



*El Capitan: The free routes (with first free ascensionists listed). 1. The West Face (on left, not shown) (V 5.11c, Jardine-Price, 1979). 2. Lurking Fear (VI 5.13c, Caldwell-Rodden, 2000). 3. The Shaft (8-pitch free variation to the Muir Wall; 5.13b, with 20 feet of A1 remaining to be freed) (Cosgrove-Epperson-Smith, 1994). 4. The Salathé (VI 5.13b, Piana-Skinner, 1988). 5. Free Rider (dotted lines) (5.12d, four-pitch variation to the Salathé) (A. Huber, 1998). 6. Golden Gate (a combination of the Salathé and Heart routes, 5.13b, Huber-Huber, 2000). 7. The Nose (VI 5.13d, L. Hill, 1993). 8. Passage to Freedom (13 pitches to the top of El Cap Tower, 5.13c A0, L. Houlding, 1999). 9. El Niño (a free variation to the North America Wall) (VI 5.13c A0, Huber-Huber, 1998). 10. East Buttress (IV 5.10b, Sacherer-Reed, 1964). CHRIS FALKENSTEIN*

by breaking holds, so I needed a third attempt to redpoint that pitch, and too much time and power was wasted to exit the route the same day. After another bivy on the wall, we reached the summit of El Cap, having freeclimbed *Golden Gate* in a single push: 41 pitches, one at 5.13b, two at 5.13a and five at 5.12.

ALEXANDER HUBER, *Germany*

*Lower Cathedral Rock, North Face, Children of the Corn, New Route.* On May 20, Steve Gerberding, Dave Griffith, and I left our comfy bivy to push for the summit of Lower Cathedral Rock's north face. Four days earlier, in perfect, hot weather, we had begun our climb. *Children of the Corn* (VI 5.12 A4+ R) takes the line straight up the middle of the north face via ten long pitches mostly of very hard aid climbing on dangerous rock, some of which is loose and expanding.

After a well-protected 5.12a pitch, the climb soon becomes hard. The second lead has no bolts and climbs its first 80 feet on body-weight (barely) gear above a ledge. The pitch ends on sporty runout hooking that risks 100-foot-plus falls. Steve claims the pitch is only A3, but it's very state of the art. Seldom does the climb let up and never is there an easy

pitch. Dave's crux lead involves a wild pendulum off bad knifeblades to a runout, mandatory dyno to a large tree. I finished my final lead to the summit on runout free climbing, hard nailing, and hard camming behind a large grainy flake, all the time looking at huge, perhaps fatal, plunges.

We summited at noon and rapped with all gear in tow to the base of the wall, happy to never venture onto the face again. For the veteran aid climber, however, the climb is an ideal adventure, mostly on good rock in a stellar location on a shaded wall.

SCOTT COSGROVE, *unaffiliated*

*Half Dome, The Long Walk.* In the fall of 1999, Bryan Law and I fixed two new pitches on the northwest face of Half Dome but were unable to continue due to various delays and other obligations. I returned to the project alone in August. The fixed lines had been left on the wall through the winter; they were a bit crunchy but otherwise OK. After hauling to the high point and climbing a couple more partially new pitches, I hurt my left wrist while drilling a belay anchor. I continued, slowly, using my left hand as little as possible and wishing I had made more effort to find a partner or two for the route. After four more new pitches and one of *Kali Yuga*, I joined *Tis-sa-ack*. A new finish was originally intended, but reaching the upper features would require drilling through a 100-foot blank headwall. With the wrist getting worse every day, that idea seemed completely pointless, so I finished the wall on *Tis-sa-ack*. Not much fun, but the route does have a couple of good pitches. "Expand Your Mind" is a difficult pitch of incipient expanding features, and "The Flying Serpent" is a moderate pitch that ascends one of the more obvious and aesthetic corners on the central wall. A total of 40 holes were added in six full and two partially new pitches. I called the route *The Long Walk*.

ERIC GEORGE

## SIERRA NEVADA

*Patterson Bluff, Western Slope, Various Activity.* Located just down the road from the Courtright Reservoir area, Patterson has long been considered a hidden jewel, with a hot, brushy, snake-infested approach to the base from below far too heinous for all but the most seasoned masochist. With access now from the Ross Crossing Road to the top of the bluff, the approach is a scenic 20-minute walk from a dreamy car-camping spot to the rim, where established rappel routes lead to the base. Of course, if one does not climb out as planned, a walk back to the car would be a character-building event for sure!

New route activity has increased over the past several years, largely spearheaded by the likes of Richard Leversee, Herb Laeger, Scott Thelen, and Dave Nettle. The emphasis has been on ferreting out all free lines, but several mixed routes with occasional aid take on the more imposing features of the face. To date, there are over ten independent routes, ranging from eight to 14 pitches long. It is still a place for the adventurous spirit, since it usually takes a trip or two just to figure out the location of the rappel anchors and routes. Many of the routes are bolt-intensive, though definitely sporty, so an adjustable crescent wrench would be handy to snug up hangers if needed. There is a basic rule of thumb about climbing temperatures: if it is 90 degrees or hotter in Fresno, you'll be better off heading up to the high country, as the cliff faces right into the sun.

Looking up from the base, an overview of routes from left (Sunset Buttress) to right on the