds. The ASCA wants to replace the bad bolt above with one of these.

Bad Bolts Kill

We need YOUR help. The American Safe Climbing Association has helped replace more than 4,500 bolts throughout the country and almost 500 in Red Rocks alone. We estimate that there are more than 20,000 bad bolts remaining on popular climbs today. Your \$50 donation will make at least one route safe . . . and that one route could be the next one you climb. The ASCA would like to get there before you do.

Does your crag need re-bolting? Please contact us.



\$25 Supporter \$50 Contributor \$100 Advocate \$500 Lifer

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail/Phone _____

All contributors receive the ASCA newsletter.
Make checks payable to: ASCA, 2 Bradford Way, Mill Valley, CA 94941
or donate online at www.safeclimbing.org

The American Safe Climbing Association is a 501(c)3 organization and contributions are tax-deductible.



FOR CURRENT ROUTE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.SUPERTOPO.COM

Introduction

by Greg Barnes

With steep, moderate routes, cracks that eat up pro, and tightly bolted face pitches, many long routes at Red Rocks give you high adventure without the runouts so common in many areas. Varnished edges, incut jugs, splitter cracks, technical faces, fun chimneys—Red Rocks multi-pitch routes have it all. Bolted anchors on many popular routes quicken the pace and allow easy retreat. Red Rocks multi-pitch climbs are just downright fun, but that’s only half the story. Red Rocks also has tons of shorter routes, great sport climbs, and excellent bouldering. The canyons of Red Rocks are blissfully free of traffic noise and the reminders of civilization, and Desert Bighorn easily outnumber hikers. As you get back in the canyons, you realize the awesome scale of the 3,000-foot sandstone escarpment, and how even the very long routes rarely tackle more than half of a wall’s relief. During the daytime, Las Vegas thankfully remains hidden away, and only at night, with the glow of casinos on the skyline, do you realize just how close Red Rocks is to Sin City.

Yet the huge and rapidly expanding Las Vegas, if not one of the attractions, is one of the main conveniences of climbing at Red Rocks. Cheap airfare, endless neon nightlife, restaurants, coffee shops, supermarkets, libraries, and the infamous Strip—are all only a few minutes away.

Even more convenient than the city is the plethora of sport climbing, bouldering, and short trad routes that bring many climbers to Red Rocks in the first place. And with the development of hundreds of sport routes on the limestone cliffs in the area, climbers are no longer limited to the often overcrowded, but excellent, sport

craggs at the start of the Red Rocks Loop Road. These limestone cliffs are often at higher elevations, and offer great alternatives for warmer days.

All told, the classics of Red Rocks are uniquely accessible, often relatively low on the commitment scale, and undeniably high on the pure climbing fun scale! Here we give you SuperTopo guides of some of Red Rocks’ best—including a few never before published routes.

Red Rocks Historical Overview

Prior to 1970, climbing in Red Rocks was a low-key affair. To the extent that technical climbing was being done, it was mostly in the category of general mountaineering. The practitioners were a group of climbers usually referred to as the “Sierra Club” set. (This goes all the way back to a time when the Sierra Club focused on leading outdoor activities.) The routes of this era were typically unrecorded “class 4” operations that linked ledge systems and broken areas to find their way up the walls and to the summits. Climbers such as Howard Booth, Vern Bostick, and Jeff Lansing navigated the canyons and cliffs in these early explorations. One eager participant was local teenager Joe Herbst.

Joe spent the summer of 1970 working for the Palisade School of Mountaineering in the company of luminaries such as Don Jensen and Doug Robinson. Following an autumn in Yosemite, Joe returned home to Las Vegas prepared for great things. Over the next decade he pioneered first ascents of innumerable Red Rocks classics from short crag testpieces, to long free routes, to big aid walls. His pure clean climbing ethic, strongly influenced by Doug Robinson, in turn influenced an emerging generation of local climbers who followed him.

By the late 1970s, George and Joanne Urioste were beginning to make themselves noticed in the local climbing scene. With a good eye for the beautiful line, and a willingness to work very hard on long bolted stretches, the Uriostes initiated a new era in Red Rocks climbing. Drawing from a knowledge of their own routes, and with much reference to Joe Herbst’s notebook,

Tori Allen on Caustic (5.11b). (Greg Epperson)

Joanne Urioste authored the original Red Rocks climbing guide in 1984. The ensuing surge in popularity propelled Red Rocks to world-class status as a rock climbing destination.

– Larry DeAngelo

Welcome to Red Rocks Climbing

Our goal in this guidebook is to provide you with everything a climber needs to know about Red Rocks' finest climbing routes—including our namesake SuperTopo—in order to prepare you for an awesome climbing adventure. We chose these routes because of their exceptional rock quality, elegant lines, and outstanding views.

Many of these routes played a historic role in the development of Red Rocks climbing. As we do in all of our SuperTopo guidebooks, we've taken the time to provide you with the history for each route as well as the climbing info. If you're like us you'll find the experience of climbing these classic routes enhanced by the rich history and stories of the colorful characters that first pioneered the climbs.

We hope you enjoy climbing these routes as much as we do. You can be assured that they will offer a superb experience.

About the Crags

East Face Windy Peak (5.6-5.9)

The East Face of Windy Peak has great short trad routes with less crowds.

Whiskey Peak (5.9-5.11c)

The middle section of Whiskey Peak is home to some of Red Rocks' best splitter cracks and some excellent face climbs.

Lotta Balls Wall and Alcohol Wall (5.7-5.10b)

The Lotta Balls area is full of clean cracks and dihedrals that form steep, moderate climbs on excellent dark brown rock.

East Face of Mescalito (5.9-5.10b)

This face has great steep climbing on somewhat runout routes, with morning sun and afternoon shade, and close proximity to several other two- to four-pitch routes and the Brass Wall.

Brass Wall (5.6-5.10d)

Quality cracks, a short approach, and a good concentration of moderate climbs make the Brass Wall one of the most popular traditional crags at Red Rocks.

Ragged Edges, Hidden Falls Wall, and Case Face (5.5-5.12d)

Only a few hundred yards from the road, these great climbs are popular when the weather is appropriate since the walls only get morning sun.

The Gallery (5.8-5.12c)

These short, juggy, and steep sport climbs are in a great sunny location—the most popular sport climbing spot in Red Rocks.

Magic Bus (5.8-5.9)

Great sunny crag with a few well-protected climbs, both sport and trad.

About the Climbs

Here is a brief summary of some of Red Rocks' best multi-pitch climbs listed by difficulty.

Mescalito South, Cat in the Hat (5.6, 6 pitches)

With great and consistent climbing, big belay ledges, and an easy rappel down the route, Cat in the Hat is the friendliest and most popular route of its grade in Red Rocks.

Jackrabbit Buttress, Geronimo (5.6, 4 pitches)

This is a fun climb for those experienced at the grade with steep face and crack climbing with an exposed finish, but with some delicate holds.

Solar Slab Wall, Solar Slab (5.6, 11 pitches)

One of the best long routes of the grade anywhere with many variations.

Rose Tower, Olive Oil (5.7, 6 pitches)

Great varied climbing in a long crack to face to dihedral system with midday sun.

Angel Food Wall, Tunnel Vision (5.7, 6 pitches)

Fun chimneys with a cool tunnel-through pitch—a great climb with a short approach.

Angel Food Wall, Group Therapy (5.7, 6 pitches)

A wild big roof pitch at the top with some runout climbing lower, Group Therapy is a

good route for those comfortable with a bit of loose rock.

Mescalito North, Dark Shadows (5.8, 4 pitches)

It's hard to believe that the steep, dark, and ominous dihedral of Dark Shadows is rated only 5.8. The route is located in a tight canyon with large trees and pools of water—an atmosphere unique in Red Rocks.

Whiskey Peak, Frogland (5.8, 6 pitches)

Long, sustained, and deservedly popular, Frogland is one of the best of the moderate climbs in an area renowned for awesome moderates.

Cloud Tower, Crimson Chrysalis (5.8, 9 pitches)

This fantastic route is sustained at 5.8. There are many bolts when the climbing gets wide, which allows you to venture onto the face.

Burlap Buttress, Arrow Place (5.9, 3-5 pitches)

A great sunny route, opposite the popular Whiskey Peak Wall.

Solar Slab Wall, Beulah's Book (5.9, 3 pitches)

Fun climbing with a great new arête variation, often used as an approach to the upper Solar Slab.

Global Peak, Chuckwalla (5.9, 6 pitches)

A long remote approach guards this great face and crack climb in the rarely visited Mud Spring Canyon.

Black Velvet Wall, Epinephrine (5.9, 15 pitches)

One of the longest and best routes in Red Rocks, and certainly one of the best 5.9 routes in the world. Although rated “5.9,” the chimneys on Epinephrine are slick, continuous, serious, and not to be underestimated.

Black Velvet Wall, Sour Mash (5.10a, 7 pitches)

With varied climbing, tons of thin cracks, tightly bolted face climbing cruxes, and an intriguing traversing roof to crack, Sour Mash is endless fun.

Black Orpheus Buttress, Black Orpheus (5.10a, 11 pitches)

Black Orpheus ascends a break in a huge overhung headwall via a cleanly fractured

dihedral and has some of the best moderate crack climbing at Red Rocks.

