

Read Macadam

ROCK CLIMBING IN SAUDI ARABIA

Olympic Crag, Al Shafa



الإتحاد السعودي للتسلق
SAUDI CLIMBING FEDERATION

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Rock Climbing in Saudi Arabia Al Shafa
Saudi Climbing Federation
www.climbing.sa

Created by Read Macadam, December 2018

Cover Photo: P.Lotito, What I'm Waiting For 7c ©Read Macadam 2018



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DISCLAIMER

Rock climbing is a dangerous sport that can lead to serious injury or worse. The fact that a route is described in this book does not mean that it is safe for you, nor does the information in this guide list every possible hazard you may encounter. You should not climb without the proper training or equipment.

The details of the climbs in this guide, their grades, reference to protection and heights should be treated with extreme caution. Climbs can change due to natural events; holds fall down, rock becomes dirty, in-situ gear changes or deteriorates or disappears. Even small alterations can have a significant effect on the grade or seriousness of a route so it is therefore the responsibility of you, the climber, to judge the condition of any route for yourself before and during climbing.

Great effort has been made to make the routes as safe as possible and also in compiling the information for this guide however the Saudi Climbing Federation, the author and the route developers cannot be held responsible for any omissions or mistakes, nor be held liable for any personal or third party injuries or damage, howsoever caused, arising from use of this guide or the climbing sites.



INTRODUCTION

Olympic Crag is the first complete climbing venue developed in the Kingdom and the name, Olympic, is an homage to the future generations of climbers in Saudi Arabia.

The bullet golden granite rivals that of Chamonix - it is a world class climbing venue - and with 38 routes from 4 to the 8th grade in both sport and trad styles at just 2.5 hours from Jeddah and 45 minutes from Taif Airport, Olympic Crag is destined to become a focal point for climbing in Saudi Arabia.

The development of the work was undertaken by the Saudi Climbing Federation during the first phase of the Saudi Bolting Project. The trail, routes and base of the crag were created between November 1st and 12th, 2018 by a team led by the author, Read Macadam - best known for his climbing development in the Sultanate of Oman - A. Guide Alpine Carlo Giuliberti and Piergiorgio Lotito and accomplished climber Alex Ruscior, all based in Turin, Italy.

At 2,300m altitude and morning shade, Olympic Crag is a crag for all seasons. Weather changes fast in these mountains so it is advised to pack warm and for rain.

More initiatives of the Saudi Climbing Federation can be found at www.climbing.sa

Olympic Crag, Al Shafa guidebook December 2018

Material:

Raumer Superstar 10mm x 80mm 316L stainless steel glue-in bolts with Hilti RE500 V3 epoxy. All of the lower-offs are Raumer Superstar 10mm x 100mm 316L combo chains with a fixed stainless steel carabiner.



DIRECTIONS

OLYMPIC CRAG

21° 2'41.24"N 40°21'9.47"E

65KM FROM TAIF AIRPORT
220M FROM JEDDAH
830KM FROM RIYADH

45 MINS
2.5 HOURS
8.5 HOURS

COORDINATES

	21° 6'15.66"N 40°20'10.02"E		21° 4'5.83"N 40°19'25.47"E
	21° 5'31.05"N 40°22'10.18"E		21° 3'41.89"N 40°19'58.18"E
	21° 3'27.42"N 40°20'56.20"E		21° 2'39.78"N 40°20'58.23"E

From Taif: Following Route 267 south towards Ash Shafa, exit left onto route 4335 at GPS point 1. After 4.1km turn right (GPS point 2). After 5.1km turn right at GPS point 3.

Follow the road over the mountain. The cliff will come into view, descend the switchbacks and exit the road onto the dirt track on your right to the parking.

From Al Shafa: Exit route 4370 at GPS point A onto road 4042. Turn left at GPS point B after 1.3km and then right after 300m onto road 4249. Follow until GPS point 3 then follow directions as above.

The trail is marked by cairns beginning at the far terrace. Approach time 20 minutes.

