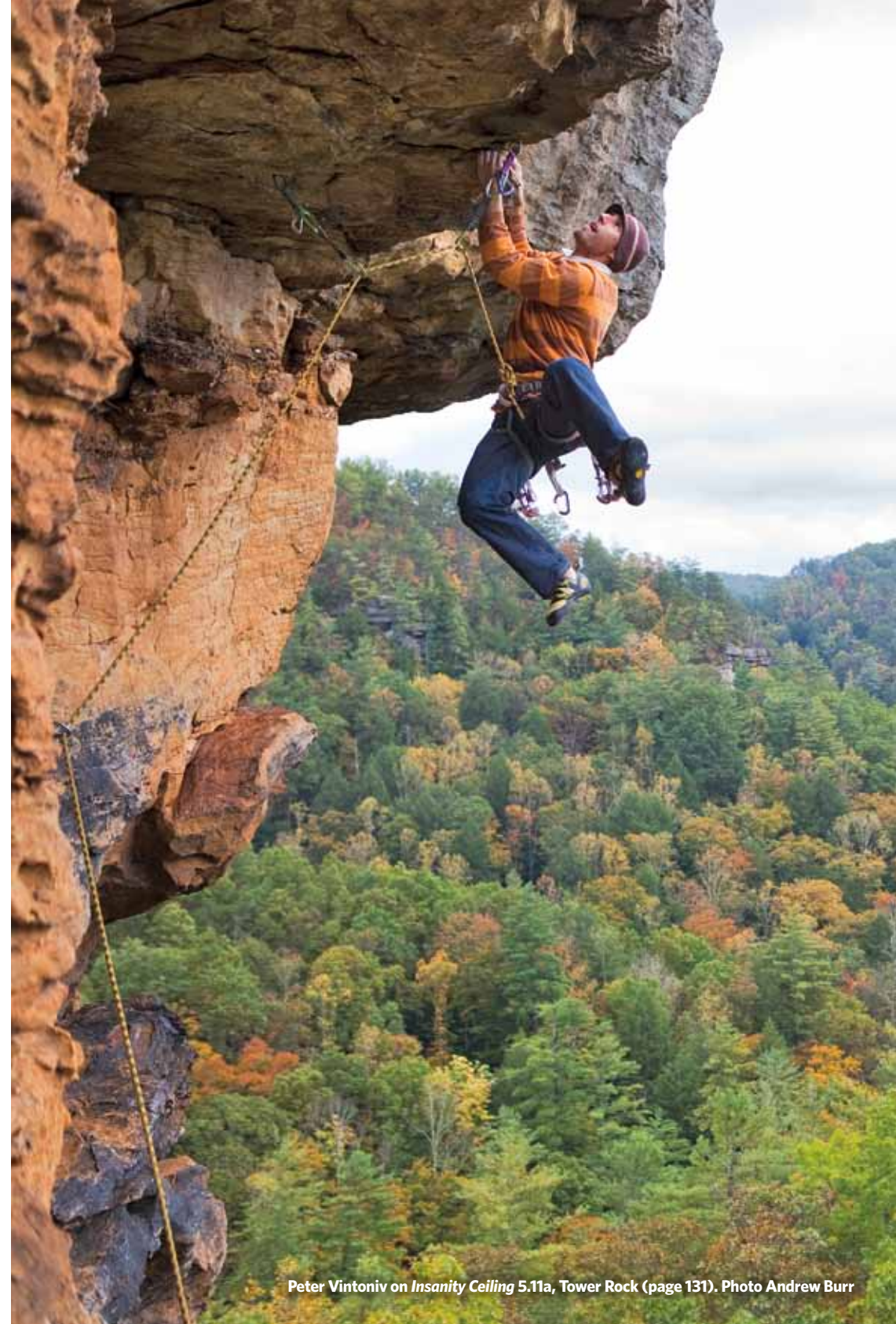
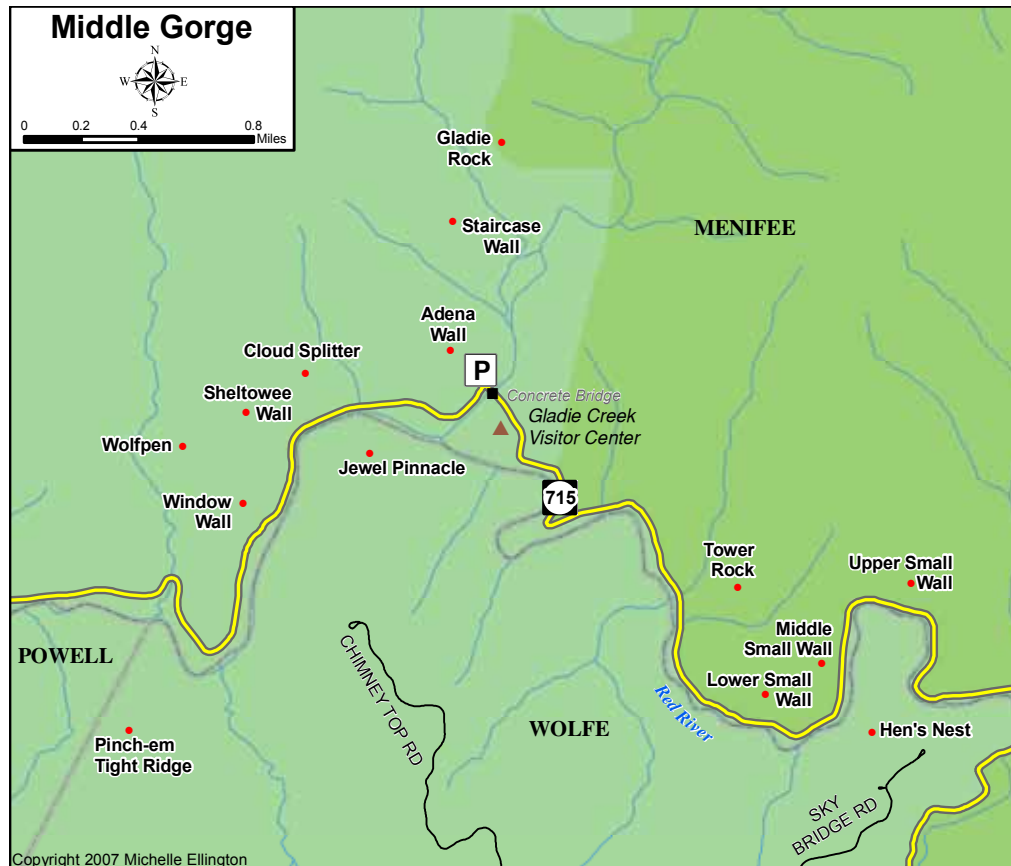