Solar Slab Wall, Horndogger Select to Sundog (5.10a, 10 pitches)

Fun climbing on more delicate rock, this newer climb is sunny and perfect for more experienced sandstone climbers.

Black Velvet Wall, Dream of Wild Turkeys (5.10a, 11 pitches)

Long and sustained, Dream of Wild Turkeys tackles discontinuous features for over 1,000 feet of amazing climbing with nearly every pitch 5.9 or 5.10a.

Black Velvet Wall, Yellow Brick Road (5.10b, 10 pitches)

Yellow Brick Road is a two-pitch direct variation to Dream of Wild Turkeys. It is slightly harder, more sustained, and avoids the hardest slab cruxes of Dream of Wild Turkeys.

Black Velvet Wall, Prince of Darkness (5.10c, 6 pitches)

Amazingly sustained perfect edges up pitch after pitch of sport-bolted face, Prince of Darkness is one of the most classic face climbs in the U.S.

Eagle Wall, Eagle Dance (IV 5.10c A0, 10 pitches)

Long, sustained, and beautiful, nearly every pitch on Eagle Dance is 5.10 with a variety of climbing from thin crack to sustained edging face.

Eagle Wall, Ringtail (5.10d, 5 pitches)

Fun crack and dihedral climbing with a tightly bolted, thin edging crux.

Eagle Wall, Levitation 29 (5.11c, 10 pitches)

The classic 5.11 multi-pitch of Red Rocks, with an enduro crux freed onsite by Lynn Hill. It has everything from steep crack to roofs to endurance overhung thin face.

Whiskey Peak, Only the Good Die Young (5.11c, 5 pitches)

Wildly steep yet tucked away out of sight, Only the Good Die Young is easily the most neglected classic of its grade in Red Rocks.

Red Rocks Climbing Beta

Red Rocks Climbing Skills

Endless seas of perfect in-cut edges are the hallmark of Red Rocks face climbs. Unlike Yosemite, most Red Rocks crack climbs are actually face climbed while using the crack for protection and the occasional jam. For those not used to sandstone, take some time on easier climbs to get used to the often fragile rock, and above all else, do not climb on the rock the day or two after a rainstorm (longer if heavy rain), since the rock is significantly weaker when damp.

Climbing Gear

Red Rocks sandstone has many tapered cracks and a double set of nuts is essential. When cams are used, they are mostly in the thin to hand size (we'll warn you when bigger gear is needed). Tri-cams are useful for protection in pockets, as are very narrow head cams such as the larger sized Aliens. For many of the longer routes, many draws and slings are needed—it is common to clip more than 10 bolts on a single pitch. Extra rap slings and rap rings are a good idea for many of the routes, especially for trees and blocks. Most bolted stations have fixed rings or chains which eliminate ugly webbing tangles.

Ropes

Red Rocks is infamous for stuck ropes. Those great in-cut edges often snag ropes (some people call Red Rocks faces “velcro rock”), and raps down gullies or crack systems often end up with epic rope problems. While the long routes which you rap may seem like an obvious case for using double or twin ropes, these skinny ropes seem to get stuck more often than thicker lines. Also, many parties are used to using skinny tag lines or thin static lines. This is not recommended in Red Rocks due to the frequency that you have to re-lead up to retrieve ropes. If you have only a tag line or a static line, an easy lead up to retrieve your rope can be extremely dangerous. The most common solution is to have the leader trail another dynamic line, or have the follower backpack the second rope.

New and Delicate Climbs

The SuperTopo Red Rocks guide includes several lesser traveled or newer routes with more fragile holds than the more traveled classics. Use caution and pay extra attention to which holds are probably too thin to support a climber's weight for the following routes:

- Geronimo
- Horndogger Select and Sundog
- Pine Nuts
- When A Stranger Calls
- This Ain't No Disco
- Arrow Place
- One-Armed Bandit
- Aquarium

Non-Climbing Gear

A good supply of water is key, both for climbing days and for camping. Potable water is available at the campground, but it tastes bad. Fill up water containers from areas with better tasting water. Wear long pants and good approach shoes or boots to protect you from the often cactus-filled approach trails and the bushwacking descents. Use sunscreen and sun hats for warmer periods. Carry warm clothing and rain gear for anytime in the late fall through spring, where you can expect anything from hot periods to rain or snow.

About Anchors and the ASCA's Work

Until just a few years ago, most bolts on longer Red Rocks routes were terrible 20-year-old 1/4" bolts. Dan McQuade and friends spent a ton of time and energy replacing key anchors, and then in the last few years SuperTopo's own Greg Barnes, the Director of the American Safe Climbing Association, spearheaded rebolting efforts that have replaced almost 500 bolts on classic climbs in the canyons, including most routes covered in this SuperTopo guide. All the work is done by volunteers—the ASCA has no paid staff. Please donate to the ASCA, a 501(c)(3) non-profit, as it doesn't yet receive enough support from the climbing community to keep up with all the

bolts that need to be replaced. On average a new camouflaged 1/2" stainless bolt, hanger, drill bit, etc. for replacement in Red Rocks costs the ASCA about \$9 in hardware costs alone. Visit www.safeclimbing.org for more information.

Environmental Ethics

Red Rocks is a desert ecosystem, and while the thorn and spine-barring plants may look (and feel) formidable, take care to reduce your impact. The number one way to do that is to stay on the main trails and avoid lesser traveled trails—even back-track if necessary. Bighorn sheep, peregrine falcons, and many other animals inhabit the canyons—respect them in their home.

Burros are feral (once domestic animals that have escaped to the wild) mule-like animals that were imported from North Africa to help miners in the 1800s. They are protected in Red Rocks, while in California they've been systematically removed from public lands for over 20 years. They are of most concern in Red Rocks while traveling on the highways at night, and speeding cars plus hard-to-spot burros have led to some serious accidents.

Unfortunately, the real environmental issues with Red Rocks are outside its boundaries and obvious to anyone who goes to Las Vegas more than once. The

city is exploding in size and threatening to develop every scrap of land that it can get, somehow securing enough water for wasteful practices like artificial lakes in the middle of some of the suburbs. The hill across from the canyons, Blue Diamond Hill, has been the home of a gypsum mine for as long as anyone can remember. While the giant blasting (2 p.m. on Wednesdays usually) is annoying, the hill has blissfully blocked Vegas from view from most of Red Rocks. Unfortunately, this is likely to change, and unless enough pressure is put on the local government entities, high-end housing, golf courses, gated communities, and Wal-Marts may be only a few years away. Thankfully, development of this hill was delayed in May 2003 due to a big public outcry. See www.redrock.org for more info on how to help preserve Red Rocks.

Current Road and Weather Conditions

http://weather.yahoo.com/forecast/USNV0049_f.html or call the National Weather Service for local weather at 702-736-3854.

Getting There

Car Travel

Red Rocks is just west of Las Vegas and is accessed from various points in Vegas, and from Highway 160 from the Death Valley area. From almost any direction it's fastest to take the main Interstate highways into the city, although on weekends the heavy traffic flow from LA can long traffic jams across the desert from the west.

Despite what you'd expect from a map, if driving from the Bishop/Yosemite area it's actually much faster to take Highway 168 from Big Pine across Westgard Pass into Nevada, then down Highway 95. This takes about 4.5 hours. However, the views through Death Valley National Park, especially in late fall, winter, or early spring, are definitely worth seeing.



Sarah Feichtlin

Air Travel

Las Vegas is one of the easiest, and cheapest, places to fly to in the world. However, huge conventions sometimes clog the airlines, drive prices through the roof, and fill up every hotel room. Plan ahead.

Loop Road

There is a \$5 entrance fee to enter the loop. A Golden Eagle Pass (same as a National Park Pass but with a little golden sticker that costs \$15) works to get you in free. If you already have a National Parks Pass, you can buy the Golden Eagle sticker here. Annual Red Rocks specific passes are also available for \$20. Climbs accessed from the Loop Road have very limited parking hours. If you are staying after hours, and wish to avoid a \$50 fine, call the late exit number (702-515-5050), where you must give detailed information on your car, the number of people, the route you're climbing, and emergency contacts. Late exit passes are only available for long routes in the canyons—not for sport climbing, bouldering, or hiking. Don't try to abuse the system. You WILL get fined for being in the Loop Road after closing with no pass. The pass only allows a few extra hours, and if you are still not out, you can get fined.

When to Climb

The longer routes at Red Rocks are in the canyons and many are usually too cold in the dead of winter. The best seasons are fall and spring, although south-facing routes are sometimes too hot (and therefore climbed even in mid-winter). Monitor current weather, as cold or hot spells can change your plans. Even in warmer spring and fall periods, cold storms happen regularly, and the sport, short trad, and bouldering areas of Calico Basin are often perfect when the canyons are stormy or drying out after a storm. Several local limestone areas are also perfect alternatives, and for truly desperate days, Powerhouse Rock Gym (next to Desert Rock Sports on West Charleston Boulevard) offers indoor overhug leads and hot showers.

June through August is usually so hot that no one dares climb except in the

coldest canyons. Air temperatures well above 100 degrees are common. Local high-altitude limestone climbing is the best choice if you're in Vegas this time of year.