3

Al Shafa

RULES OF THE CRAG

- Never ever litter. Carry out more than you brought in
- Stay on the beaten trails. Do not cut trees
- Never modify the rock. Brush excess chalk and tick marks
- Always partner check and tie a knot in the end of your rope
- Respect the local culture, residents, animals, property and other climbers
- Dispose of human waste and paper appropriately. Leave no trace
- Use your own gear for top-roping, the last climber descends on the fixed gear

SECTOR MAP

THE BIG SHOW

**SCHOOL OF
ROCK**

BASECAMP

LOWER WALL

SCHOOL OF ROCK

Located at the far left side of Olympic Crag. In the shade until the afternoon.



	ROUTE NAME	GRADE	BOLTS	LENGTH	DESCRIPTION
1	MOKLEY	5c+	7	12m	Technical friction slab
2	BAYROU PIZZA	4	6	12m	Easy slab. Named in honour of our friend who fed us at his great place to eat In Taif
3	MADRASAT AL KUNG FU	6c	12	20m	Direct up the obvious arch feature.
4	AL FAWZO MO'AKKAD	7b	8	18m	Small crimps to a tricky finish
5	LA TATARADAD	6c	5	16m	Follow the left trending undercling rail. Mantle finish. Belay from the ground
6	SABIQ	5c	7	14m	Left trending crack and slab
7	TA'ANI WA ITQAN	7a	7	14m	Shares the first three bolts with SABIQ and then up the bouldery face to the right

Pay attention while lowering off of Mokley as the centre of gravity will take the climber into the trees on the left. Back clipping is advised for top-roping.

Amblypygi, one of the unique (and harmless) animals that calls Olympic Crag home. Let's do our part to preserve their habitat.

