

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

main face follows. *The Sun Also Rises* (5.12+), *Raptors of the Steep* (5.10 A3), *Some Assembly Required* (5.11), *Under The Gun* (5.11 A1), *Under the Knife* (5.12b), *50 pounds of Crack* (5.11+ A0), *Some Restrictions Apply* (5.11), *The Face that Launched a Thousand Clips* (5.12c), *La Cara Perfecta* (a.k.a. Ten, 5.10c), *Eleven* (5.11c), *The Millennium Falcon* (5.11c A1).

DAVE NETTLE, *unaffiliated*

Evolution Traverse, First Complete Ascent, Previously Unreported. In early summer, 1999, I finally traversed the Evolution Crest. This is a jagged, eight-mile ridge of nine 13,000-foot peaks in the central Sierra. I say finally, because in 1997 and 1998 I climbed sections of it with two different partners but failed both times to link the whole enchilada. In 1997, it was with Galen Rowell, and failure that time was due to my not being adamant in starting at the first peak and the long rocky ridge that formed its skyline. Galen and I started with Mt. Mendel, the second peak, and climbed south over several peaks to Mt. Haeckel, where Galen, opting for the fleshpots of base camp, bailed. I continued alone on the last half. It was a very good traverse with great rock, but I knew I had blown it.

The next year I was back again, this time with Dayle Mazzerella and this time starting at the beginning. A mile of great knife-edge led over Peak 13,360 to Mendel and then on over a few more peaks before we realized that it just wasn't going to happen. So we dropped off the crest to Mt. Spencer and on down to the valley.

In 1999, I returned to try it alone. My friend Kevin Calder came along to camp out. With big packs, the hike into this area is fairly brutal, so we drank a lot of tequila when we got there.

After a day to recover, I started at the first sign of light. I traveled lighter this time, carrying no rope or hardware. On the other hand, I was still murky with a hangover. This time, though, everything went great: weather, climbing, and eventually even my head. I got back to camp at dark.

This is the best traverse that I have done in the Sierra. It has a clear beginning and end, the rock is excellent, and unlike many traverses, the line of least resistance is on the very crest for virtually all eight miles. The route (VI 5.9) starts on the west-southwest ridge of Peak 13,360 and then traverses on over Mendel, Darwin, Peak 13,322, Haeckel, Wallace, Fiske, Warlow, and Huxley.

PETER CROFT, *unaffiliated*

Wheeler Crest, The Big K-Mart, Four More Shopping Days. On December 21, Barb Howe, Eric Sampson, and I established a new route on a previously unclimbed formation on the far right (north) side of the Wheeler Crest. The formation itself is an approximately 800- to 900-foot high pyramidal granite outcropping at the extreme top of Sixth Canyon. We named it The Big K-Mart in honor of Bishop's latest cultural mecca. Our route, *Four More Shopping Days* (IV 5.10b), begins inauspiciously in grubby 5.9 offwidthing, then follows the prominent left-facing dihedral to the sharp right arête of the formation through fantastic, sustained hand jamming on good steep granite. The approach up Sixth Canyon is about 90 minutes, and due to considerable slab frictioning may be impossible if wet.

PETER CLARK, *unaffiliated*