Staying in Red Rocks

Camping

Unfortunately, there is only one campground in the Red Rocks area—the BLM 13 Mile Campground. It is located on West Charleston (Route 159), one mile from Calico Basin Road. While the 13 Mile Campground is new and fairly large, it fills quickly in prime season. Both drive-in and walk-in sites are \$10 (which is odd since you can have two cars at a drive-in site but only one at a walk-in). Currently there are about 40 sites, but plans are under way to double the size of the campground. Large groups should reserve some of the group sites, which are only \$25 a night for up to eight cars and 20 people. These are often reserved 6 months in advance for peak times. Visitors Center: 702-363-1921.

If full, Vegas hotels or a long drive to the west to find a camping spot are the only options. If you can sleep in your car, the back lots of many large casinos are usually hassle free. Take note that cheap hotels are difficult to find and almost non-existent on weekend nights. It is illegal to camp at the trailhead for Black Velvet Canyon or anywhere in that area.

Recently Added Bolts

Many classic Red Rocks moderates have recently had some bolts added. Sometimes added by the first ascent party, and sometimes added by unknown parties, these bolts may be removed by other climbers wishing to preserve the difficulty and danger level of the climb. Some bolts indicated in the SuperTopo may or may not remain, and if they are missing, do not be overly surprised. Check the SuperTopo Route Beta section and the SuperTopo Climber's Forum for more current info at:

<http://www.supertopo.com>

Restaurants

There are endless restaurant options all over Las Vegas. The main concentration of eateries near Red Rocks are along Charleston Boulevard and Sahara Avenue, and Rainbow Boulevard, which runs perpendicular to the two. Every fast food chain and tons of restaurants and casino buffets dot the city.

Groceries

Several brand-new large grocery stores are on Charleston Boulevard near Red Rocks. By the time you read this there will be even more so take your pick. There is a Starbucks inside every one, and there is a Starbucks outside in the strip mall in front of every one as well. We're not joking.

At the intersection of Highways 159 and 160 near Blue Diamond (on the way out to Black Velvet Canyon from the campground) is a new gas station with a small selection of food and supplies.

Water

Carry plenty of water—especially on the south-facing routes. Dehydration is no fun and impairs judgement. Get water at the campground, the visitors center, or nearby stores. The water at 13 Mile is particularly nasty, so stock up ahead of time if you can.

Library/Internet Access

West Charleston Library (6301 West Charleston Boulevard; 702-878-3682) is the easiest to find and has about 20 internet terminals. You have to have a library card to use the terminals, but they are easy to obtain.

Sahara West Library (9600 West Sahara Avenue; 702-507-3630) is the quickest to get to and has around 50 Internet terminals that you can use for free for an hour, but amazingly they are all filled much of the time. You currently do NOT need a library card, just a photo ID such as your driver's license. It also has a discarded book salesroom out front where you can pick up great reading material at a quarter per paperback and 50 cents per hardback. Just down the street is a large mall/movie theater complex.

Climbing Gear

Desert Rock Sports (8201 West Charleston Boulevard; 702-254-1143, www.desertrocksports.com), on Charleston Boulevard as you drive into town, is a full-service climbing shop with a huge gear selection and knowledgeable staff. One of the folks you'll likely see there is one of the owners, Mike Ward, who's been doing long FAs in Red Rocks since the 1970s (including several of the routes in this book). Powerhouse Gym, located in the same building, is a good option for rainy days and also offers affordable showers.

Climbing Guides

American Alpine Institute:

360-671-1505; www.mtnguide.com

Jackson Hole Mountain Guides:

702-254-0885 ; www.jhmg.com

Mountain Skills: 505-776-2222;

www.climbingschoolusa.com

National Outdoor Leadership School

(NOLS): 307-332-4784; www.nols.edu

Sky's The Limit:

800-733-7597; www.skysthelimit.com

Other Guidebooks

Rock Climbing Red Rocks by Todd Swain offers a full guide to sport climbing and information on many climbing routes in the canyons.

The Red Rocks of Southern Nevada by Joanne Urioste was recently reprinted, and has detailed written information on many canyon routes not covered by any other guide.

Islands in the Sky by Dan McQuade, Randy Leavitt, and Mick Ryan is a guide to limestone climbing all over Nevada, most of which is concentrated close to (and sometimes even in) Red Rocks. www.rockfax.com

Las Vegas Limestone by Roxanna Brock covers all Las Vegas area limestone climbing. www.VegasClimbing.com

Red Rocks Bouldering by Rob Jensen, and *Las Vegas Bouldering Guide* by Jared McMillen, cover local bouldering. Also by McMillen is the *Red Rocks Sport Climbing Guide*.

Crime

Las Vegas is a big city with big city crime. Never leave your wallet in your car, conceal valuables, and be especially careful at canyon trailheads. If possible, conceal any evidence that your car belongs to a climber. Thieves specifically target climbers' cars because they know they will be gone all day. A common trick is to break into a car, find a wallet, remove a single credit card, then carefully lock the car back up. By the time you figure out that a card is missing, thousands of dollars have been charged at local casinos. Also, it is not uncommon for valuables like mountain bikes to be simply ripped off of locked racks on the car, sometimes leaving parts of the fork behind.

Camping near the city to the west along Highway 160, which is a heavily traveled road to the satellite town of Pahrump, runs the risk of violent crime and should be carefully considered. Gun shells litter the campsites, and most sites near the road are illegal to camp at.

Animals and Sharp Plants

Be very careful around the abundant cacti and sharp desert vegetation—a glance will tell you that the plants in Red Rocks know how to defend themselves. It's a good idea to carry a pair of tweezers for cactus spines.

Rattlesnakes, scorpions, tarantulas, and wasps are present but rarely seen.

Peregrine falcons nest in the canyons—do not disturb them if you see them (besides, they are bold and have a history of attacking climbers).

Please give Desert Bighorn sheep a wide berth in the unlikely event that you see them up close (half a mile away up a 5th class wall is more common).

Rest Days

The human zoo of Las Vegas, especially The Strip, must be viewed at night. The roller coasters, pirate shows, fountains, and endless extravagantly decorated casinos are reminiscent of the orgies of the Roman Empire in its heyday. There are so many bright lights in Vegas—especially the one out of the top of the Luxor's black pyramid—that Las Vegas is the most intensely bright spot on earth as seen from space.

For other “rest” day activities, there are many excellent hikes in Red Rocks, notably Bridge Mountain and Turtle Mountain. Full information on these is available at the BLM visitors center. Fun hikes up the various canyons can also be good times to scope the approaches to routes without the weight of your gear. Those with mountain bikes can explore the big new array of trails out near the entrance to Black Velvet Canyon. There are also longer excellent single tracks south of Highway 160, all on hard-packed and often rocky terrain. A quality mountain biking map is available at the mountain bike store right next to Desert Rock Sports/Powerhouse Gym. Tire kits (and tweezers) are essential as these trails wind in and out of sharp plants.

The desert tortoise among spring wildflowers.



Greg Barnes

SuperTopo Mission

- Help climbers ascend and descend routes quickly, efficiently, and safely by creating the most accurate and informative climbing topos ever published.
- Capture the mystery, adventure, and humor of climbing by publishing the histories, anecdotes, and outrageous stories of each route.
- Promote clean climbing by publishing the most up-to-date rack info as well as hammerless ratings for each pitch.
- Stress the importance of low impact climbing and promote stewardship of the environment.

Visit www.SuperTopo.com Before Each Climb

There is much more beta available for free on the SuperTopo web site: www.supertopo.com. Visit the web site before your climb to be sure you have the latest information.

The web site offers additional free beta for each climb:

- photo galleries
- trip reports
- route condition updates
- closures and rockfall warnings
- route beta email alerts

The web site is packed with general Red Rocks info:

- free downloadable color topos
- road and weather conditions
- everything you need to know about staying in Red Rocks
- good routes for first-time Red Rocks climbers
- general trip planning info



Protect Red Rock Canyon

by Jed Botsford, Climbing Ranger

Why do you climb at Red Rock Canyon? Is it one of your favorite places to climb when it is cold everywhere else? Do you like it because of the variety of the climbing, the wilderness experience while climbing tall routes in the canyons, the sport routes with quick approaches, or the large amount of bouldering? It seems as though every climber has a different reason for why they climb at Red Rocks. One theme that climbers can all agree on is that the climbing access at Red Rock Canyon is worth protecting.

Protecting the Desert Environment

What can you do to protect the fragile desert environment while climbing at Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area? Remember and practice some of the Leave No Trace principles.

Plan Ahead and Prepare

A nice hot cup of coffee is great to get you going in the morning, but it also gets other things moving. Plan to go to the bathroom before you leave the parking lot instead of waiting until you are at the base of the crag. Human waste does not decompose in the desert soils and toilet paper is trash.

When you are climbing a tall route, always carry a headlamp and warm clothes. All too often climbing parties head up a route which takes much longer than was expected and get caught in the dark.

If you are not sure if you will be able to do the approach, climb the routes and get back to your car before the closure of the Scenic Drive, call for a Late Exit Permit and save yourself a \$50 ticket. The permit is free and easy to get by calling 702-515-5050.



Sarah Felchlin

Travel on Durable Surfaces

While you are hiking, stay on established trails to avoid trampling cryptobiotic soils. Red Rock Canyon has been a popular climbing area for a long time. There is always an established trail leading to a climb or crag. Take a few minutes to find the trail instead of cutting across open desert or straight up to the climb.