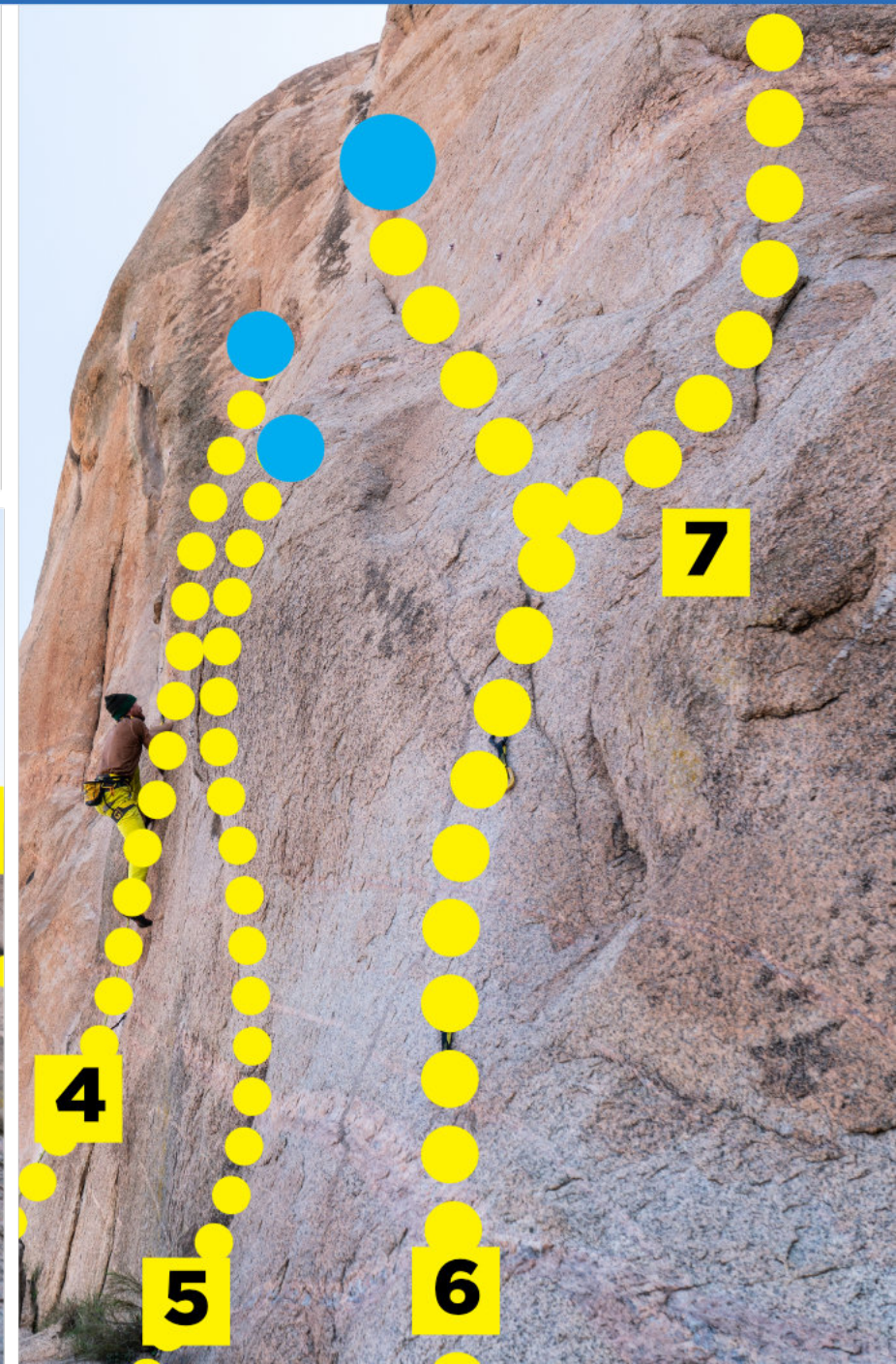


SCHOOL OF ROCK

Located at the far left side of Olympic Crag. In the shade until the afternoon.

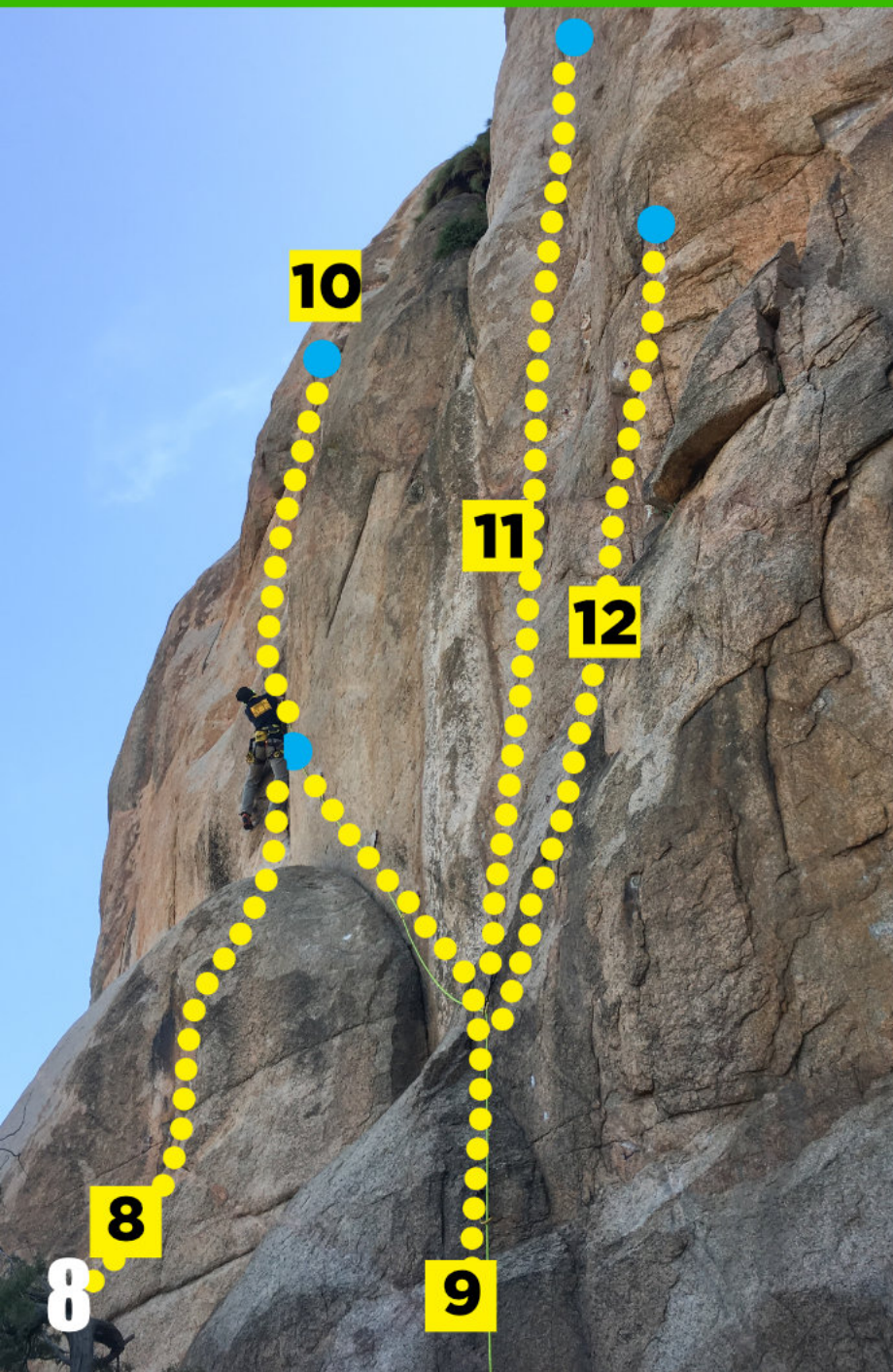
Madrasat Al Kungfu begins next to Bayrou Pizza, climbing up the bolted slab.