MIDDLE GORGE

This region has mostly traditional crags, and some great ones at that. The deceptively named Small Walls have many multi-pitch routes and some of the Red's longest climbs. Hen's Nest is a good bet for wet-weather crack climbing.

Approach: The cliffs of the Middle Gorge Region border the Red River. Most are a short hike up the steep hill that borders KY 715 as it winds along the river. From Miguel's, head north on KY 11 toward Mountain Parkway. Pass under Mountain Parkway then turn left onto KY 15 near the Shell station. Continue west on 15 for about a mile until you reach KY 77 on your right. Turn right onto and follow 77 through Nada Tunnel, past Military Wall, and across the steel bridge. Bear right after the steel bridge, remaining on KY 77 until it intersects KY 715. Turn right onto 715 to reach the areas of the Middle Gorge Region.

Access: Most of the areas are located on Forest Service land, so respect signs and fences indicating closed routes or trails, and read the guidelines for climbing on Forest Service land on page 32. Tower Rock and the Small Walls are located in the Clifty Wilderness area. Pay special attention to additional Forest Service restrictions when climbing in designated wilderness.



Peter Vintoniv on *Insanity Ceiling 5.11a*, Tower Rock (page 131). Photo Andrew Burr

CLIFF	KIDS	RAIN	SUN	DRIVE	HIKE	ROUTES	GRADE RANGE	CLASSIC ROUTES
WOLF PEN page 140				 25 min	 25 min	5	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	
WINDOW WALL page 141				 25 min	 10 min	4	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	
PINCH EM TIGHT page 142				 25 min	 30 min	5	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	
SHELTOWEE WALL page 143				 25 min	 15 min	1	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	
ADENA WALL page 143				 25 min	 10 min	4	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	
STAIRCASE WALL page 144				 25 min	 30 min	6	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	
GLADIE ROCK page 145				 25 min	 15 min	1	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	
JEWEL PINNACLE page 145				 25 min	 20 min	4	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	<i>Diamond in the Crack</i> 5.6
TOWER ROCK page 146				 25 min	 15 min	35	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	<i>Caver's Route</i> 5.3 R <i>Arachnid</i> 5.8
LOWER SMALL WALL page 151				 25 min	 15 min	24	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	<i>Starship Trooper</i> 5.10a
MIDDLE SMALL WALL page 156				 25 mi	 15 min	13	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	<i>The Quest</i> 5.10c
UPPER SMALL WALL page 158				 25 min	 15 min	2	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	
HEN'S NEST page 160				 25 min	 30 min	17	≤6 .7 .8 .9 .10 .11 .12 .13 .14	