Sandstone is a porous rock and absorbs water during a rainstorm. Allow the rock to dry out for at least 24 hours after a rain. There are some great limestone crags around Red Rocks and Las Vegas that can be climbed on when the sandstone is wet.

Pack It In, Pack It Out

Pack out all your toilet paper, tape, cigarette butts and left-over food. How many times have you arrived at the base of a tall route and right where the climb starts there is an orange peel or some other type of trash? The orange peel may biodegrade but it can take up to a year in the desert for it to disappear.

Respect wildlife

Seeing a wild horse or burro is a great experience, but remember that wild horses and burros are federally-protected animals and it is illegal to harass or feed them.

Climbing Access

“What can I do to help protect the climbing access at Red Rock Canyon?” This question is one of the most common questions I am asked while I am on patrol. My reply depends on the situation, but here are some great ways to protect climbing access at Red Rock Canyon.

Get involved with your local climbing groups, such as the Las Vegas Climbers Liaison Council and join the Access Fund. Participate during project days when land managers and climbing groups are working together on a trash pick up at a local crag, or a chalk cleaning session.

Talk with the land managers before you decide to put up a route. Find out if there are any bolting restrictions. Red Rock Canyon has two wilderness areas: Rainbow Mountain and La Madre Mountain Wildernesses. As of the summer of 2003, the BLM does not allow any new bolting to take place in the Wilderness areas of Red Rocks.

The BLM will be writing a Wilderness and Climbing Management Plan in the near future. By getting involved and talking with the BLM, your comments can be incorporated into both the Wilderness and Climbing Plans that will affect climbing directly.

One of the most popular bouldering areas in Red Rocks is the Kraft Boulders. The access into Kraft is through private property. As long as climbers approach the bouldering area by parking in the BLM designated parking areas, walking on the dirt roads to the boulders and not cutting across private property, the Kraft Boulders will be open for a long time to come.

If you would like to learn more about Leave No Trace ethics check out their website at: <http://www.lnt.org>.

If you would like to contact either of the climbing rangers at Red Rocks, feel free to call 702-515-5138 or 702-515-5042.



If you are lucky, you may run into Bighorn sheep. These were spotted below the Brownstone Wall.

Larry DeAngelo

Free Climbing Ratings

USA Yosemite Decimal System	UIAA	France	UK	Australia
5.1	I	1	M	4
5.2	II	2	D	6
5.3	III III+	2+	3A 3B VD	8
5.4	IV	3-	3B 3C HVD	10
5.5	IV+	3	3C 4A S	12
5.6	V-	3+	4A 4B HS	14
5.7	V	4	4A 4C VS	16
5.8	V+	4+	4C 5B HVS	18
5.9	VI-	5	5A 5C E1	19
5.10a	VI	5+	5B 6A E2	20
5.10b	VI+	6A	5C 6A E3	21
5.10c	VII-	6A+	6A 6B E4	22
5.10d	VII	6B	6A 6B E4	23
5.11a	VII+	6B+	6A 6C E5	24
5.11b	VIII-	6C	6A 6C E5	25
5.11c	VIII+	6C+	6B 6C E6	26
5.11d	VIII	7A	6B 6C E6	27
5.12a	VIII+	7A+	6C 7A E7	28
5.12b	IX-	7B	6C 7A E8	29
5.12c	IX-	7B+	6B 6C E6	30
5.12d	IX	7C	6B 6C E6	31
5.13a	IX+	7C+	6C 7A E7	32
5.13b	X-	8A	6C 7A E8	33
5.13c	X	8A+	6C 7A E8	34
5.13d	X	8B	6C 7A E8	35
5.14a	X+	8B+	7A 7B E9	36
5.14b	XI-	8C	7A 7B E9	37
5.14c	XI	8C+	7A 7B E9	38
5.14d	XI	9A	7A 7B E10	39
5.15a	XI+	9A+	7A 7B E10	40

Cam Sizes by Brand

Ref Size*	BD Camalots	CCH Aliens	Metolius Cams	Trango Big Bros	Wild Country Friends
0.4"	.1 red	.33 black	00 gray		
0.5"	.2 yellow	.375 blue	0 purple		0 red
0.6"	.3 purple	.5 green	1 blue		.5 orange
0.75"	.4 gray	.75 yellow	2 yellow		1 yellow
1"	.5 pink	1 red	3 orange		1.25 brown
1.25"	.75 green	1.5 orange	4 red		1.5 sky
1.5"	1 red	2 purple	5 black		2 pink
1.75"	1 red	2.5 gray	6 green		2.5 royal
2"	2 yellow	2.5 gray	7 blue		3 navy
2.5"	2 yellow		8 purple		3.5 purple
3"	3 blue		9 burgundy		4 black
3.5"	3.5 gray		10 dark blue		4 black
3.5-4.5"	4 purple			1 red	5 silver
4.5-5.5"	4.5 red			2	
5.5-7"	5 green			3 green	6 plum
7-8"				3 green	
8-12"				4 blue	

*"Ref size" is the optimal crack width for a given camming unit. It is not the range given by the manufacturer.

Understanding the Maps

Topo Symbols

Right-facing corner		Roof		Bolt	x
Left-facing corner		Ledge		Rappel anchor	
Straight-in crack		Slab		Face climbing	
Groove		Belay station		Pine tree	
Arête		Pitch length		Oak-like tree	
Flake		Optional belay		Bush	
Chimney		False belay		Knob	
				Hole	

Notes on Rack

- “nuts” refers to any nut, stopper, or chock. “micro”= #1, 2; “sml”= #3-5; “med”= #6-8; “lrg”= #9-13
- for cams, “2 ea .75-1.5” means bring two sets of all sizes between .75” and 1.5”. Check the cam size chart to see which cam corresponds to which crack size.

Notes on Topo

- “belay takes .6-1” means, while leading the pitch, save enough .6-1” cams and nuts to build a natural anchor.
- a number next to a tree is its height.

Topo abbreviations

ow = offwidth
 lb = lieback
 p = fixed piton
 R = runout (dangerous fall)

Metric system conversions

1 inch = 2.54 centimeters
 1 foot = 0.305 meters
 100 feet = 30.5 meters
 50 yards = 45.7 meters

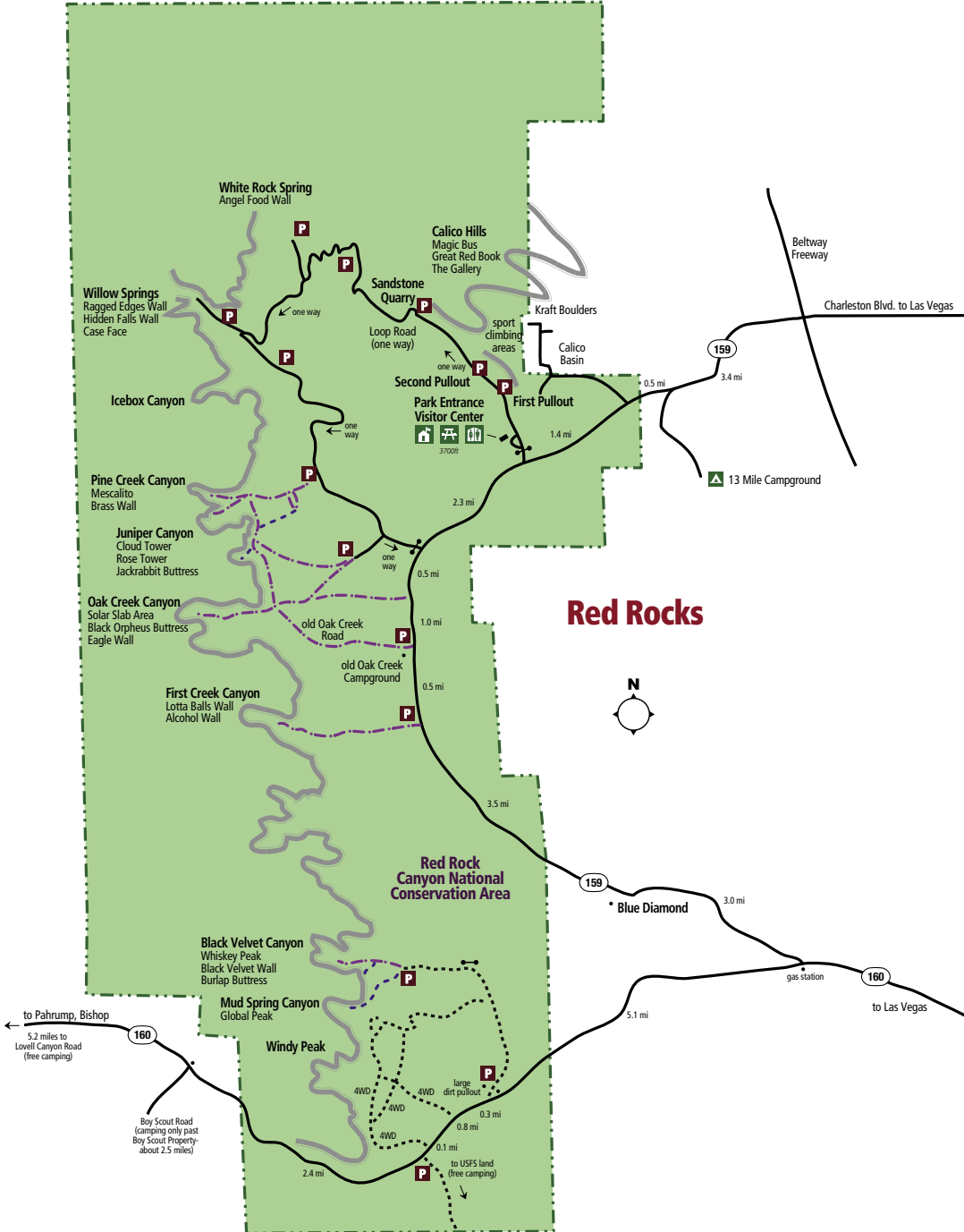
Overview graphics

Canyon Wall	
2WD/4WD dirt road	
Road or State Route	
Federal Highway	
Hikers' trail	
Climbers' trail	
Cross-country travel	