Al Fawzo Mo'Akkad and La Tataradad are belayed from the ground and the climber begins by walking up to the ledge by the gully on the right, between the boulder and the slab.



BASECAMP

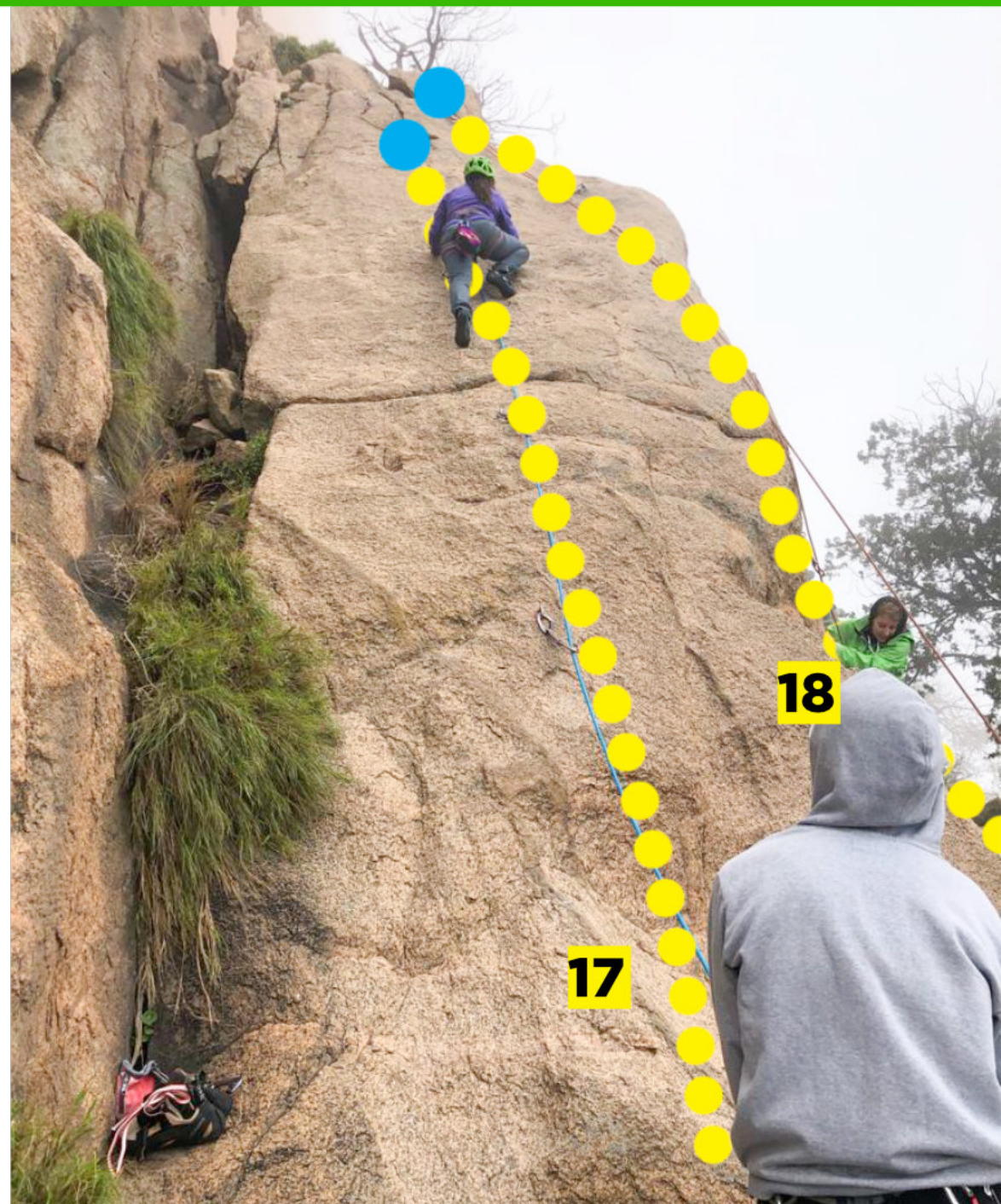
This is the top of the approach. A place to drop your bags and begin the day. The wall comes into the sun in the afternoon



