

a final 12-day push, which seems to prove that climbing advances much faster than aging.

GALEN ROWELL

SIERRA NEVADA

Bubbs Creek Wall, Samurai Warrior. Over three days in September, Dave Nettle and I established a new route on Bubbs Creek Wall in Kings Canyon. *Samurai Warriors* (V 5.11 A1) follows the first pitch and a half of *Crystal Bonzai* before taking an independent line to the right. All but two of the 14 pitches are 5.10 or harder, and a 60-meter rope is required. One short pendulum and 50 feet of bathooks are the extent of the aid. The first half of the route follows corners up to a prominent right-leaning straight-in crack. The route then goes through the brown headwall via a finger crack to a scenic hanging bivy. The rest of the climb is mostly bolt-protected face climbing with knobs, mantles and friction. It is a beautiful, varied, user-friendly backcountry route.

BRANDON THAU

Moro Rock, El Niño. Grant Gardner, Jody Pennycook and I completed a new route on the east face of Moro Rock in Sequoia National Park during an extended Veteran's Day weekend. Three and a half days were spent on *El Niño* (V 5.10 A3+). This nine-pitch climb starts up a crack system that connects near the top of and ends at the first pitch of *Full Metal Jacket*. Then it follows the ramp of *FMJ* for 30 feet and goes up a gray half-moon section to a shallow straight-in crack. The pitch ascends a hidden 5.6 chimney and belays at the base of the prominent headwall crack. Follow this crack up to a 70-foot straight-in micro-birdbeak crack. Belay under the roof. Traverse around the roof and follow right-slanting cracks to the summit. Aside from bolted anchors, only one rivet was used on the ascent. A full wall rack is required, with heads and extra birdbeaks. The highlight of the climb was when the first of the El Niño storms of 1998 hit us on the sixth pitch. The three of us shivered inside a double portaledge while 18 inches of snow fell. We abandoned all our gear in the morning for a dash to the summit during a break in the storm. This difficult, overlooked line has gorgeous views of Castle Rock Spire and Angel Wings.

BRANDON THAU

Thor Peak, South Face, Lucifer's Hammer. In September, Bruce Bindner, Em Holland and I climbed *Lucifer's Hammer* (III, 5.10a) which starts from *Odin's Wrath*, a route we climbed the previous year (AAJ 1997, p. 142). From the flake ledge on top of the first pitch above the Pink Perch, *Odin's Wrath* goes up and left. *Lucifer's Hammer* goes straight up for six more pitches. There are six bolts, three at belays and three for protection.

PAT BRENNAN, *unaffiliated*

Nameless Pyramid, East Face, Direct Finish. The East Face of Nameless Pyramid (5.8) is a popular backcountry route, often done car-to-car in a long day. In July, Eric Tipton and I climbed the route, doing two new final pitches. From the notch on the ridge where the regular route eases in difficulty, we moved out left and climbed up via mostly left-facing ramps and corners. Our variation, the *Direct Finish* (III, 5.10a), ended at the base of the final summit pinnacle.

PAT BRENNAN, *unaffiliated*