Star Ratings

- ★★★★★ - undisputed classic
- ★★★★ - excellent climb
- ★★★ - good climb
- ★★ - okay climb
- ★ - barely included in this book

Red Rocks Overview Map

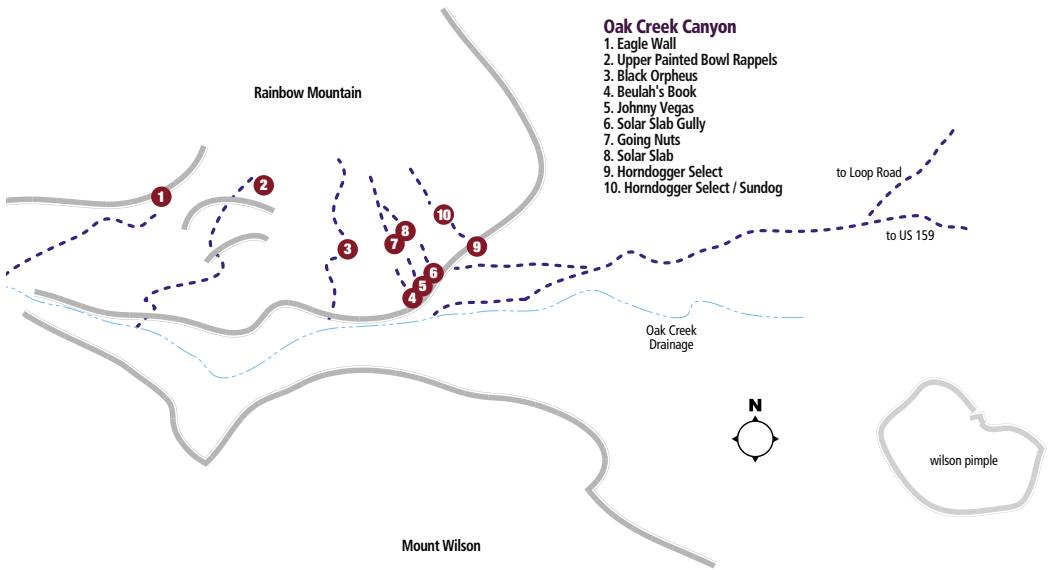


Oak Creek Canyon

Huge, complex, and varied, Oak Creek Canyon has some of the warmest climbs in the main canyons of Red Rocks. South-facing routes where the sun is not blocked by the opposite wall of the canyon often get uncomfortably warm, and are perfect for cooler days. Long approaches, long routes, and short Loop Road hours often force climbers into choosing to hike an extra half hour from the old Oak Creek Campground on Highway 159, although the Oak Creek trailhead (last stop on the Loop Road) is closer. Oak Creek Canyon routes are some of the warmest longer routes and are best in late fall through early spring.



Sarah Felchlin



Shelly Presson Dunbar plans her next move on Pitch 5 of Levitation 29. (Greg Epperson)

Black Orpheus Buttress

The steep, broken Black Orpheus Buttress hosts one of the best moderate routes in Red Rocks. This brown wall, actually the southwest face of Solar Slab Wall, is totally out of sight on the approach. With a long approach and descent, plus lack of easy retreat, the Black Orpheus Buttress hosts one of the more committing moderate routes at Red Rocks.

Approach

Oak Creek Canyon is at the very end of the loop road. Because of this, you can also park at the old Oak Creek Campground along the main highway and avoid the hassle of the Loop Road, at the price of an extra 20-30 minute hike in each direction.

Black Orpheus is around the corner from Solar Slab, but the boulder-strewn canyon bottom and the long 3rd and 4th class approach takes about 2 hours. Hike past Solar Slab, then drop into the canyon bottom. Hike up the canyon for about 1/4 mile, looking for a cairn on top of a white boulder on the right. Black Orpheus starts well above the canyon floor after a series of slabs and bushy areas and is not obvious from the bottom of the canyon, so examine the SuperTopo picture to help you determine where to head up. The pile



Greg Barnes

of rocks on the white boulder is just as the canyon bottom takes a vague curve to the left, and is well before the split in the canyon. Depending on exactly where you go up, you must negotiate usually at least one 4th class band of 40-foot cliffs, and some may want to rope up for these sections.

Once you reach the wall, Black Orpheus begins in the largest left-facing dihedral; to the left is slick polished rock and some bushes 40 feet up on a ledge.

Descent

Four descents are possible. Most people use one of the two Upper Painted Bowl descents, but you can also downclimb to the rappels for Solar Slab, or rap the long Upper Solar Slab Gully. We only describe the Upper Painted Bowl descents here; the Solar Slab descents should not be used unless familiar with them, and even then they often have other parties clogging them. **None of these descents should be attempted in the dark without someone who knows the descent.** It is far better to scramble up to wide flat ledges with bushes and bivy for the night.



Greg Barnes

View of Black Orpheus from the approach.

Upper Painted Bowl double-rope descent

From the top of Black Orpheus, hike up slabs for a short distance (50-100 yards) to a large ledge which heads around left. Hike along this ledge around the corner, where you will see the ledge descending steeply behind a huge flake. Scramble down behind this flake to a ledge/platform with bolts at the far end. From these bolts, rappel 130 feet, passing an intermediate rappel station, to a set of bolts. From here it is 165 feet to 3rd class slabs. As of spring 2002, there is NO intermediate station allowing a rappel with only one rope.

Once you reach the slabs you are in the upper region of the Lower Painted Bowl. Scramble down long 2nd and 3rd class slabs, staying on the right side of the bowl, aiming for a shoulder on the right with a prominent large rounded boulder. Here, turn the corner to the right and head down and traverse right along another long 2nd and 3rd class slab below a headwall. When the slab hits a line of bushes and forces you down, it seems logical to keep traversing. However, keep heading down and left on the only ledge system, finding abundant cairns along the way. After 200 yards, the ledge system ends in a steep slab, with bushes heading left. Here, you go down steep 3rd/4th class slabs for about 100 yards, then contour right above a line of bushes for 50 yards. Then you head down 3rd and 4th class blocks until just above the streambed; a very slick traverse to the right, or sliding down on your butt, gets

you down this final 30 feet. Always head right at this very end section, or a drop-off is encountered.

Once down in the streambed, it takes most people about an hour and a half to get back to the trailhead. The entire descent takes approximately 3 hours for people who make no mistakes or have to backtrack.

Upper Painted Bowl single-rope descent:

From the top of Black Orpheus, hike up slabs for about 400 yards, aiming for a colored headwall. Just before getting to the obviously 5th class headwall, pass through a cool little arch, then head left along the base of the wall. After 100 yards, slide/chimney down a 4th class gully/chimney leading to large trees—be very careful on the slick rock. From here, work down into the Upper Painted Bowl (Chicken Lips, a long 5.10 route, starts on your right). When you can see the whole Upper Painted Bowl, head down and aim for bushes on the left—behind them is a gully that you will rap down. It may take a bit of checking to find the gully. Rappel 70 feet from slings around blocks down a low-angle chimney system. Hike down another short bit, and rappel from the last tree 100 feet to 3rd class slabs. Be very careful on this last rappel as the rope is just long enough; also, it is easy to accidentally stab your rope on a very sharp cactus near the tree—hooking your rope through a smaller dead tree can keep the rope out of the cactus.

From the slabs, follow the descent info for the Lower Painted Bowl (see above).



Greg Barnes

Black Orpheus 5.10a★★★★

Time to climb route: 5-6 hours

Approach time: 1.5-2 hours

Descent time: 3-4 hours

Sun exposure: mid-morning to sunset

Height of route: 1000'

Black Orpheus ascends a break in a huge overhanging headwall via a cleanly fractured dihedral and has some of the best moderate crack climbing at Red Rocks. An initial dihedral has a few awkward sections, then a long broad slab leads up to a traverse below the headwall. The reward is the excellent upper dihedral with tons of fun climbing and a short bolt-protected crux.

History

George and Joanne Urioste accomplished the first ascent of Black Orpheus in April 1979. It was not a good time for the Uriostes. They were divorced. Though plagued by uncertainty and facing serious life decisions, they were united by a common love for climbing. A reconnaissance up the first few pitches looked very promising. The dark, south-facing rock was warm and pleasant in the still-cool spring air. The initial pitches went free and assured easy access to the spectacular crack and dihedral system on the upper part of the route.

They returned optimistically, with the intention of climbing through to the summit in one push. The climbing went well. They quickly achieved their previous high point and continued onto the upper cracks. As they reached the top of their thirteenth pitch, both daylight and crack were fading. Faced with drilling several

bolts to protect the face climbing that separated them from the summit, they had no choice but to bivouac.

