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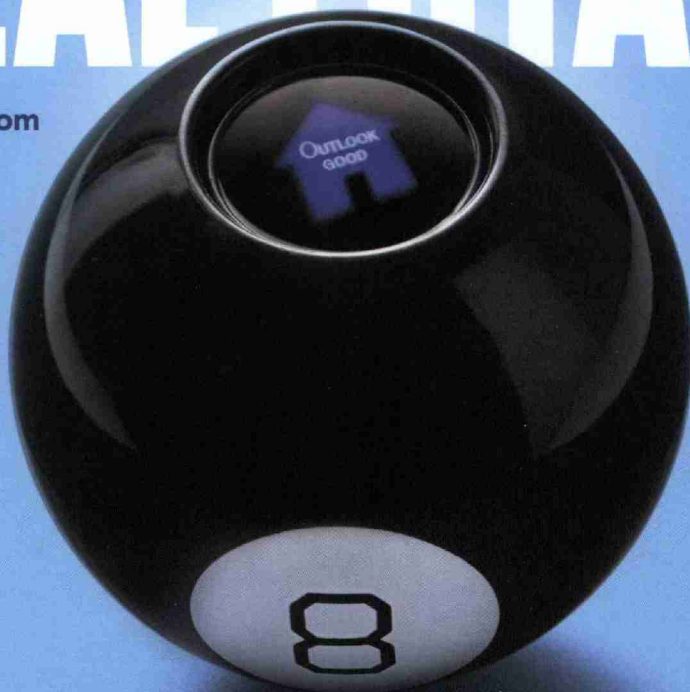
5280

THE
DENVER
MAGAZINE

THE FORTUNE-TELLER'S GUIDE TO DENVER REAL ESTATE

Seeking Wisdom
About The
Future Of
The Mile-High
Market?
Our Experts
Reveal Their
Predictions.

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A BEGINNER'S
MANUAL TO ROCK
CLIMBING IN
COLORADO

BY KASEY CORDELL

THE STATE'S VERY
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CAN THREE
STARTUPS REMAKE
LOCAL NEWS?

BY MICHAEL BEHAR

MAY 2019 | 5280.com

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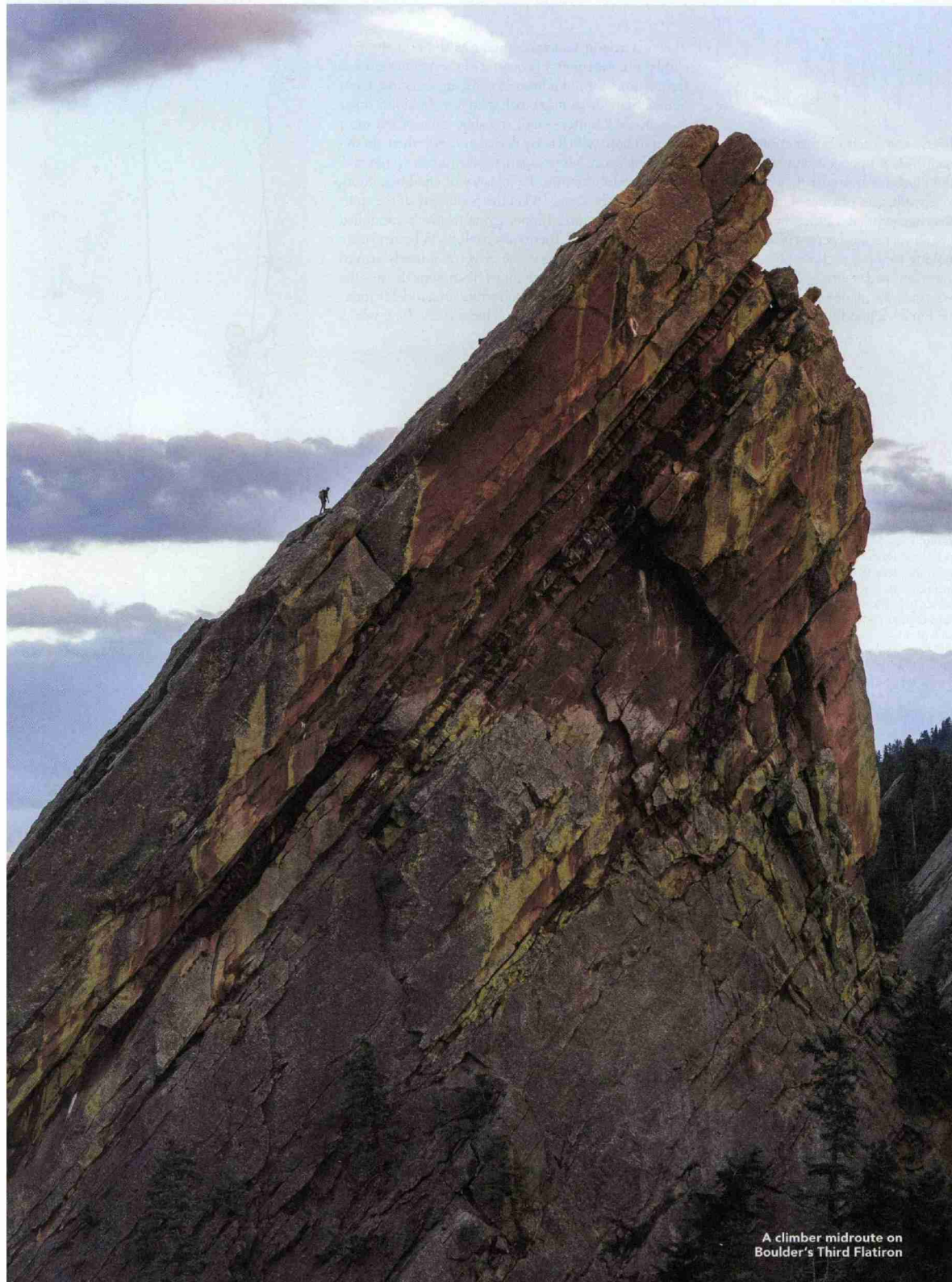
ROCK
SOLID