	ROUTE NAME	GRADE	BOLTS	LENGTH	DESCRIPTION
8	MENTAL MANTLE	6c	6	15m	Directly up the two bulges
9	MATAR L1	5b	6	10m	Follow the left trending crack
10	MATAR L2	6b+	14	22m	From the top of the crack continue up the corner
11	BLADE RUNNER	7a+	13	22m	Technical with a sting at the top. Shares the first bolts with LO BAGI LAILA
12	LO BAGI LAILA	6a	7	14m	Techical climbing to reach the chains
13	SHAMAL SHARQ	5a	8	14m	Easy slab and groove running up and right
14	LAIL	6a+	8	16m	Belay up the gulley, take the first exit at the strenuous crack on the left.
15	FLOW L1	6a	11	10m	Belay up the gulley, follow the easy crack after LAIL
16	FLOW L2	6c	18	28m	Continuous and balancy face climbing on edges
17	ADNAN	5c	6	14m	Balancy friction slab climbing
18	LINA	5b	7	14m	A small crux to reach the slab and then cruisy to the top

BASECAMP

This is the top of the approach. A place to drop your bags and begin the day. The wall comes into the sun in the afternoon





Carlo Giuliberti testing out Flow 6c while Piergiorgio Lotito cleans the top Lo Bagi Laila in the background, November 10, 2018.

LOWER WALL

The base of the grand, main face. Although it seems short, this cliff is packed full of diverse climbs on perfect granite. It benefits from the early morning shade.