LARRY DAY

(old school)

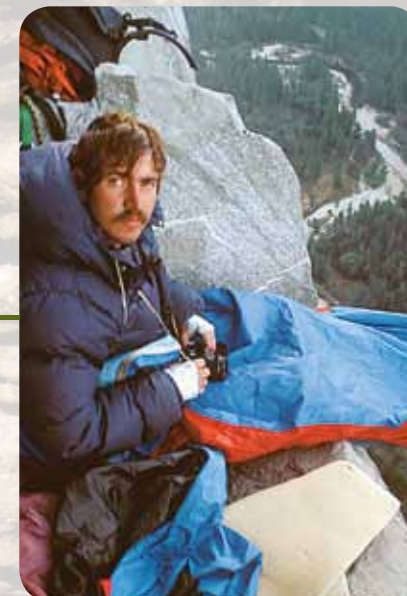


Photo Larry Day Collection

Larry Day was one of the first climbers to realize the staggering potential of the Red River Gorge. His first ascents date back to the early 1970s, and many remain classics to this day. Some of his best include *Jungle Beat* at Military Wall and *Insanity Ceiling* at Tower Rock. Attitudes toward ethics and goals have changed quite a bit since the 1970s. For Larry, the best lines all had one thing in common — they had to go to the top. OI' "Lay-back Larry" now lives in Bozeman, Montana, but is still a regular contributor to www.redriverclimbing.com, where he offers recollections of early first ascents as if they happened only yesterday.

LARRY ON RATINGS

"Not only can you rate climbs without sending them, you can downrate climbs that you've never even been on! Gets done all the time. And if you are surprised to flail on a route that you thought you'd hike, then it's an automatic sandbag... way underrated. See, **this rating business is easy.**"

LARRY ON ETHICS

"The one thing that I'd like to communicate is that preserving the particular and unique beauty of the Red River climbing experience was foremost in the minds of even those of us who were most desirous of bagging the best lines. **We were so determined not to spoil the place we loved** that we refused even the temptation of chalk. If we couldn't do a route without chalk, then it would just have to stand until we could. We were not absolutely against bolting, but we would never have committed the grid bolting horrors that happened later."

LARRY ON JODIE FOSTER

"Jodie looks like her skin is on way too tight, kind of mummified looking if you ask me. Or maybe like she just got finished sucking on something real sour."

LARRY ON SANDBAGGING (from www.kywilderness.com)

"So, as far as sandbagging in the Gorge goes, **I plead not guilty.** It's true we were using Seneca as a general standard. Most of us had never climbed in the Gunks, but we understood that the ratings there were pretty stiff. We weren't trying to be falsely modest either, but with a rating scale that only had four grades above 5.7 we figured we'd better not rate the stuff we were doing too highly. It wasn't until we started traveling West that we realized some of the Seneca grades were stiff to the point of being laughable. We used to sit around and speculate as to the reasons for this. I have a few good theories, but won't go into that now. So in general I'd say that the ratings of classic routes in the Gorge were pretty consistent with other Eastern routes of the same era (if not quite as wacky as some of the more obscure Seneca routes). So while I must confess that I do enjoy the sandbagger reputation, it really ain't so." ■

MIDDLE SMALL WALL






 37.8225 N
 -83.5884 W
 25 min 15 min

13 routes As with the other small walls, this one isn't so small. One of the Red's longest and most exposed traditional lines, *The Quest*, is found here; if you're a solid 5.10 crack climber, definitely try it. Finding yourself perched at a natural hanging belay, with the ground almost 200 feet below, is a rare experience at the Red. Wide-crack climbers will find that Middle Small has a lot to offer. Take on *Handjob*, *Marmalade*, *Layback Crack*, or the upper pitch of *The Quest* and your abs will be sore for weeks! Bring big cams.