A beginner's guide to Colorado climbing.
 BY KASEY CORDELL

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RAMI NIEMI

92 | 5280 | MAY 2019

The cover features a large, bold title 'ROCK SOLID' in red and black. Below the title, a cartoon illustration of a climber is shown against a background of a sunset over a mountain range. The climber is wearing a yellow helmet and a red shirt, and is holding a rope. The background shows a vast landscape with mountains and a body of water under a colorful sky.



THE BASICS

There's a reason Colorado produces some of the best climbers in the country (a quarter of the national team is from here). With hundreds of climbing areas, the Centennial State owns more rock than just about any other state in the country—and, arguably, some of the most diverse and accessible year-round. But if you weren't born with a belay device in hand, where do you begin? Once upon a time, climbing was a mentoring sport. More experienced climbers would take ambitious noobs under their wings and safely introduce them to the logistics of climbing: knots, rope work, gear placement, technique, environmental ethics, etc. Today, the popularity of the sport has changed that a little; there are more rookies than mentors. Indoor gyms' relatively controlled environments are a decent place to start learning (see page 100). There's also, well, us. Whether you're looking to dip a sticky-rubber-clad toe into Colorado's climbing scene or you're a newly arrived transplant with a crag addiction, this insider's guide to exploring Centennial State stone delivers the practical information every beginner needs before chalking up. It's no substitute for a real-life mentor, but it's a good first step to finding your place, and your people, in Colorado's climbing world.

The Climber's Dictionary

An occasionally illustrated glossary.

Belay: The system and rope technique used to prevent a climber from falling to the ground, with the aid of a belay device (like an assisted-braking Petzl Grigri or a tubular device such as an Air Traffic Controller, or ATC). The partner minding the rope while the other person climbs is called the belayer. (1)

Beta: Information or tips about a route or problem. (2)

Bouldering: Ascending large rocks, typically up to about 20 feet in height, or traversing a low rock face with no ropes. Routes on boulders are called "problems," and a single boulder will often have multiple problems on it. Boulders protect their falls by placing large, thick mats—"crash pads"—near the base of the problem. (3)

Crag: A specific cliff face or section of rock with multiple routes on it. Guidebooks often break down climbing destinations, such as Eldorado Canyon State Park, by crags. (4)

Crimper: A small hold that requires climbers to clasp down—or crimp—with their finger tips to hang on.

Crux: The most difficult part of a route or problem. (5)

Free climbing: Climbing a route using only the hands, feet, and other body parts, with no

assistance from the rope or gear to move upward. (The rope is only used to protect falls.)

Free solo: To climb a route without a rope, as Alex Honnold famously did when he soloed Freerider in Yosemite National Park's El Capitan. (6)

Jug: A big, easy-to-grab hold. (7)

Lead: Being the first roped partner up a route; this person clips the rope into bolts or protection she places as the climb progresses.

Pitch: A section of rock that can be climbed in a single rope length; longer routes that require stops at belay stations are known as multipitch climbs.

Protection: Often shortened to "pro," protection encompasses any of the gear clipped along the route or placed in cracks and other rock features to catch falls. Some examples: camming devices ("cams"), hexentrics ("hexes"), nuts, and bolts (which are permanent). A "rack" is a specific set of protection for a climb. (8)

Send: To complete a boulder problem or climbing route in its entirety without falling. ("She sent the route on her second try!") (9)

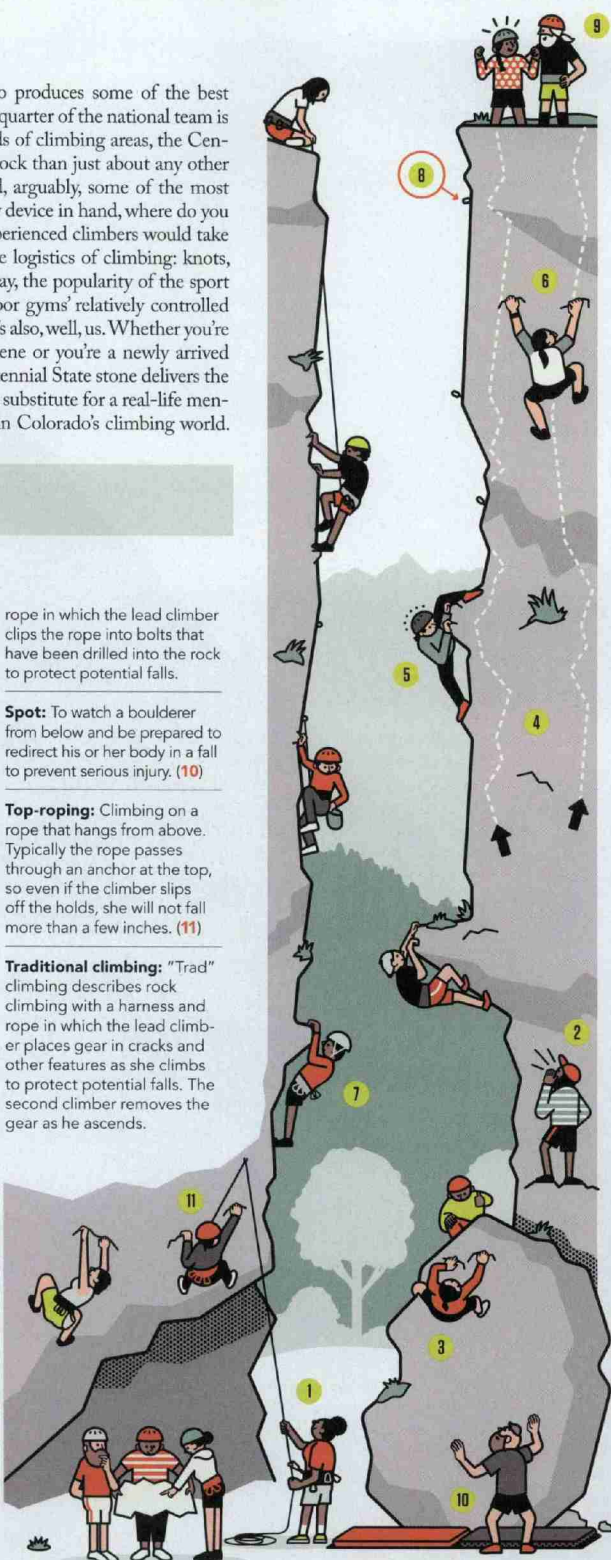
Sport climbing: A form of climbing with a harness and