Even then, their options were limited. There was no ledge big enough to stretch out on, only big enough for sitting. And, ironically, there was no spot big enough for them to sit together, so the maritally torn climbers endured the cold April night on separate ledges high above Oak Creek.

When morning finally arrived, George set out to lead the face pitch. Tired, stiff, and debilitated from the rough night, he drilled the four protection bolts on the pink face. Above this pitch the difficulties faded and the climbers were soon unroping on the summit slabs.

The name Black Orpheus derives from a 1958 movie that modernized the Greek legend of Orpheus and Eurydice to a setting during the Carnival in contemporary Rio. The movie was noted for its presentation of the Bossa Nova musical idiom, but retained the Greek myth's bittersweet story of doomed love. The relevance of the movie to the Uriostes' personal situation, combined with the darkly varnished rock, explains the selection of the route name.

— Larry DeAngelo

Strategy

Often touted as one of the easiest long routes of its grade due to a short crux, Black Orpheus lures many into epics. While the route is not particularly long, the approach and complex descent demand an early start and rapid progress. Especially important is the near impossibility of retreating out of the upper part of the route.

The second pitch has a short but awkward section of liebacking/jamming and a large nut is the best option for protection. The eighth pitch has some

	Pitch										
Black Orpheus	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Free difficulty	≥5.10								●		
	5.9	●	●					●			
	5.8										
	5.7		●								
	5.6			●		●				●	●
	≤5.5				●	●					

scary face climbing off the belay, then an awkward chimney section followed by a tricky lieback. The crux, at the start of the ninth pitch, has two bolts protecting a tricky lieback/reach for an edge. However, due to the position of the bolts and the direction of the lieback, a fall could result in a short, hard pendulum into the belay ledge, and it is not possible to simply pull on a draw to bypass the crux.

If you finish the route early and have the time, consider running up Johnny Vegas or Beulah's Book, then rappelling Solar Slab Gully.

Bolts were replaced by the ASCA in 2002.

Retreat

From the first two pitches you can rappel with two ropes from bolts. From the top of the third, a long sling could be used to retreat. **Above the third pitch, retreat is not recommended and would require experienced parties.** A multi-pitch rappel while leaving gear, followed by a mandatory long traverse on 4th and 5th class slabs, followed by more gear-intensive rappels, means that retreat is basically not an option once you leave the initial dihedral.

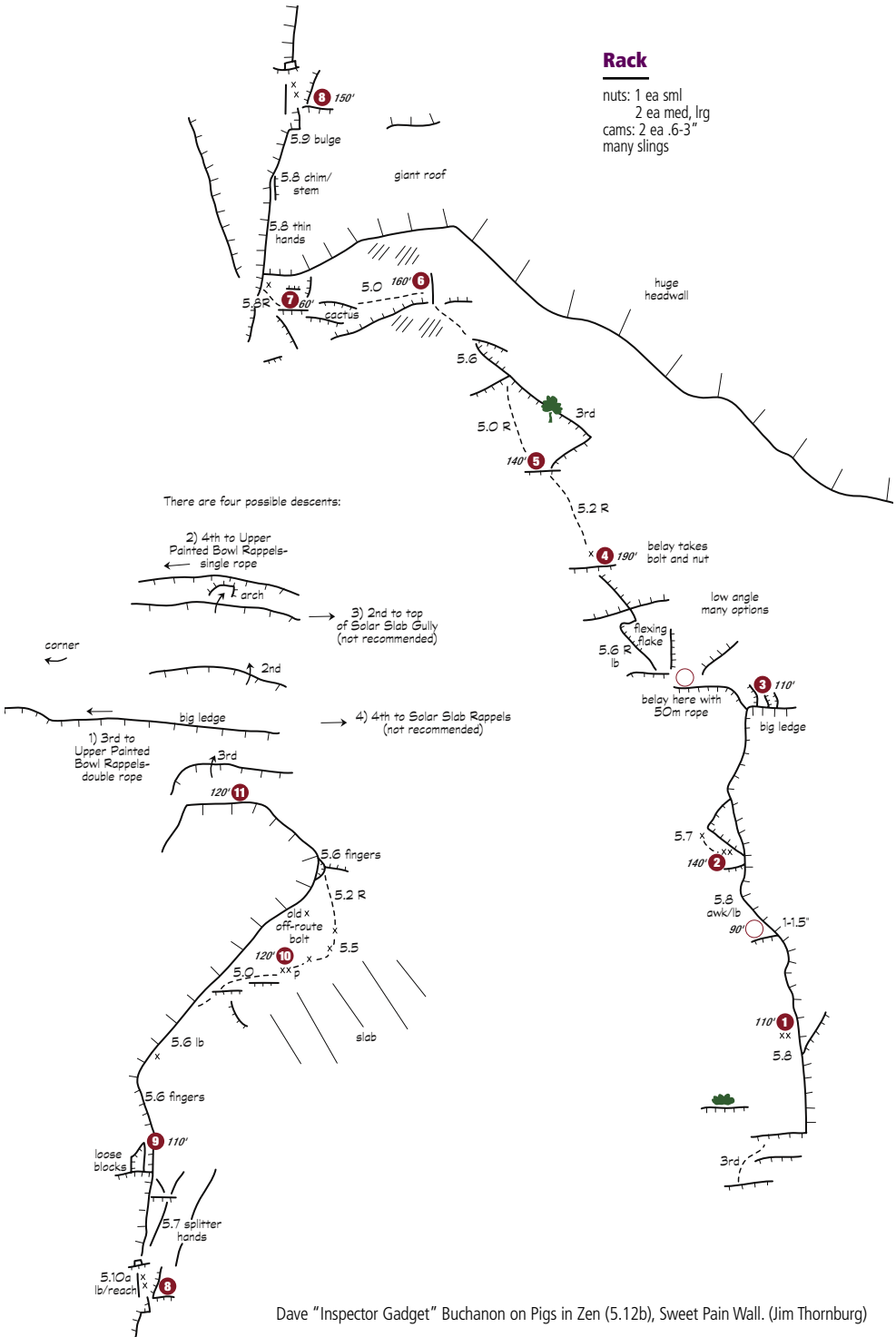


George Urioste on Pitch 10 of Black Orpheus.

Larry DeAngelo

Rack

- nuts: 1 ea sml
- 2 ea med, lrg
- cams: 2 ea .6-3"
- many slings

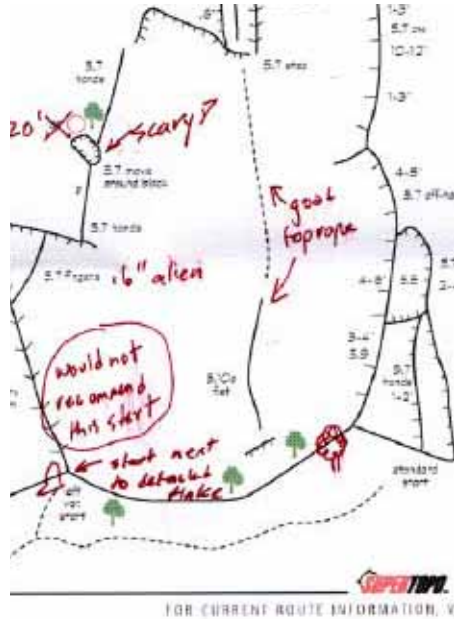


Dave "Inspector Gadget" Buchanan on Pigs in Zen (5.12b), Sweet Pain Wall. (Jim Thornburg)

We need YOUR feedback

I love getting feedback on SuperTopos. The reason we make SuperTopos is so that you and other climbers can have an incredible experience on the rock. If there is any way I can make this experience better I want to know.

Every time you climb a route you will come away with a unique familiarity about each pitch. I want to hear what you thought of the climb and what you think can be improved on our topos. This information will help us make better topos and enhance other people's climbing experience.



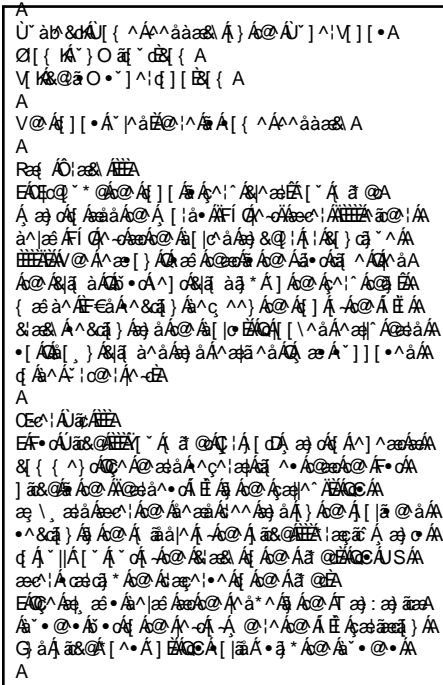
FOR CURRENT ROUTE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.SUPERTOPO.COM
 Mail us your topo corrections and help make SuperTopos even better.

You will greatly help us if after your climb you do one of two things:

- Visit the web site's Climber Beta section (www.supertopo.com/route_beta) and tell SuperTopo users about the climb. What were the conditions like? Is there any extra beta? What did you think of the route?
- If you have any suggestions please email me at chris@supertopo.com or send snail mail to 2 Bradford Way, Mill Valley, CA 94941. Let me know if we got a pitch length wrong, if you disagreed with a rating, or if you think the topo could be better in any way.