The Quest

Approach: From the intersection of KY 77 with KY 715 near Fortress Wall, stay on 715 for 5.7 miles (2.5 miles past the bridge over Gladie Creek) to a pulloff on your right, just past another pulloff known to swallow cars that don't have 4WD — look for deep tire tracks and then drive a little farther! Hike back down the road toward the muddy pulloff and locate a faint trail on the right, just right of a ravine that begins with a steep, muddy section right off the road. Follow the trail straight uphill about 10 minutes and you should meet the wall about 200 feet right of *The Quest*. To locate *The Quest*, look for a large roof with a splitter crack about 150 feet up — *The Quest* is about 50 feet left of there.

Conditions: Due to their northeast-facing nature, a few routes at Middle Small Wall can be mossy. These include *The Quest* and *Basecamp*, so avoid them in damp or humid conditions. Routes 5–9 get more sun and stay in better condition. They're also shorter, so it's possible to knock a few out in a day. Plan on at least a half-day to climb *The Quest* or *Basecamp*. The routes are long and difficult.

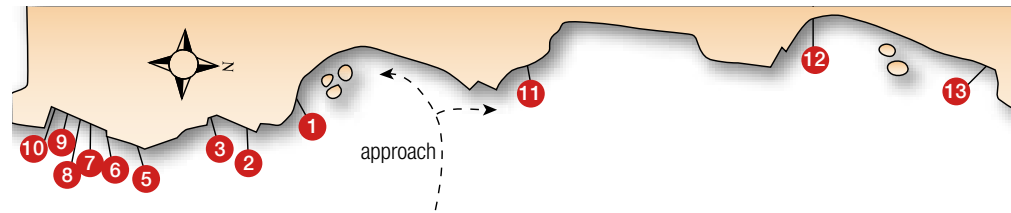
1 The Quest 5.10c ★★★

From where the approach trail meets the wall, head left about 150–200 feet, passing through some boulders. Locate a section of the wall about 40 feet behind a large tree with two cracks 20 feet apart. Start in the right crack and pull over a small roof. Climb through thin and technical cracks to a ledge with some loose rock directly beneath a roof. Power through the roof and continue through fists to a nice belay ledge on the right.

Climb up to another roof and traverse right to gain a hand crack in a slightly overhanging dihedral. Climb this, then set a hanging belay directly beneath a large roof. Beware setting gear in what looks like a solid crack in the roof, but that upon closer inspection may eventually be a large loose block. Now, try to talk your partner into leading. Traverse out another large roof, then dive up into a squeeze chimney when you feel like you can fit. Be sure to look down at this point to add to your leg shake. Kick and scream while you lose your feet for a few seconds trying to swim up into the chimney, then relax once you get them bridged again. If your offwidth technique isn't up to par, begin to lose skin as you struggle through what may be the most difficult 20 feet of your life. Grab a huge ledge, place a piece for your partner so he doesn't pendulum if he falls, then crawl across the ledge for 15 feet to a tree that you may just kiss at this point.

To descend, walk left to locate a large tree with webbing and rappel with two ropes. Bring No 3.5–4 Camalots for the final pitch.

220 ft. FA Tom Souders, Bob Hayes, 1984.



2 Which Way Is Up 5.10d R ★★

Walk left from *The Quest* about 100 feet, around the corner, to locate a crack system near a small pond. Climb the crack through some roofs to a vertical face with sketchy gear. Continue up to a large ledge and rap from a tree to descend. 85 ft. FA Greg Smith, 1984.

3 Basecamp 5.11b ★★★★★

Walk 40 feet left of *Which Way Is Up* to a dihedral with a roof about 20 feet up. Climb to the roof, crank out to a hand jam at the lip, then pull up into the dihedral. Follow the dihedral to a belay beneath a large roof. Move back right and climb to the roof for some pro. Pull over the roof and turn the lip to gain a belay ledge. Continue up the face, using natural protection to reach the top of the wall. Rappel with two ropes. 180 ft. FA Jeff Koenig, Tom Souders, 1984.

4 Lichen Lung Lunacy 5.10c

Walk left 25 feet from *Basecamp* to locate a wide outward flaring crack that faces to the left due to a detached section of the rock. Climb the flaring crack for about 30 feet then follow a thin crack until it peters out. Continue up the face finding protection and holds when possible. Eventually head leftward toward a ledge with a bulge and hand sized crack. Continue up this crack to the top. 175 ft. FA Danny Rice, Max Rodatz, 2003.