rope in which the lead climber clips the rope into bolts that have been drilled into the rock to protect potential falls.

Spot: To watch a boulderer from below and be prepared to redirect his or her body in a fall to prevent serious injury. (10)

Top-roping: Climbing on a rope that hangs from above. Typically the rope passes through an anchor at the top, so even if the climber slips, she will not fall more than a few inches. (11)

Traditional climbing: "Trad" climbing describes rock climbing with a harness and rope in which the lead climber places gear in cracks and other features as she climbs to protect potential falls. The second climber removes the gear as he ascends.



FANCY FOOTWEAR

In search of the perfect climbing shoes.

These specialized kicks aren't as comfortable as your everyday sneaks, but they're essential to sticking to stone. Specifically shaped to help you feel features in the rock and outfitted with a specially formulated rubber that grips stone better than your Nikes, climbing shoes are a pricey (\$80 to \$200) but necessary accessory. To find the ideal pair, visit a store with a wide selection (go later because feet swell as the day goes on) and try on a variety of models. We checked in with the experts at Boulder's Neptune Mountaineering for more Cinderella-ing tips.

THE
BETA



La Sportiva Finale This model (\$109) is popular with beginners. Other La Sportiva faves: Mythos and Helix.

STYLE Whether you opt for lace-ups, Velcro straps, or slippers is a personal preference. Lace-ups can provide a more customizable fit, but they're also more of a hassle to put on and take off.

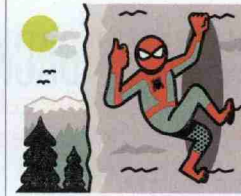
CAMBER Most beginners will want a shoe with a neutral camber. When you look at it from the side, the shoe will appear fairly flat on the bottom, like this one from La Sportiva, an Italian brand that—like fellow Italian company Scarpa—planted its North American headquarters in Colorado. Climbers trade some performance for (relative) comfort with these more neutral shoes, but most novices haven't yet acquired the technique that aggressive shoes—with a dramatically down-turned shape—allow for anyway.

MATERIAL Leather or synthetic? One isn't necessarily better than the other. Experts say to go with what feels good to you. Just know that leather will stretch (sometimes by as much as a full size if it's unlined), whereas synthetic materials won't.

STIFFNESS Softer or more flexible shoes that bend more at the midsole and forefoot allow for greater sensitivity when climbing, which can help encourage proper technique, especially on overhanging terrain. But they also hurt and tire the foot more, leading most neophytes to opt for the stiffer versions until they develop foot strength.

RUBBER Shoes usually have between three and five millimeters of rubber on the soles. Typically, the thicker the rubber, the more durable the shoe. Resoling is, however, an option. Boulder's Rock and Resole and Estes Park's Komito Boots (you can mail them) have both been specializing in climbing shoe repair for at least three decades.

FIT Climbing shoes should be snug but not painful. Toes should touch the ends of the shoes or potentially curl a tiny bit. You might end up wearing a full size (or more) smaller than your street shoes. You also want a tight heel cup so the back of your foot doesn't slip when performing certain moves. If you can easily get a finger between your heel and the shoe, it's too big. Women's models tend to have smaller heels and sit lower on the ankle, so if you have narrow feet—male or female—consider those "low volume" options.



Making The Grade

Understanding U.S. rock climbing ratings.

Sport and traditional rock climbing routes in this country are rated using the Yosemite Decimal System (YDS). The YDS starts with Class 1 (hiking on flat, easy terrain), but technical climbing ratings begin at 5.0 (pronounced "five zero") and increase up to 5.15 (five fifteen). Grades 5.10 (five ten) and up are further broken down with letter designations from a to d (5.10a is easier than 5.10d, for example). Grades can be subjective, but here's generally what to expect.