Thank you for helping us improve SuperTopo,

Chris McNamara
 Founder and CEO
 SuperTopo



Beth Renn cruises up Blanc Czech, Meat Puppets Wall (5.11). (Greg Epperson)



Climbs by Rating

5.1 – 5.5

- Solar Slab Gully 5.3★★★ (94)
- Just in Case 5.5★ (133)
- Tonto 5.5★★★ (130)
- Unknown 5.5★★★ (43)

5.6

- Cat in the Hat 5.6★★★★ (117)
- Doobie Dance 5.6★★★★ (72)
- Geronimo 5.6★★★★ (107)
- Going Nuts 5.6★★★★ (96)
- Heavy Spider Karma 5.6★★★ (125)
- Jackass Flats 5.6★★ (30)
- Johnny Vegas 5.6 R★★★★ (94)
- Lazy Buttress 5.6 R★★ (43)
- Sniveler 5.6 R★★ (125)
- Solar Slab 5.6★★★★ (96)

5.7

- Group Therapy 5.7 R★★★★ (137)
- Olive Oil 5.7 R★★★★ (109)
- One-Armed Bandit 5.7 R★★ (110)
- Romper Room 5.7★★★★ (72)
- Schaeffer's Delight 5.7★★★★ (43)
- Space Case 5.7★ (133)
- Tunnel Vision 5.7 R★★★★ (136)

5.8

- Blockade Runner 5.8★★★★ (30)
- Crimson Chrysalis 5.8★★★★ (103)
- Dark Shadows 5.8★★★★ (122)
- Frogland 5.8★★★★ (42)
- Great Red Book 5.8 R★★★★ (145)
- Lotta Balls 5.8★★★★ (71)
- Neon Sunset 5.8★★★ (144)
- Ragged Edges 5.8★★★★ (130)
- Sport Climbing is Neither 5.8★★ (143)
- This Ain't No Disco 5.8 R★★ (119)
- Unknown 5.8★★★ (43)
- Varnishing Point 5.8★★★★ (125)

5.9

- Aquarium 5.9 R★★★★ (114)
- Arrow Place 5.9★★★★ (67)
- Beulah's Book 5.9★★★★ (93)
- Black Track 5.9★★★ (129)
- Blonde Dwarf 5.9★★★ (144)
- Buck's Muscle World 5.9★★ (143)
- Chuckwalla 5.9★★★★ (36)
- Diet Delight 5.9★★★ (29)
- Electric Koolaid 5.9★★ (144)
- Epinephrine 5.9★★★★ (62)
- Hard Case 5.9★★ (133)
- Head Case 5.9★★★ (133)
- Straight Shooter 5.9★★★★ (125)
- The Misunderstanding 5.9★★★ (46)
- Topless Twins 5.9★★★★ (125)
- When A Stranger Calls 5.9★★★★ (119)

5.10a

- Bigfoot 5.10a★★★ (129)
- Black Orpheus 5.10a★★★★ (88)
- Dream of Wild Turkeys 5.10a★★★★ (55)
- Friendship Route 5.10a★★ (72)
- Gelatin Pooch 5.10a★ (143)
- Horndogger Select to Sundog 5.10a★★★ (98)
- Kemosabe 5.10a R★★ (130)
- No Laughing Matter 5.10a★★★ (125)
- Overhanging Hangover 5.10a★★★★ (61)
- Rob Roy 5.10a R★★★★ (72)
- Sand Felipe 5.10a★★★ (47)
- Simpatico 5.10a R★★★★ (125)
- Sour Mash 5.10a★★★★ (60)
- The Gobbler 5.10a★★★★ (58)
- Wholesome Fullback 5.10a★★★★ (48)
- Plan F 5.10a★★★ (130)

5.10b

- Chicken Eruptus 5.10b★★★★ (130)
- Pine Nuts 5.10b R★★★★ (119)
- Pump First, Pay Later 5.10b★★ (143)
- Y2K 5.10b★★★★ (120)
- Yellow Brick Road 5.10b★★★★ (57)

5.10c

- Gin Ricky 5.10c★★★ (71)
- Prince of Darkness 5.10c★★★★★ (54)
- Running Amuck 5.10c★★ (143)
- Triassic Sands 5.10c★★★★★ (47)
- Bodiddly 5.10c R★★★ (130)
- Eagle Dance 5.10c A0★★★★ (77)

5.10d

- Left Out 5.10d★★★★ (129)
- Our Father 5.10d★★★ (48)
- Mai Tai 5.10d R★★★★ (72)
- Mazatlan 5.10d R★★★★ (46)
- Mushroom People 5.10d R★★★★ (125)
- Range of Motion 5.10d★★ (143)
- Ringtail 5.10d★★★ (84)
- The Next Century 5.10d★★★★ (120)

5.11a

- Serious Business 5.11a R★ (125)

5.11b

- A Day in the Life 5.11b★★ (143)
- Gridlock 5.11b★ (143)

5.11c

- Buffalo Balls 5.11c★ (129)
- Ixtlan 5.11c★★★★ (46)
- Levitation 29 5.11c★★★★★ (80)
- Only the Good Die Young
5.11c★★★★ (50)

5.11d

- Social Disorder 5.11d★ (143)
- Yaak Crack 5.11d★★★ (143)

5.12a – 5.12d

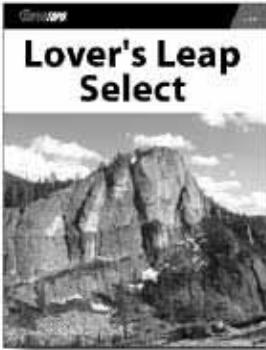
- Minstrel in the Gallery 5.12b★ (143)
- The Gift 5.12c★★★ (143)
- Vision Quest 5.12d★★ (130)

Climbs by Name

- A Day in the Life 5.11b★★ (143)
 Aquarium 5.9 R★★★★ (114)
 Arrow Place 5.9★★★★ (67)
 Beulah's Book 5.9★★★★ (93)
 Bigfoot 5.10a★★★ (129)
 Black Orpheus 5.10a★★★★ (88)
 Black Track 5.9★★★★ (129)
 Blockade Runner 5.8★★★★ (30)
 Blonde Dwarf 5.9★★★★ (144)
 Bodiddly 5.10c R★★★ (130)
 Buck's Muscle World 5.9★★ (143)
 Buffalo Balls 5.11c★ (129)
 Cat in the Hat 5.6★★★★ (117)
 Chicken Eruptus 5.10b★★★★ (130)
 Chuckwalla 5.9★★★★ (36)
 Crimson Chrysalis 5.8★★★★ (103)
 Dark Shadows 5.8★★★★ (122)
 Diet Delight 5.9★★★ (29)
 Doobie Dance 5.6★★★★ (72)
 Dream of Wild Turkeys
 5.10a★★★★ (55)
 Eagle Dance 5.10c A0★★★★ (77)
 Electric Koolaid 5.9★★★ (144)
 Epinephrine 5.9★★★★ (62)
 Friendship Route 5.10a★★ (72)
 Frogland 5.8★★★★ (42)
 Gelatin Pooch 5.10a★ (143)
 Geronimo 5.6★★★★ (107)
 Gin Ricky 5.10c★★★ (71)
 Going Nuts 5.6★★★★ (96)
 Great Red Book 5.8 R★★★ (145)
 Gridlock 5.11b★ (143)
 Group Therapy 5.7 R★★★ (137)
 Hard Case 5.9★★ (133)
 Head Case 5.9★★★★ (133)
 Heavy Spider Karma 5.6★★★ (125)
 Horndogger Select to Sundog
 5.10a★★★ (98)
- Ixtlan 5.11c★★★★ (46)
 Jackass Flats 5.6★★★ (30)
 Johnny Vegas 5.6 R★★★★ (94)
 Just in Case 5.5★ (133)
 Kemosabe 5.10a R★★ (130)
 Lazy Buttress 5.6 R★★ (43)
 Left Out 5.10d★★★★ (129)
 Levitation 29 5.11c★★★★ (80)
 Lotta Balls 5.8★★★★ (71)
 Mai Tai 5.10d R★★★★ (72)
 Mazatlan 5.10d R★★★★ (46)
 Minstrel in the Gallery 5.12b★ (143)
 Mushroom People 5.10d R★★★ (125)
 Neon Sunset 5.8★★★★ (144)
 No Laughing Matter 5.10a★★★ (125)
 Olive Oil 5.7 R★★★★ (109)
 One-Armed Bandit 5.7 R★★ (110)
 Only the Good Die Young
 5.11c★★★★ (50)
 Our Father 5.10d★★★ (48)
 Overhanging Hangover 5.10a★★★★ (61)
 Pine Nuts 5.10b R★★★ (119)
 Plan F 5.10a★★★ (130)
 Prince of Darkness 5.10c★★★★ (54)
 Pump First, Pay Later 5.10b★★ (143)
 Ragged Edges 5.8★★★★ (130)
 Range of Motion 5.10d★★ (143)
 Ringtail 5.10d★★★ (84)
 Rob Roy 5.10a R★★★★ (72)
 Romper Room 5.7★★★★ (72)
 Running Amuck 5.10c★★ (143)
 Sand Felipe 5.10a★★★ (47)
 Schaeffer's Delight 5.7★★★★ (43)
 Serious Business 5.11a R★ (125)
 Simpatico 5.10a R★★★ (125)
 Sniveler 5.6 R★★ (125)
 Social Disorder 5.11d★ (143)
 Solar Slab 5.6★★★★ (96)
 Solar Slab Gully 5.3★★★★ (94)
 Sour Mash 5.10a★★★★ (60)
 Space Case 5.7★ (133)
 Sport Climbing is Neither 5.8★★ (143)
 Straight Shooter 5.9★★★★ (125)
 The Gift 5.12c★★★ (143)
 The Gobbler 5.10a★★★★ (58)