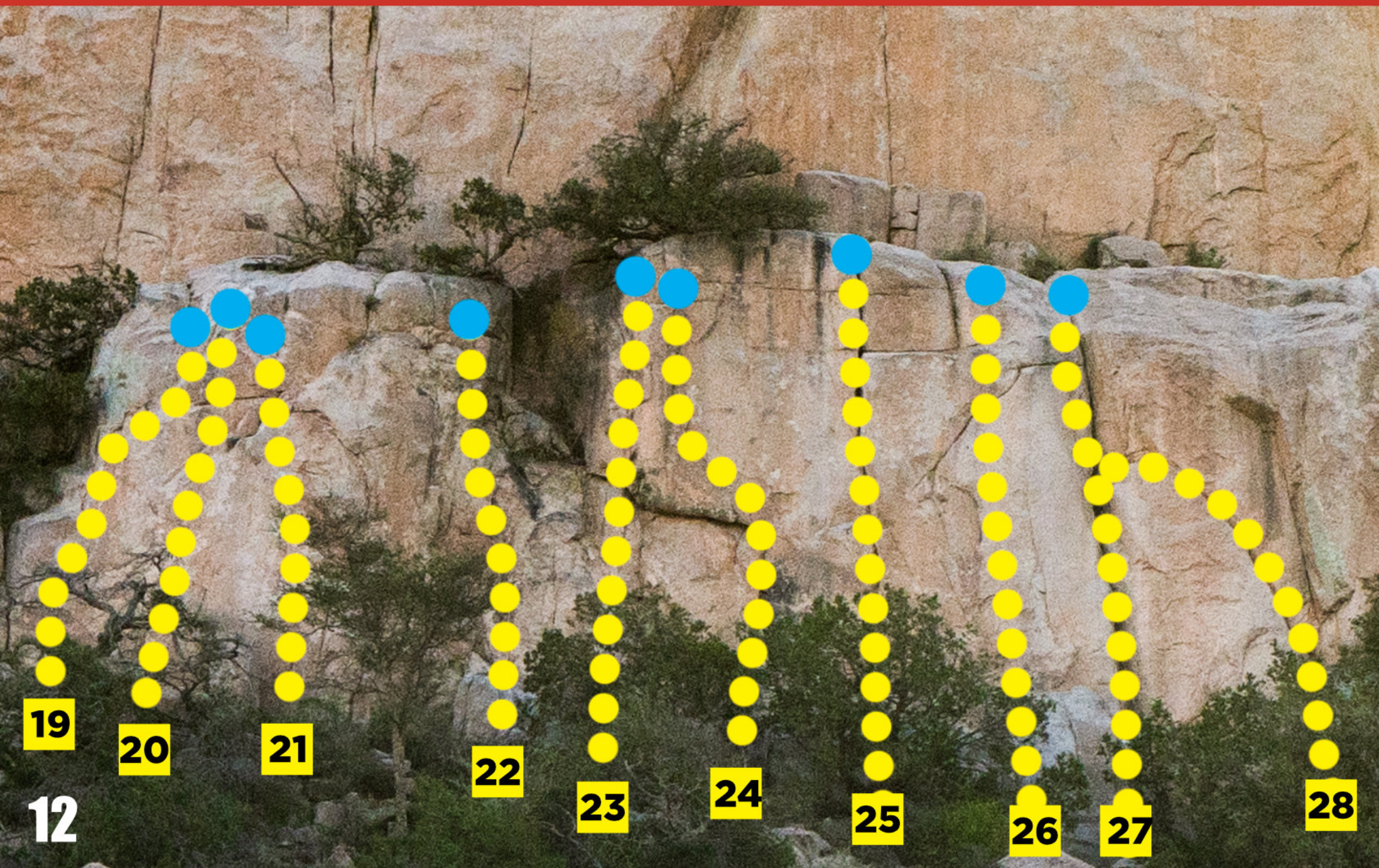
	ROUTE NAME	GRADE	BOLTS	LENGTH	DESCRIPTION
19	YAMEEN	6a+	7	16m	A crux at mid-height guards the traverse.
20	MAHARAH	7a	8	16m	Bouldering on a rope
21	ANQITHOONI	6b	6	16m	Follow the pink band of rock
22	BASEETA	5a	5	12m	Big holds. Trend up and left towards the trees.
23	BAHR AL KHAYAL	6b+	7	14m	Up the left side of the small buttress. Layback!
24	LA TFAKKER FEEHA	7a+	7	14m	Traverse up and left off of the large flake feature. Think less, climb more!
25	E3TAMID	6a+	0	16m	Perfect hand jam crack.
26	TEARS OF JOY	7c	7	14m	Technical face climbing. Incredible Rock.
27	LA TAI'AS	6b	0	14m	Wide flared crack.
28	LA TABKI	6c	0	14m	Begin on the crack right of la TAI'AS and traverse into the same finish