5.0 to 5.4	Easy. Large hand and foot holds.
5.5 to 5.8	Moderate. Terrain that requires basic rock climbing skills.
5.9 to 5.10	More difficult. Routes that necessitate more advanced techniques.
5.11 to 5.12	Very challenging, technical climbing. Unless you're a gifted athlete, you're not likely to succeed on these routes without a lot of practice and specialized training.
5.13 to 5.15	Spiderman terrain. Professional climbers operate in this realm.
Bouldering Scale	The American bouldering rating system is known as the V scale. It starts with V0 and progresses up to V17 (although very easy problems are designated VB, or V Basic); beginners will want to seek out problems up to about V2.

OUT-YOUR-BACK-DOOR ROUTES

Experience classic Colorado climbing* within a one-hour drive of Denver.

ELDORADO CANYON STATE PARK ♦

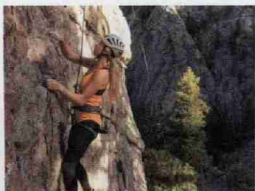
Popularized in the 1950s and '60s by some of Colorado's iconic climbers, "Eldo" is one of Colorado's—and America's—most famous climbing areas. The routes here often feel more difficult than their ratings (climbers call this "sandbagging"), which makes ascending them all the more satisfying. Add in spectacular scenery and the refreshing, natural Eldorado Springs Swimming Pool waiting post-session and you'll understand why more than 500,000 visitors come here annually. Note: Eldo is often windy.

Craggs To Consider:

- The 700-foot-tall Redgarden Wall holds over 300 routes; most are more than one pitch, so good rappelling and route-finding skills are essential.
- For shorter but equally exciting routes, visit the West Ridge.
- In the early 1900s, Ivy Baldwin walked a high wire between Wind Tower and the Bastille—two sandstone pillars that today hold the Wind Ridge and Bastille Crack routes.

BOULDER CANYON ♦ ▲

This 15-mile granite seam comes with short approaches, ample sun on its north-side crags, and shade on the south-side crags. Some



things to know: Crag accessibility varies with creek levels; be prepared to ford it in some cases. And in the spring and summer, some areas close for nesting raptors.

Craggs To Consider:

- Sample some of the canyon's classic crack climbs on the Elephant Butresses' four fat towers.
- The Sport Park is perfect for gym climbers looking to transition to

real rock. Most of the area's 80-plus routes can be top-roped—but get there early to do it because this place bakes once it loses the a.m. shade.

- Animal World's lower section has a mix of easier sport and crack climbs.

THE FLATIRONS ♦ ▲

From the classic trad routes up Boulder's signature sandstone silhouettes (the East Face of the Third Flatiron has been called one of the best beginner climbs in the universe, and we agree) to finger-chewing bouldering on Flagstaff Mountain to boundary-pushing sport climbs, the Flatirons have it all. Be aware: A few crags are subject to raptor and bat closures.

Craggs To Consider:

- The Der Zerkle area for intermediate trad and sport options.
- The Satellite Boulders—look for the Wave, Sputnik, and BBC.
- The Amphitheater's short, easy routes—with lots of top-rope options—make it a popular spot for beginners, especially on hot days, since it's shady. (Shade is more comfortable, and when it's really hot, your shoes don't stick to the rock as well.)

CLEAR CREEK CANYON ♦ ▲

Over 1,000 bolted routes with virtually zero approach sit just 30 minutes west of Denver. If you can overlook the hum of Highway 6, Clear Creek presents plentiful fun sport climbing with little hassle. Climbing style varies wildly with each area, but the beginner spots are typically nice gneiss and schist slabs with quartz features. Expect road noise, crowds, and some loose rock.

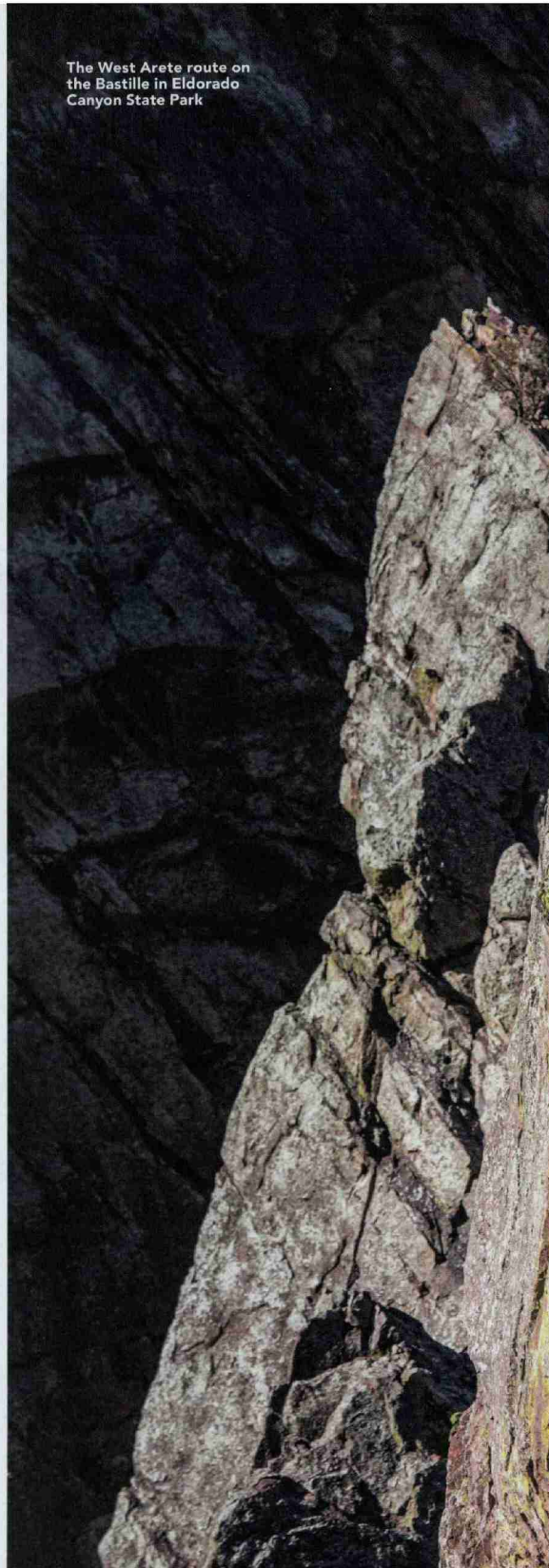
Craggs To Consider:

