

between me and the belay. As Lucho pulled the hammer and pins out of the haul bag, the hammer mysteriously came untied from its sling and plummeted down the face. I lamented having thrown all the big rocks off, but scrounged a small one and pounded in a somewhat solid Lost Arrow. After a few minutes of climbing up and down, I committed to a mantle on chickenheads at the lip of the body-length roof and reveled in the glory of an overhanging 5.9 chickenheaded headwall. We called the route Far Out, for the long approach and the airy final pitch. We descended via the famous 150-foot free-hanging rappel off a microwave-sized chickenhead and headed for the prominent spire that flanks the tallest face of The Obelisk. We climbed the spire's tallest face, encountering two classic 5.10 chickenhead-and-crack pitches, followed by a terrifying 5.11R/X pitch on sloping and overhanging chickenheads. We found no sign of passage on the summit and believe that we were the first people to stand on top of it. Lucho and I basked in the setting sun, realizing that we had climbed two of our best first ascents in one long day.

CEDAR WRIGHT, AAC

Mt. Tyndall, East-Facing Grave. On August 25, 2002, Becka Bracy and I intended to do the 5.8 East Chimney as a date climb. A date climb is when you climb something easy, so as to get in some climbing, while you still spend time with a girl. In this case, a lot more climbing than I was interested in. The newest Moynier guidebook described the route as the left of two chimneys on the east face. These chimneys are left of the Direct East Face and around the corner, out of sight to the left as you round the base of the mountain. But I didn't remember all that, and walked around the base until I got to the second chimney I saw and thought, "that doesn't look too bad." So we started up the left of the two chimneys RIGHT of the Direct East Face with one rope, stoppers, a set of cams to 2.5" and me in shorts with no helmet. You'd think this story was heading for the other AAC publication. Being tired from the hot 12-mile hike with a big elevation gain, loss, and another gain, we did not leave camp until 9 a.m. and arrived at the base of the descent route at 11, where we racked and scrambled around looking for our climb. We climbed the 1,600-foot face to the summit ridge in eight pitches and in about seven hours, with climbing up to 5.11b (5.10+/11-R and 5.10X). The line is easy to pick: the massive chimney/gully just right of Galen Rowell's Direct East Face, and at 2/3 height (where it gets really wide) it climbs the left face of the gully.

We eventually became committed to our gully, with its smooth walls, lack of gear placements, and our small rack. At one point we heard what sounded like a Volkswagen coming down the gully, but it turned out to be only football-sized, flying way overhead. Later, I realized that I had gotten used to the sound of rocks hitting my girlfriend's helmet. I knew if anything happened to me, this would probably become for both of us an east-facing grave. We were benighted during the descent and arrived at the base at 9 p.m. We failed to find our packs, tried to bivvy, and finally hiked the two hours to camp in our climbing shoes. Becka later lost a toenail. The next day we found our packs underneath the rock that I thought we'd left them on top of.

One highlight was climbing a dihedral. It looked like there would be a good belay under a five-foot roof. When I got there it was no good. With two feet of rope left, I got a green alien in halfway out the roof and, hoping the crack above would be good for a belay, shoved my fat tips in, laybacked off the left wall, and reached out to the lip of the roof. It was positive, so I reached out with my right hand too—and my feet cut loose. The lip crumbled, and I fell, lip in

hand. So I yelled down, "On belay! Climb when ready!" Becka didn't feel the fall, and as she climbed I lowered until I could clip my webalette to pieces I'd placed on the way up, then landed perfectly on a small stance.

ERIK ROED

Arizona

Grand Canyon, Clay Tank Castle, first ascent. Andy Martin, while searching topo maps for high points, discovered that the second highest butte in the Canyon was an unnamed, unclimbed redwall butte in the far west end of the Grand Canyon. He told me about it, and a friend flew me over it for scouting. I contacted Aaron Tomasi to see if he'd climb it with me. He said sure, so I got a permit from Grand Canyon National Park, and in May we rafted the 55-mile lower section of the Colorado River in the Canyon from Diamond Creek to get to the base of what we called Clay Tank Castle. It took a lot of class 4 route-finding to get to the last redwall section, the north fin. Due to the poor rock, I ended up free-soloing the last 200 feet or so, maybe 5.6 at the worst, but the exposure was XXX for a good 100 feet.

This castle, north-northwest of Clay Tank Canyon (Spencer Canyon quad, 29N13W), may have been the last unclimbed butte in Arizona (and even the Lower 48), with over 1,000 feet of shoulder/prominence (the elevation difference between the summit and the lowest contour that encircles it and no higher summit). A map of the butte is at: <http://www.topozone.com/map.asp?z=12&n=3970405&e=257560&s=25&size=m&symshow> [try zooming out to a smaller scale to find the butte.—Ed.].

TOM MARTIN, *River Runners For Wilderness*

Utah

The Desert, various activity. In 2003 Paul Ross and partners added 23 multipitch routes in the southwest desert, 18 of which were on the Eastern Reef Slabs of the San Rafael Swell. [Note: Only the longer routes are presented here, and route length-pitch count discrepancies are due to frequent 4th-class unroped climbing on the routes—Ed.] Most of the routes on the slabs follow the major features; however, many other possibilities remain in the side canyons between the major slabs. There are now 31 routes on the Eastern Reef Slabs, amounting to over 36,000 feet of climbing. The longer new routes from 2003 include Dedication (1,440', 5 pitches, 5.7+; to the left of Sinister Slab), by Layne Potter and Ross, and, just right of Dedication, Seduction of Stone (1,600', 5.7+R), put up by those two and Sheridan Potter. On the slab formation just right of Three Finger Canyon, Layne Potter and Ross established Layne Potter and the Sorcerers Stone (760', 5.9R). On the Great White Wall, left of Three Finger Canyon, the pair established Senile Dementia, 1,000 feet, 5.6 (they forgot drill bits for setting up descent raps—fun epic!) and Everlastingyes (1,160', 5.8 R).

Three routes were climbed on the Triple Slab Buttress area in March (though pictured in the 2003 AAJ, p. 203) by the Layne Potter and Ross team: The Giraffe (1,130', 7 pitches, 5.9R), The Jack Russell Buttress (980', 5.6R)—named for Paul Ross's other preoccupation, breeding and judging Jack Russell Terriers—and the classic Mellow Yellow (1,060', 6 pitches, 5.9R).