5 Hidey Ho 5.10a R ★★★

Locate a chimney left of *Lichen Lung*. Climb the short chimney to reach a belay ledge beneath a 25-foot roof. Work your way out the roof to gain the face again, then continue up the crack to another belay. Head left on a short face (R-rated) to a crack that takes you back right to a belay ledge. Continue up through a short slot to reach the top. 175 ft. FA John Bronaugh, Roger Pearson, 1986.

6 Investigator 5.7 ★★★

This short, left-facing dihedral is located 50 feet left of the previous line and marks the start of a wall with a horizontal break 40 feet up. Rappel from a tree to descend. 40 ft. FA Unknown.

7 Lactic Acid 5.9 ★★

Climb the finger crack on the face left of *Investigator*. Fingertlock and face-climb up the crack, then shift left just before the end to reach a ledge. Rappel from a small tree to descend. 40 ft. FA Greg Smith, Chris Bennett, 1983.



Basecamp



Hidey Ho



Handjob

8 Handjob 5.9+ ★★★

This obvious splitter begins about 15 feet left of *Lactic Acid*. Climb through fists to an offwidth section just before a small roof. Maneuver through the wide section, then pull around the roof. Dive deep for good jams the second half of the way. Rappel from bolted anchors.

80 ft. FA Ed LeCroix, Tom Seibert, 1980.

9 Marmalade 5.9 ★★★★★

Break out the big cams for this one. It climbs the next wide crack splitting the face just before a right-facing dihedral. Chicken-wing and arbar the crack, pulling through a tough section or two along the way. Descend by traversing left along a ledge and rappel from the tree above *Layback Crack*. Photo on cover.

60 ft. FA Tom Seibert, Ed Pearsall, 1980.

10 Layback Crack 5.9 ★★★

Another one for the big cams. Be sure to place your cams really deep so your partner doesn't cheat by getting to layback the whole way. This is the obvious right-facing dihedral just left of *Marmalade*. Scramble up to a ledge to start. Pull over a low roof, then make use of fists and armbar to the top.

60 ft. FA Larry Day, Tom Seibert, 1976.

The next three routes are located right of *The Quest*.

11 Devine Climb 5.8+ ★★

This route is 125 feet right of *The Quest*, past a couple of small streams and around a corner. Look for a hand crack splitting the face, which becomes a dihedral about 40 feet up. The crack is about 30 feet right of a left-facing dihedral. The right face of the route becomes bright orange halfway up, and there is a large, oblong hueco on each side of the crack halfway up. Climb the crack to a small roof. Pull around the roof and continue up the crack to a low-angle and poorly protected section just before a large ledge. Rappel from here or take a second pitch, which begins to the right and follows a dihedral to the top. Rappel from a tree to descend.

165 ft. FA Tom Seibert, Larry Day, 1976.

12 Spiderweb Tearoom 5.8 ★★

Walk about five minutes right from *Devine Climb* to locate a right-facing flake with an orange face above. If you reach two very large boulders, you've walked too far. Climb the flake to a ledge and belay. Pull a small overhang, then move left on small holds to a ledge. Rappel with two ropes from a tree at the top of the cliff.

150 ft. FA Larry Day, Tom Seibert, 1976.

13 Mickey Mantle 5.6

Walk 250 feet right of *Spiderweb Tearoom*, past the large boulders, to a left-facing dihedral near a small stream. Scramble up to a ledge, then climb a crack system to the left of a slab. End on a ledge and rap from a tree to descend.

30 ft. FA Tom Seibert, Ellen Seibert, 1981.

UPPER SMALL WALL

37.8264 N
-83.5826 W

25 min 15 min

2 routes This wall offers the least of the three Small Walls. The approach is somewhat difficult due to dense vegetation and fallen trees, and the lines are low quality.

.14
.13
.12
.11
.10
.9
.8
.7
.6
≤.6

Approach: Drive about 0.3 miles past the pulloff for Middle Small Wall to a pulloff on the left. Hike across the road and uphill to the wall. Walk left along the base until you reach a slabby, south-facing wall with a dihedral on the left side.

the way of protection. Rappel from a tree to descend.

Variation 5.8 X: Climb straight up the face.

150 ft. FA Ed Pearsall, Larry Harmon, 1977.

Variation: FA John Bronaugh, Tina Feezel, 1988.