- The Safari area's Little Five zone offers "slabby" (less than vertical) terrain that stays below 5.5. Visit the Cat Slab for a smorgasbord of 5.5 to 5.9 routes.
- The Canal Zone, near the canyon's entrance outside Golden, holds tons of 5.8s and 5.9s (a few are trad) and stays in the shade until about 2 p.m.
- Nearby, North Table Mountain's basalt cliffs contain nearly 500 routes, most of them easily top-roped. Also close: The bouldering near Morrison is right off the road, gets great early season sun, and offers problems of all difficulties.

*Only if you know what you're doing; else, go with veteran climbers or a guide.

The West Arete route on the Bastille in Eldorado Canyon State Park

This spread, clockwise from left: Chris Weidner; Colin Serio; Courtesy of the Broadmoor; Susan E. Degginger/Alamy Stock Photo





KEY

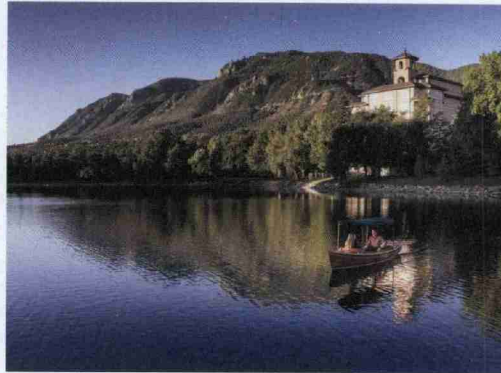
◆ TRADITIONAL

▲ SPORT

■ BOULDERING



ROCK SOLID



STAY & PLAY

The Broadmoor

Initially a casino opened by daring entrepreneur Spencer Penrose, the Broadmoor has long had an adventurous streak. Embrace that penchant with a half or full day of climbing with Broadmoor Outfitters—no gear or experience required. The in-house adventure team takes anyone wanting to sample Colorado Springs stone to one of a host of venues. Cool, dry days are perfect for the sandstone pillars at Garden of the Gods and Red Rock Open Space. North Cheyenne Canyon presents granite options and stays cooler than the sandstone spots, which are off-limits after it rains (sandstone is fragile when wet). Our advice? Request Garden of the Gods' New Era, a multipitch 5.7 up Kindergarten Rock that will give you a new perspective on the plains and the ant-size people wandering the trails a hundred feet below. *From \$1,518 (two people, two nights, and climbing)*

SCHOOL OF ROCK

Breaking down Centennial State stone.

THE BETA

Basalt

This volcanic rock usually creates vertical columns.

FIND IT: Table Mountain

Conglomerate

A sedimentary rock that's very hard and marked by cobbly, gravel-like features.

FIND IT: Castlewood Canyon

Gneiss (pictured)

Gneiss is a metamorphic rock, so it's very hard and can form vertical walls, low-angle cliffs (slabs), and sometimes overhangs.



FIND IT: Clear Creek Canyon, Black Canyon of the Gunnison

Granite

Hard rock, with pretty good friction, that often forms vertical faces and slabs.

FIND IT: Independence Pass, South Platte, Rocky Mountain National Park, Boulder Canyon

Limestone

Created from min-

eral deposits, limestone crags usually contain vertical or overhanging walls that are often characterized by pockets and crimped edges.

FIND IT: Shelf Road, Rifle Mountain Park

Sandstone

Another sedimentary rock, sandstone is sometimes soft and fragile but provides excellent friction for climbing. Cracks and crimps are features often found on sandstone formations.

FIND IT: The Flatirons, Garden of the Gods



STAY & PLAY

Crested Butte Mountain Resort

The Black Canyon of the Gunnison's committing routes are only accessible to advanced climbers, but that's where Cement Creek, Taylor Canyon, and Gunnison Mountain Park come in. These close-to-CB crags are the go-to spots for Irwin Guides, which partners with CBMR's the Lodge at Mountaineer Square to offer stone scampering to all ability levels. We're particularly fond of Taylor Canyon. With generous parking and ultrashort approaches, this picturesque creekside crag hosts at least 50 routes from one pitch to three. Once you've had your fill of granite, return to Irwin's HQ for a cold Session IPA from two-year-old Irwin Brewing Co. right next door. Then shuttle back to the hotel to rest weary muscles while watching the sun set on Mt. Crested Butte from the best seat in town: the outdoor hot tub. *From \$698 (two people, two nights, and climbing)*

THE
BETA

FOLLOW THE LEADER

How to find a rock climbing guide.