The Misunderstanding 5.9★★★ (46)
The Next Century 5.10d★★★★ (120)
This Ain't No Disco 5.8 R★★ (119)
Tonto 5.5★★★ (130)
Topless Twins 5.9★★★★ (125)
Triassic Sands 5.10c★★★★★ (47)
Tunnel Vision 5.7 R★★★★★ (136)
Unknown 5.8★★★ (43)
Unknown 5.5★★★ (43)
Varnishing Point 5.8★★★★ (125)
Vision Quest 5.12d★★ (130)
When A Stranger Calls 5.9★★★★ (119)
Wholesome Fullback 5.10a★★★★★ (48)
Y2K 5.10b★★★★ (120)
Yaak Crack 5.11d★★★ (143)
Yellow Brick Road 5.10b★★★★★ (57)

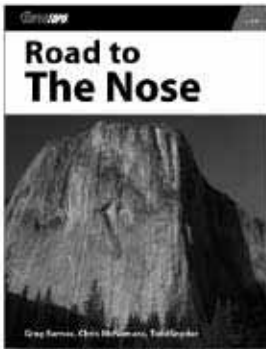
MORE FROM SUPERTOPO



LAKE TAHOE'S CLIMBING GEM **LOVERS LEAP SELECT (eBook)**

List Price: \$9.95 Available at www.supertopo.com

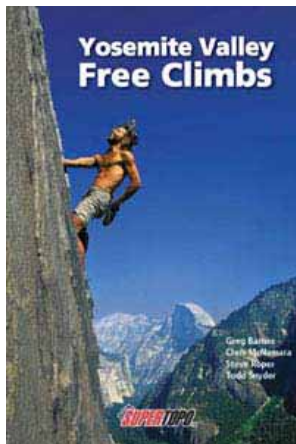
This guide includes virtually all the moderate classic routes at Lover's Leap. Most of these climbs are well-protected, two to four pitches long, and ascend the incredible granite that Lover's Leap is known for. Because these routes have so many face holds and good rests, they are the perfect introduction to granite trad climbing and outdoor climbing in general.



EVER WANTED TO CLIMB A BIG WALL? **ROAD TO THE NOSE (eBook)**

List Price: \$14.95 Available at www.supertopo.com

Many climbers consider The Nose of El Capitan the crowning achievement of a climbing career. In the *Road to The Nose*, big wall master Chris McNamara takes you through 14 climbs of increasing difficulty to help you build skills, speed, endurance, and comfort with big wall climbing. This guide includes special tips and beta specific to The Nose as well as more general information on getting ready for your first big wall.

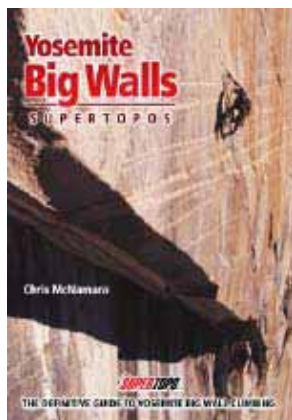


THE BEST TOPOS FOR YOSEMITE'S BEST CLIMBS **YOSEMITE VALLEY FREE CLIMBS (Print Book)**

List Price: \$29.95 Available at www.supertopo.com

This guidebook includes over 230 of the best routes in Yosemite Valley from 16-pitch trad climbs to one-pitch sport routes. While many hard Yosemite testpieces are included, this book focuses on topropes, crags, and multi-pitch climbs in the 5.4-5.9 range. We also include formerly obscure climbs to provide more options for avoiding crowds. As in all SuperTopo books, the authors personally climbed and documented each route with meticulous care to create the most detailed and accurate topos ever published.

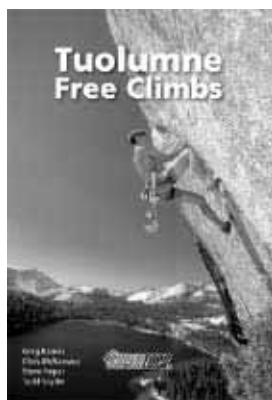
MORE FROM SUPERTOPO



UNPRECEDENTED BIG WALL BETA **YOSEMITE BIG WALLS (Print Book)**

List Price: \$29.95 Available at www.supertopo.com

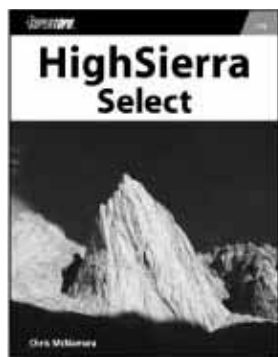
Written by Chris McNamara who personally climbed and painstakingly documented every route, this book includes essential route details such as climbing strategy, retreat information, descent topos, pitch lengths, and gear recommendations for each pitch. Yosemite Big Walls covers the 41 best big wall routes on El Capitan, Half Dome, Washington Column, and Leaning Tower.



OUTSTANDING PEAKS AND DOMES IN THE HIGH SIERRA **TUOLUMNE FREE CLIMBS (Print Book)**

List Price: \$24.95 Available at www.supertopo.com

Tuolumne Free Climbs includes over 110 of the best routes in Tuolumne Meadows from 14-pitch trad climbs to one-pitch sport routes. This book focuses on topropes, crags, and multi-pitch climbs in the 5.4-5.9 range. Includes formerly obscure climbs to provide more options for avoiding crowds. As in all SuperTopo books, the authors personally climbed and documented each climb with meticulous care to create the most detailed and accurate topos ever published.



ALPINE ROCK CLIMBING PARADISE **HIGH SIERRA SELECT (eBook)**

List Price: \$14.95 Available at www.supertopo.com

Included here are 14 classic High Sierra rock climbs ranging in difficulty from 3rd class to 5.10b. Most of these are well-protected, 10 to 15 pitches long, and ascend some of the best alpine granite anywhere. Whether you plan to scramble up the 3rd class East Ridge of Mt. Russell, climb the 5.7 East Face of Mt. Whitney, or ascend the epic 18-pitch Sun Ribbon Arête, this guidebook will ensure you spend minimum time getting off route and maximum time enjoying the climbing.

About the Authors



Greg Barnes

Greg has been climbing since 1994, and he can tell you every move on every route he's done, draw a topo from memory, give you his opinion on the rating of any pitch, repeat anything written in any guidebook, and tell you about the weather that day. He is Director of the American Safe Climbing Association. Between March 2001 and November 2002, Greg spearheaded the replacement of 482 bolts in Red Rocks canyons, including most of the long routes in this guidebook. He and other ASCA volunteers work long and hard to restore deteriorating bolts. Please support the ASCA by visiting www.safeclimbing.org and donating! Greg lives in Bishop, Yosemite, Tuolumne, Joshua Tree, and Red Rocks and develops SuperTopos for these areas.



Larry DeAngelo

Larry started climbing way back in 1969 in Southern California. Stony Point, Tahquitz, and the Southern Sierra were home back then. He moved to Las Vegas in late 1980s and Red Rocks is home now. Due to a serious inclination to live in the past, history comes naturally to Larry. His anachronistic approach (he still ties in with a swami belt and uses a hip belay) has caused some of the local climbers to grace him with the nickname "Scary Larry." He wears it as a badge of honor, since the sound of it suggests a reputation for boldness that he feels unlikely to earn based on climbing skill. His day-to-day profession is writing business software and consulting.

The Final Pitch

Thanks for buying this SuperTopo guidebook. We hope you enjoy it and the climbing adventure it may help you experience.

Your purchase means a lot to us. We here at SuperTopo are climbers who have set out to create a small business dedicated to giving you, and climbers like you, immediate access to the kind of detailed information you can normally only get by talking with a local expert. It takes a lot of work to create each SuperTopo and we're committed to making sure it's done right.

We're on a mission to develop SuperTopos for the best routes in the best climbing areas in North America. We hold ourselves strictly accountable to a high standard, namely that each of our SuperTopos offers the very finest quality route information obtainable anywhere on each and every route we cover. If you find any shortcoming in our SuperTopos, we ask that you drop us a line at: feedback@supertopo.com and let us know how we can improve. We're dedicated to offering the best information about every route available.

If you found this SuperTopo guidebook useful, we'd like to ask you two favors:

- Please post a message about your experience climbing these routes for the benefit of other climbers at: www.supertopo.com/routebeta
- Tell your friends about SuperTopo. We're about as "grassroots" an organization as you can imagine, and are entirely dependent on word-of-mouth referrals to keep producing quality SuperTopos.



Chris McNamara

On behalf of myself and the rest of the crew here at SuperTopo, I want to thank you for your support. Keep climbing and please tell a friend about SuperTopo!

Thanks again,

Chris McNamara

Founder and CEO
SuperTopo