

cracks to the summit ridge 100 feet below the top. Back in camp that evening, we watched rays from the setting sun paint a slender thread of golden light along the path of our route, *The Golden Thread Arête* (IV 5.9, 14 pitches).

WALT VENNUM

NEVADA

Red Rocks

Rainbow Wall, Sauron's Eye and Emerald City. Brian McCray and I had eyed the most obvious feature of the Rainbow Wall, a huge arch in the center of the wall that expands up half the wall, for some time. Mike Ward had started a route on the right side of this arch. In February, Brian added a new aid line, *Sauron's Eye* (5.10R A4), up the left side of the arch. The fourth pitch, the crux (A4), climbs out the top of the arch on knifeblades and through a 25-foot roof. Warren Hollinger took an unfortunate 50-foot fall and broke his back while participating in the first ascent of this route.

Emerald City was an old aid line (5.10 A2) that had (probably) not been climbed in years; it looked like the next possible free line on the Rainbow Wall. On June 12, I climbed the first pitch, an easy but interesting 5.10, using everything from a #2 tcu to a #5 Camalot. The next pitch was a thin crack, coming in at 5.12a, which led to ten to 15 feet of completely blank corner. Brian and I aided it and then worked the moves on top rope. They were very difficult, and although we could do it on top-rope we were unsure about doing it on lead. We started trying, each vying for the first ascent of this pitch. We'd get our nerve up, grab the gear and then head out. With hands perspiring, toes aching and sores on our palms, we'd try one more time to get through this blank section of rock. We'd fall and then come down and let the other try. I was sure I had perfected the move and now only had my mind to blame for not completing it. This time I did it (5.12d) and we moved on. The next notable pitch was the fifth (5.12a). It climbed a thin, technical face and arête and required a smear move on mossy, smooth rock at the crux. Although pitch 6 was only 5.10, it would have been the most difficult pitch on the route for me. It climbs up an extremely loose pillar with little gear. It then traverses a ledge with much loose rock. Brian styled it and set up a solid belay on the huge bivy ledge. When I reached the anchor, we were struck by the sound of what had to have been a swarm of bee creatures and sat silent for a moment as they passed below us. The next several pitches were nice 5.11 and 5.10 cracks. These led to a classic dark offwidth. We finished the route on 200 feet of #4 and #5 sized crack. We completed the route in just under 24 hours. We added one bolt to the route on the .12d pitch and actually removed a bolt (not there on the first ascent) on the first pitch. *Emerald City's* 13 pitches were free at 5.10, 5.12+, 5.10-, 5.10, 5.12-, 5.10, 5.11, 5.10, 5.11, fourth class, 5.9 (OW), 5.6 (OW).

ROXANNA BROCK

UTAH

The Desert, Various Activity, Previously Unreported. Utah 95 passes through Comb Ridge, a dramatic, deep cut in the Navajo sandstone. In March, 1997, Mike Baker and Leslie Henderson put up *Magic Man*, a five-pitch, 250-foot 5.10+ route on the Prayer Stick, a column that leans

against Comb Ridge. The route climbs the right side of a prominent pillar. Baker also established *The Dark Side* (5.9, 250') solo up the left side of the tower in September, 1998. In the Valley of the Gods, in 1997, Chris Rowins, Mark Fleck, and Marco Constant put up *Cape Town Caper* (5.8 A3, three pitches) on the south face of *Lady in a Bathtub*. In the popular Hatch Wash south of Moab, in the Rims Recreation area, Jay Miller and Andy Roberts climbed the *Big Liebowsky* (C2+, four pitches) in October, 1998.

ERIC BJØRNSTAD

The Desert, Various Activity. Jeff Achey and Irene Bloche made the first free ascent of the giant hoodoo Mexican Hat. The climb, which they called *The Frito Route* (5.12), begins ten feet left of the *Bandito Route*. The first two or three bolts are stick-clipped, giving the overhanging ascent an upper belay.

In the Moab Area, *The Full Monty* (5.11 A0, three pitches) was climbed on Super Chimney Tower by Paul Ross, Jimmy Dunn, and Billy Rothstein in November. The tower is located up the Moab Rim Trail off Kane Creek Boulevard. The first two pitches were climbed solo by Todd Madaux and named *Arnold Ziffle*. In the popular Sunshine Wall in the north Salt Wash, just north of Arches National Park, several new lines were established. Among them was *Burning Shoes* (a.k.a. *Shattered Illusions of Love*) (5.9 A3, three pitches) on Tower 143, climbed by James Garrett, Pete Keane and Brad England. The tower is the most prominent tower at the right end of Sunshine Wall.

In the Hurrah Pass area south of Moab, the spectacular Amazon Tower saw its first ascent by Andy Roberts, Dave Mealey and Matt Vanosdell. The route (5.11 A2, four pitches) climbs the west face of the spire. In the same area, Soltice Tower (5.10 C2) was climbed by Ted Rummings and Roberts in June.

ERIC BJØRNSTAD

Arches National Park

Organ Rock, Pilon's Pillar. On Organ Rock, *Pilon's Pillar* (V A5a 5.10) was soloed in November with three bolts. The route starts up *Pele Nubian Sacrifice* and goes straight up the overhanging east pillar. Although the crux has a 60- to 65-foot runout on beaks, it is the most straightforward and safe A5-minus I have done.

JIM BEYER

Valley of the Gods

Valley of the Gods, Various Activity. In 1999, with various partners, I visited the Valley of the Gods in southeastern Utah five times. While the bulk of my time was spent racing around Valley of the Gods Loop Road like a maniac (trying to set a new time record and a new dust-plume-height record), I also managed to climb five major towers that were previously unclimbed. Drivers/climbers/lunatics also involved included Jesse Harvey, Jon Butler, Benny Bach, Lefty Angus Burns and Jeff Widen. First ascents were as follows. January 2: *Putterman in A Bathtub* (II 5.9 C1, 450'). January 3: pitch 1 variation to Forrest-Hurley, Petard Tower (5.9 C1). January 9-11: *Putterman on The Throne* (III 5.9 C1, 450'). March 6: *The Putterman*