Most climbing gyms will be able to recommend a guide. If not, let the American Mountain Guides Association direct your search. The Boulder organization has been certifying outdoor experts in rock climbing, mountaineering, and backcountry skiing for 40 years. A certification from AMGA is an internationally

accepted stamp of approval. AMGA-certified rock guides undergo nearly a month of training—in addition to having years of experience under their harnesses. Certified rock climbing instructors and single-pitch instructors have a little less formal training (16 days and five days, respectively). A few Front Range outfits

that boast AMGA-certified guides and instructors: Golden Mountain Guides, Denver Mountain Guiding, Colorado Mountain School, and Vetta Mountain Guides. The 107-year-old Colorado Mountain Club also leads technical climbing classes and serves as a nexus for meeting both developing and experienced climbers.



KEY



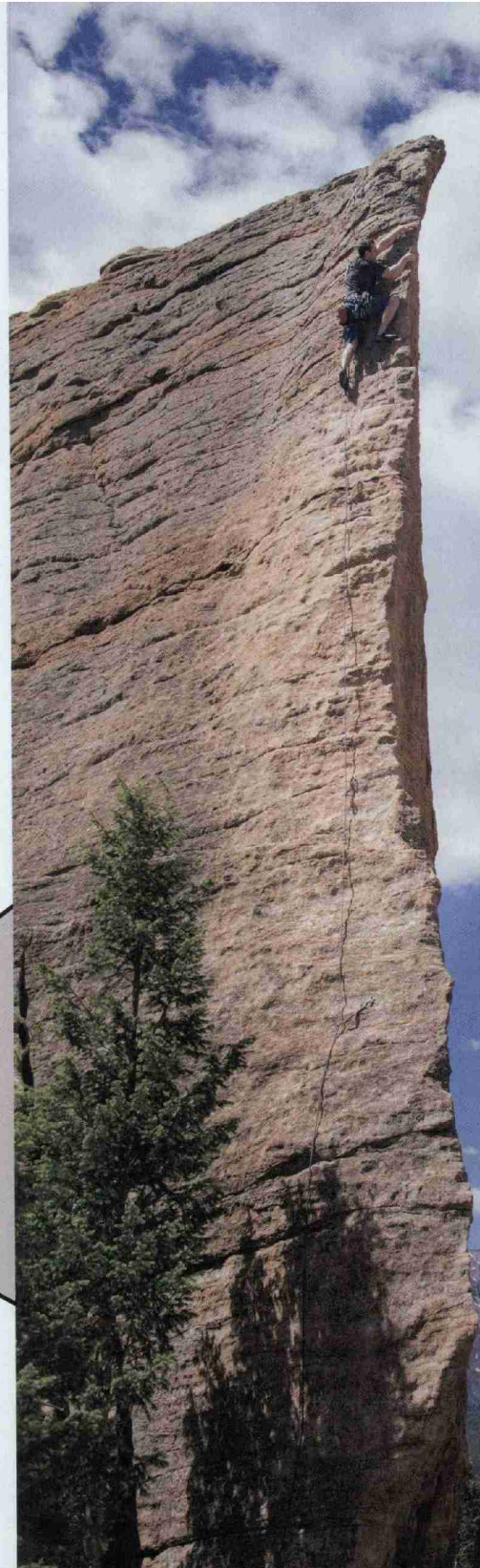
TRADITIONAL



SPORT



BOULDERING



The Edge of Time route at the Jurassic Park-Lily Lake area south of Estes Park

ROCK SOLID

ROAD-TRIP-WORTHY ROCK

Quintessential Colorado climbing* you won't mind logging highway time to reach.

ESTES PARK AREA ◆▲■

There's a reason some of the biggest names in climbing (ahem, Tommy Caldwell of *The Dawn Wall* fame) call Estes Park home: The town affords easy access to exceptional alpine rock. Beginners should be careful here, though; much of the climbing comes with exposure, unpredictable weather, and loose rock. If possible, make your first visits with a guide, like Kent Mountain Adventure Center, a longtime outfitter that also offers a climbing package to Stanley Hotel guests.

Craggs To Consider:

- Many of the routes at Lumpy Ridge fall north of 5,10, but there are some intriguing options for developing trad climbers in the Book area.
- For a little less pucker, head to the Jurassic Park-Lily Lake area's bountiful short (and largely sport) routes.
- Unless you're an experienced alpine climber—or going guided—avoid the higher zones of Rocky Mountain National Park, except for bouldering. Chaos Canyon requires a 45-minute hike but is littered with problems.

SHELF ROAD ▲

Situated near the Royal Gorge, Shelf Road gets about 300 days of sunshine, making its limestone faces an ideal option for early season, late season, and even winter climbing. (That said, you'll cook here in the summer.) Plus, the approaches are short and most of the crags have at least one sport route at every grade, so climbers of different abilities can stick together.

Craggs To Consider:

- The Bank has nearly 200 routes, including about a dozen 5.6s and 5.7s.
- With several different walls, the Gallery allows climbers to chase the sun (or shade) on 150-plus routes.
- Consider the sunny Cactus Cliffs for popular moderates like Crynoid Corner (5.7) and LaCholla Jackson (5.8+).

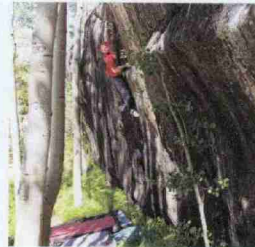
INDEPENDENCE PASS ◆▲■

Granite, granite everywhere. Independence Pass' 30 or so crags are about equally divided between trad

and sport and come with compelling views of the verdant White River National Forest's aspen groves and meadows. Thanks to Highway 82's plentiful pullouts, most approaches require less than a 30-minute haul from your car. They're often steep, though, sometimes on scree, and at 9,000 to 11,000 feet. Don't be shocked if your legs and lungs start screaming.

