

summit blocks. Bail to the gully (like we did) or take the original West Face (Nelson) finish. In hindsight we should have summited, via the last pitch of the West Face line, and rapped east as per that original line. Instead we rapped the West Face, scurried down, went north through Sandy Gap, and rapped the lower northwest face...highly discouraged, as our descent blows.

DANIEL J. CAPPELLINI, AAC

## California

### YOSEMITE VALLEY

*El Capitan, Lost in Translation.* Seven years ago I was inspired by Leo Houlding to find a line on El Cap and do it in perfect alpine style, from the ground to the top, free in a day. I tried this many times, but we got shut down every time. On El Capitan granite, it takes only 6' of blank rock and a 30-pitch rock climb turns to an aid line.

I scoped *Lost in Translation* for years and always wondered why people hadn't climbed it. It's not a big route like the Salathe, El Corazon, or the Nose, but it was a chance to accomplish a dream to put up a new free line ground-up, something that was never done before on El Capitan. I met Nico Favresse when he was working on one of the coolest free routes in Yosemite: Lappat (5.13a/b R) on Yosemite Falls wall. Nico climbed the route without placing any bolts. We talked a few times about new free lines, and then we decided to go for it on the right side of El Cap.

We scoped the line, and a perfect corner stood out. It looked from the ground that it would go free, but we thought there must be a reason why no one had free-climbed it. But our instinct kept us on track, so we decided to have fun and see where we would get, ground-up.

On August 30 at 8 a.m. we started climbing. We had a big free rack and a few pitons, copperheads, and a bolt kit. We didn't have bivy gear, only three gallons of water, and a few Power Bars. After eight pitches, a majority of them around 5.10/5.10+R, we reached the base of the big corner. We were surprised everything had gone free, with only 300' of the climb left to discover. The corner was grassy, and we couldn't see what was under the grass. It looked like people had attempted the corner before, because there were a few lead bolts and rap anchors. As the light went down we decided to stay and wait for morning. We spent the night on a small ledge dreaming of what could be under the grass. We were only two pitches from the top.

On September 1, after 10 minutes of cleaning, we knew the line would go. After cleaning holds and freeing moves, we estimate the pitch to be 5.12b/c stemming. After that the climbing eased up and allowed us to top out around 12. The dream became reality. *Lost in Translation* (1,200', 10 pitches, 5.12b/c R).

On September 8 we climbed the route in seven hours.

*From Ninov's website, [WWW.STONEMONKEYS.NET](http://WWW.STONEMONKEYS.NET)*

*El Capitan, Atlantis; Porcelain Wall, House of Cards.* In the fall of 2005, just left of Block Party (which I established in spring '05), I completed my second new line on El Capitan, in the alcove area of the southeast face, naming it Atlantis (VI 5.9 A4). I fixed the first two pitches to the top of the alcove over two days in early October, and then committed for another 18 days alone on

the face. This route shares a few pitches with Tempest but turned out to be 75% independent, requiring 74 hand-drilled holes for belays and leading, with no drilled bat hooks. One of the cruxes came on pitch six, under the Great White Shark feature of the South Seas route. Extensive hooking up and left, with a marginal tied-off Arrow for pro, led into the continuous crack system of the route Space. I followed this route for three easier pitches until I broke off on new terrain for most of the remainder of the route. Two-thirds of the way up the wall, I came upon possibly the last major ledge on El Cap that had never been touched. This feature, Bobo Ledge, gave me somewhere to stand and sit other than my portaledge, after 13 days in aiders. Another 60+m pitch led up to the left side of the luxurious Island In The Sky, a very comfy natural ledge on the Pacific Ocean route. Climbing off this ledge I headed up the left side of the Black Tower on my way to the long-awaited summit.

Then, in spring 2006, I turned my focus to the Porcelain Wall. I headed up on another solo mission, looking for unclimbed terrain to scare myself on. Luckily I found it, 100m right of the only other route on the absurdly steep central headwall section. In 1995 Eric Kohl went to this face alone to climb a direct line right up the middle of this not-so-well-known Valley gem. But after fixing the first four pitches, he teamed up with Pete Takeda for the ascent. In similar unintended style, I fixed the first four pitches solo until my good friend Matt Meinzer showed up and wanted in. The first four pitches went very well and completely natural, but up higher remained a few stretches of blank rock, which I knew would be easier to drill through with someone to share the workload. After we regained the highpoint up my three fixed lines, we continued on for 10 more days to the summit of this beautifully colored wall. Our route, House of Cards (VI 5.9 A4+), was characterized by difficult climbing through large roofs and flakes with some rivet ladders to connect delicate features. In the early 90s a section of the wall, about 200' around, fell off, leaving the adjacent rock expanding and dangerous. We hand-drilled 114 holes, including a few into pitch 10's death flake, until I could see what I was attaching myself to. We topped out after 11 days.

DAVID TURNER, *Sacramento, California, AAC*

## SIERRA NEVADA

*Incredible Hulk, free activity.* True to form, Dave Nettle called me in the midst of a heavy Sierra winter. As I often hear from him, "I just want to put a bug in your ear." But no bug was needed. When Dave calls, people listen.

We cruised snow most of the way up, getting to the Hulk as early as we could: early June. On day one we reached the headwall corner that forms the right-hand border of the Hulk headwall, which each of us had spied from Dave and Peter Croft's route, Venturi Effect. Yet another clean and steep corner up high. The end of the corner required bolts for free climbing, and as Dave is the human hammer, we rapidly dulled our bits. The next day we simply tidied up the first four pitches.

We returned a few weeks later, joined by Truckee resident Donald Otten. The three of us freed the pitches to the high point. Then, after a bit of aiding, cleaning, and working, we freed the upper pitches, which connect to the second-to-last Venturi Effect headwall pitch.

We put together approximately five new pitches along with seven pitches from other routes to complete the line, Tradewinds (IV/V 5.11+). It's really a piecing together of various