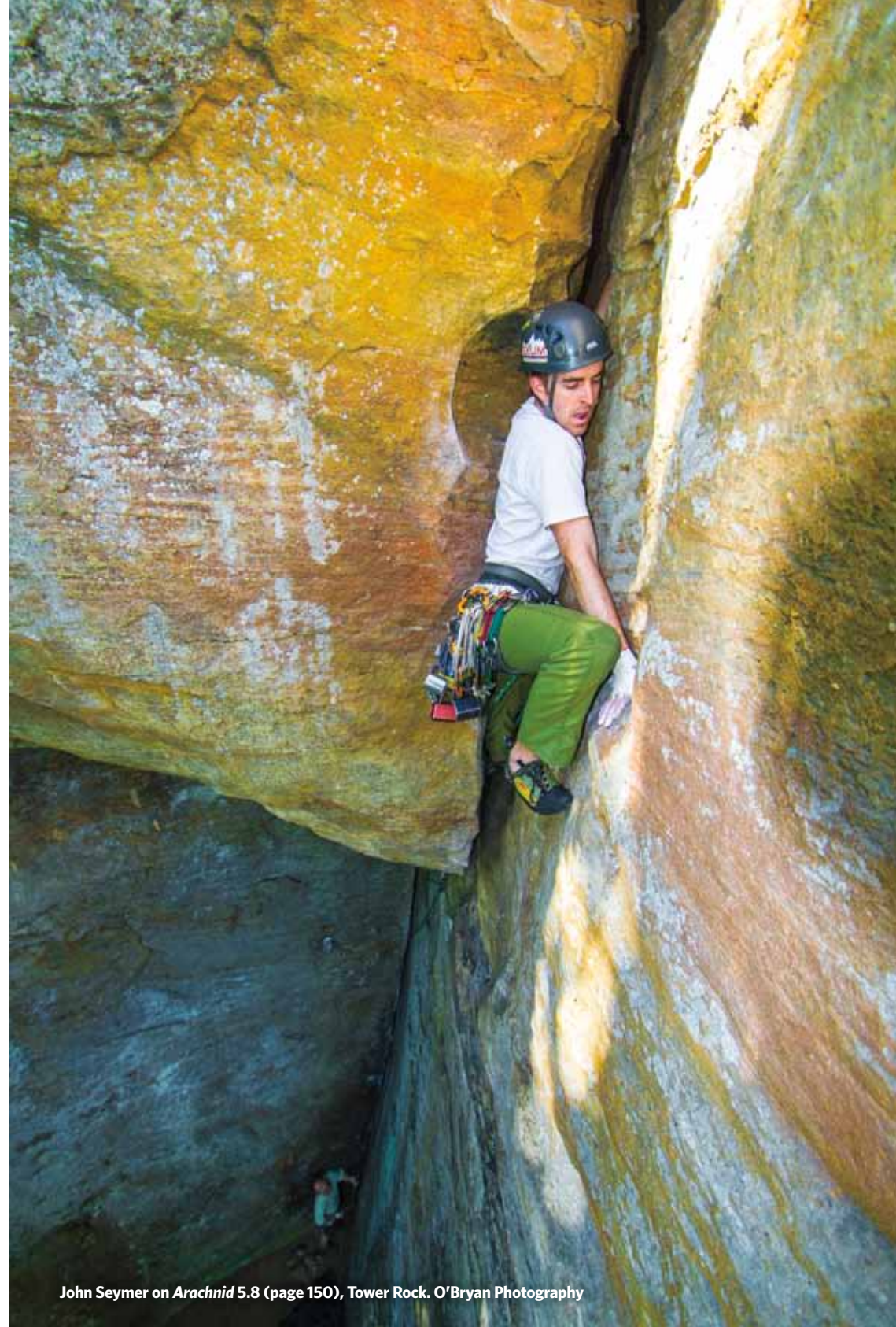
1 Cliff Hanger 5.6 X ★★

This line ascends the south-facing purplish section of the wall to a large ledge 25 feet up. Continue up the face between two water streaks then head up a steep ramp on the right to the top of the wall. Don't expect to find too much in

2 Bumblebee Junction 5.5

The line ascends the rotten dihedral left and around the corner from *Cliff Hanger*. Lower from fixed gear or continue through more torture to the top.

150 ft. FA Tom Seibert, Ellen Seibert, Eric Bostrum, mid-1970s.



John Seymer on *Arachnid 5.8* (page 150), Tower Rock. O'Bryan Photography