Craggs To Consider:

- Independence Pass' sun-soaked showpiece, Grotto Walls, presents routes at about every grade level.
- The Upper Boulderfield area and Lincoln Creek offer bouldering op-



tions for beginners and advanced climbers—plus a number of short roped routes (both sport and trad).

SOUTH PLATTE ◆▲

This climbing area spreads from Conifer down to the foothills west of Colorado Springs, and while crags here can be notoriously difficult to find, the South Platte holds everything from crack climbing to technical slabs—and some spectacular vistas. Most of the rock is a skin-chewing granite variety, so be prepared for a little rawness.

Craggs To Consider:

- In Staunton State Park, visit Dines Cliff for a handful of easy trad and top-rope climbs that stay shaded until afternoon, and try the Pooka area for some mellow sport routes.
- Find more trad options at Turkey Rock, a crack climber's paradise.
- Beginning bolt-clippers will like Chicken Head Ranch at Devil's Head and the sport routes on Elevenmile Dome in Elevenmile Canyon.

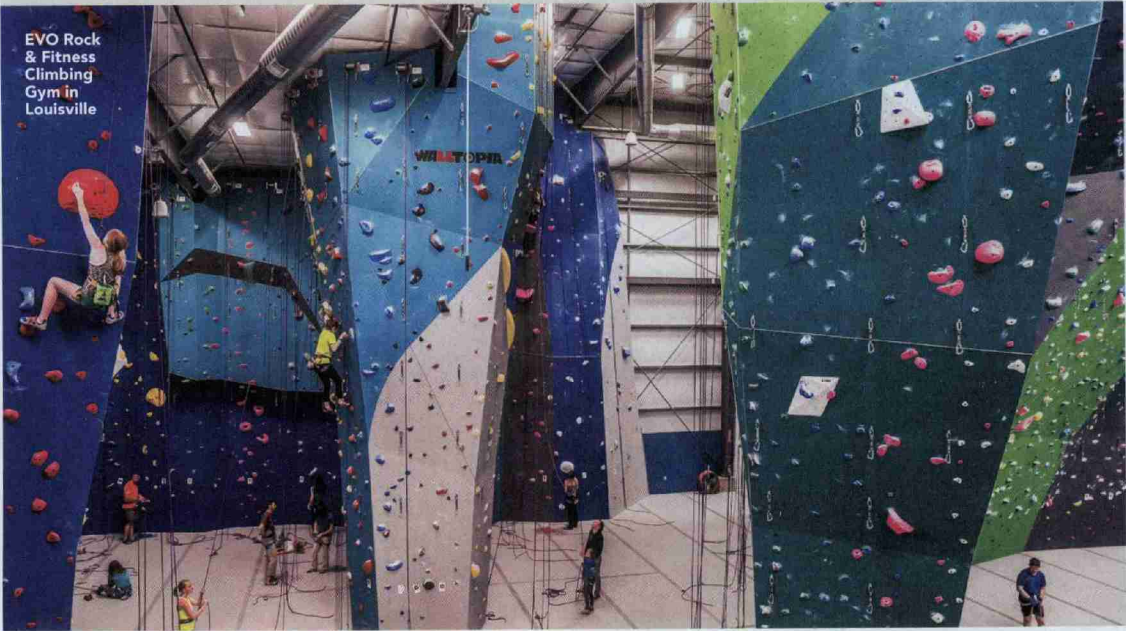
*Where's Rifle? Like the Black Canyon, Rifle is for advanced climbers, not rookies.

This spread: from left, Kurt Schmidt/Courtesy of Crested Butte Mountain Resort; Daron Jacobs; Aaron Colussi

UNTANGLING INDOOR GYMS

In the past couple of years, several new climbing gyms have joined the dozens that already exist along the Front Range. All of these additions house climbing-specific training equipment, weight rooms, and fitness and yoga studios (classes are typically included with membership). We take a look at what each climbing dojo brings to the scene.

GYM, LOCATION & FEES	OPENED	THE BREAKDOWN	SIGNATURE FEATURES	SIGNATURE EVENTS
The Spot Denver 1235 Delaware St. Day pass: \$18 Monthly: \$65	Slated for spring 2019	18,000 square feet of bouldering, with roughly 200 problems	A 25-foot-long horizontal "roof" tests the forearm (and ab and leg) stamina of climbers.	This second Spot iteration plans to host an event similar to the Boulder location's Psychodelia each year (think: costumes, black light, neon paint, and competition.)
Earth Treks Englewood 1050 W. Hampden Ave., Englewood Day pass: \$22 Monthly: \$79	August 2018	More than 250 routes and 200 boulder problems spread across 53,000 square feet	America's largest climbing gym sports 55-foot walls, so you're bound to develop endurance here. Two-for-one intro to climbing classes also encourage friends to get friends addicted.	On May 18, Earth Treks will host USA Climbing's Youth Regionals. And every third Friday, the gym puts on "Rendezvous"—a shindig with themed climbing, local vendors, and a food truck.
Movement RiNo 3201 Walnut St. Day pass: \$22 Monthly: \$82	June 2018	250-plus boulder problems contained in 40,000 square feet	The Boulder Field in the front room lets newbies practice their top-out techniques before moving on to some of the steeper stuff. And Improper City is next door, so the commute to that post-sending beer is mere steps.	Part competition, part party, the Walls Are Meant For Climbing, sponsored by the North Face, will be back again this summer during the Outdoor Retailer Show.
Übergrippen 8610 E. 21st Ave. Day Pass: \$22 Monthly: \$75	June 2017	12,000 square feet of top-rope and lead climbing (more than 100 routes) and 3,000 square feet dedicated to bouldering	A 20-foot overhang on the lead climbing wall helps climbers develop power and technique on steep terrain. Übergrippen aims to be a family-friendly climbing center, and the Alcove speaks to this mission. It boasts 15 lanes of top-roping—great for kids and beginners—plus a boulder with a slide. A community grill and an outdoor fire pit allow for post-climbing picnics.	In March, Übergrippen hosted the Sindy McGriffy's youth competition; this year, 250 kids competed over a weekend. In the fall, the staff will transform Übergrippen into a haunted house and host an amateur competition.
EVO Rock & Fitness Climbing Gym 1754 Dogwood St., Louisville Day Pass: \$21 Monthly: \$79	February 2017	Roughly 150 roped climbs and 100 boulder problems spread across 25,000 square feet	There's a 45-foot-tall lead-only wall with 30 routes, so you're not tripping over top-ropers, and six auto-belay routes, so you can climb even without a partner. "Comp Corner" boulder problems are dynamic, gymnastic puzzles that are reset at least once a week.	Each October, EVO raises money for the Access Fund—a Boulder nonprofit that works to preserve climbing access around the country—with its EVO AF event. The multiday fundraiser includes movie nights, lectures, and silent auctions and last year raised \$8,000.



Courtesy of EVO Rock + Fitness Climbing Gym, Louisville Collection



Mind Your Manners

Climbing gyms might look chaotic, but there's actually a social code at work. Don't be the twerp who breaks it.

► Rule #1

Be aware of where other people are climbing—or potentially falling. That means looking up while you're yakking at the base of a problem *and* when you're getting ready to step onto a problem or route. Double-check that your trajectory doesn't intersect with someone else's.

► Rule #2

Take turns. If someone is clearly waiting at the bottom of a route or problem when you arrive, let him or her go first. Find another route if you can't contain your enthusiasm for a few minutes.



► Rule #3

Offer advice when someone asks for it, but don't assume she wants your beta. Climbing gyms are social places, and most people are happy to hear

how you solved a problem. But wait for them to approach you before spraying unwarranted suggestions.

► Rule #4

Don't poach a route or a problem just to show off. It's one thing to give advice to someone who's struggling when he asks for it (see Rule #3). It's quite another to watch someone struggle from afar, then saunter over and send their challenge with one arm just to prove that you can.

► Rule #5

No bare feet. Ever. Nobody wants their crux covered in foot fungus, so pull your shoes on before you put your dogs on the wall. Be forewarned: Some gyms don't even allow street shoes on holds because, well, who knows what you stepped in on your walk through RiNo?



COLORADO (Climbing) BOOKSHELF

Good guidebooks for the areas we have covered.

Climbing Boulder's Flatirons

Boulder Canyon Rock Climbs

Eldorado Canyon: A Climbing Guide

Rock Climbing Clear Creek

Independence Pass Rock Climbing II

Rocky Mountain National Park: Estes Park Valley: The Climber's Guide

Colorado Bouldering: Front Range

Shelf Road Climbing

South Platte Climbing: The Northern Volume and South Platte Climbing: Thunder Ridge and Turkey Rock Edition

Mountainproject.com also provides excellent user-generated recommendations and up-to-date information about the Centennial State's climbing areas.

ROCK SOLID



STAY & PLAY

Hotel Telluride

On day one of the Hotel Telluride's new Ropes and Rungs package, you'll join a guide from San Juan Outdoor Adventures for climbing at nearby Clay Creek or the Ophir Wall. Clay Creek gives newbies several single-pitch routes in a shaded, easy-to-access area, allowing larger groups to lap routes all day. Ophir Wall, a 600-foot-tall rhyolite masterpiece, attracted accomplished climbers from Yosemite when it first started seeing ascents in the 1970s. But fear not if you're a first-timer; you'll stick to the slabber options on the east end of the impressive wall. These mellower climbs still afford incredible perspectives on the southern San Juans, though, and require enough juice to warrant partaking in the Hotel Telluride's complimentary afternoon milk and cookies. Fuel up, because day two will have you scaling Telluride's via ferrata—a kind of scrambling-meets-aid-climbing route that takes guests more than 500 feet above the box canyon. \$1,781 (two people, three nights, and climbing)

THE BETA

THE RIGHT STUFF

Colorado gear for Centennial State climbers.

TRANGO ZENITH HELMET \$100

Founded by legendary Colorado climber Malcolm Daly in 1991, Trango makes, well, everything for climbing: ropes, harnesses, carabiners, quickdraws, and other gear. The one essential piece of equipment every roped climber should have? A helmet. Trango offers two types: the Sicuro and the Zenith.

FRICTION LABS CHALK FROM \$10

This Denver company manufactures three varieties of 100 percent magnesium carbonate climbing chalk to counteract sweaty palms: Unicorn Dust is the finest, then Gorilla Grip, then Bam Bam.



KINETIK CHALK BAGS & BUCKETS FROM \$23

Whether you're in the market for a chalk bag (for routes) or a chalk bucket (for bouldering), 11-year-old Boulder-based Kinetic will ensure you're looking stylish with its customizable color choices—perfect for your Friction Labs chalk.

OSPREY MUTANT CLIMBING PACK \$100

Designed with input from Colorado climbing guides, the Mutant is a durable pack with room for rope, rack, shoes, and snacks—and has a wide-mouth opening for accessibility. The Durango bag maker even created places for crampons and ice tools, should you trade your shoes for boots come winter. ▲