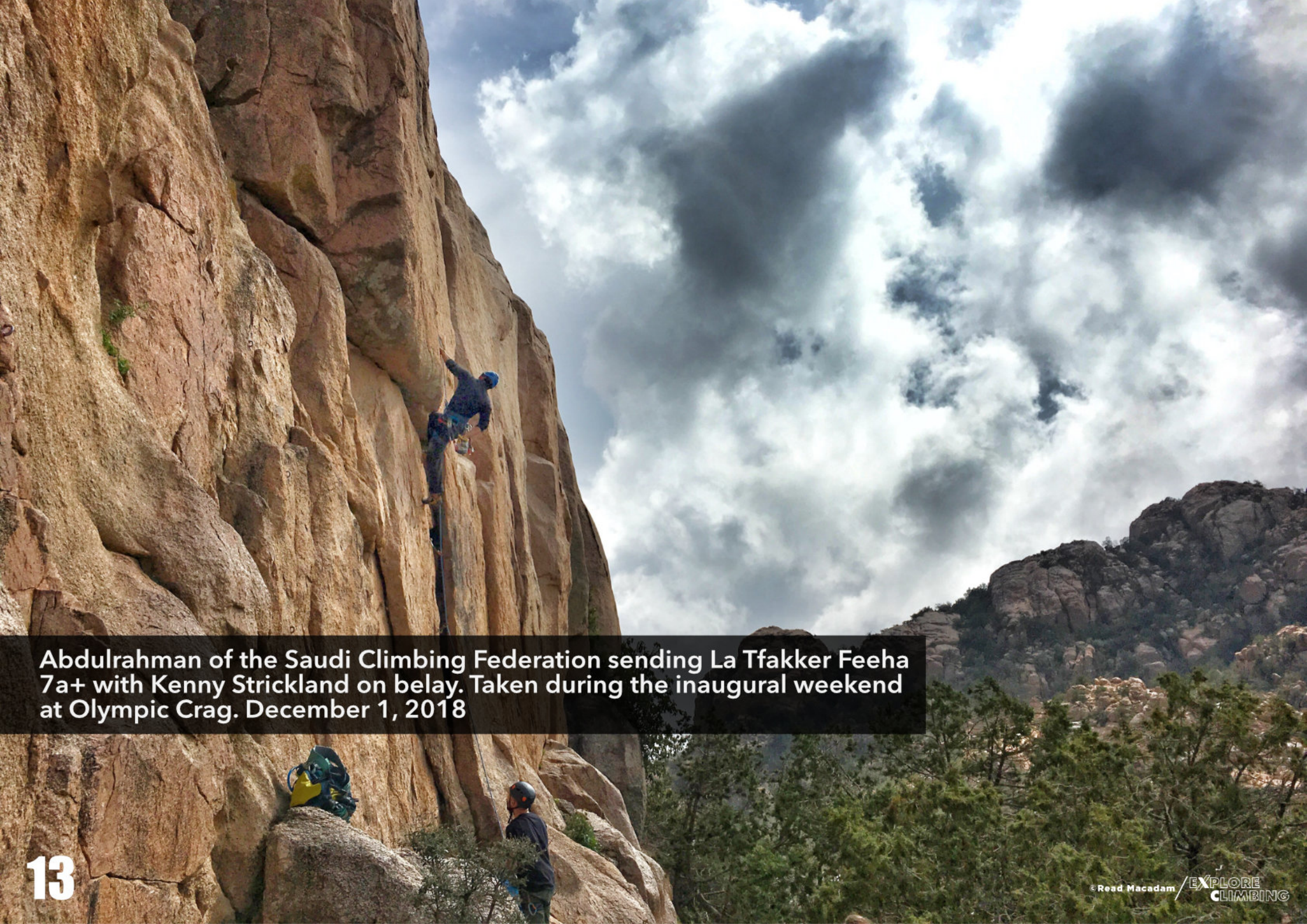
Read Macadam, Tears of Joy 7c. Named because the rock is just that good.

Photo: Alex Ruscior

LOWER WALL

The base of the grand, main face. Although it seems short, this cliff is packed full of diverse climbs on perfect granite. It benefits from the early morning shade.

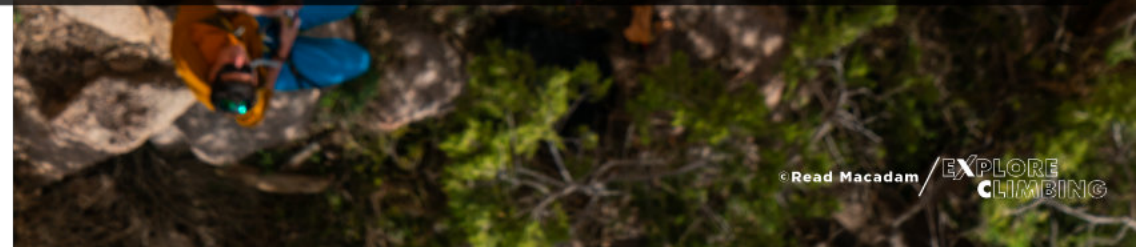




Abdulrahman of the Saudi Climbing Federation sending La Tfakker Feeha 7a+ with Kenny Strickland on belay. Taken during the inaugural weekend at Olympic Crag. December 1, 2018



Carlo Giuliberti and Piergiorgio Lotito testing out E3tamid 6a+ Nov 12, 2018. The granite around Al Shafa full of crack climbing potential so we decided to leave the obvious crack lines without bolts for the future trad climbing community of Saudi Arabia.



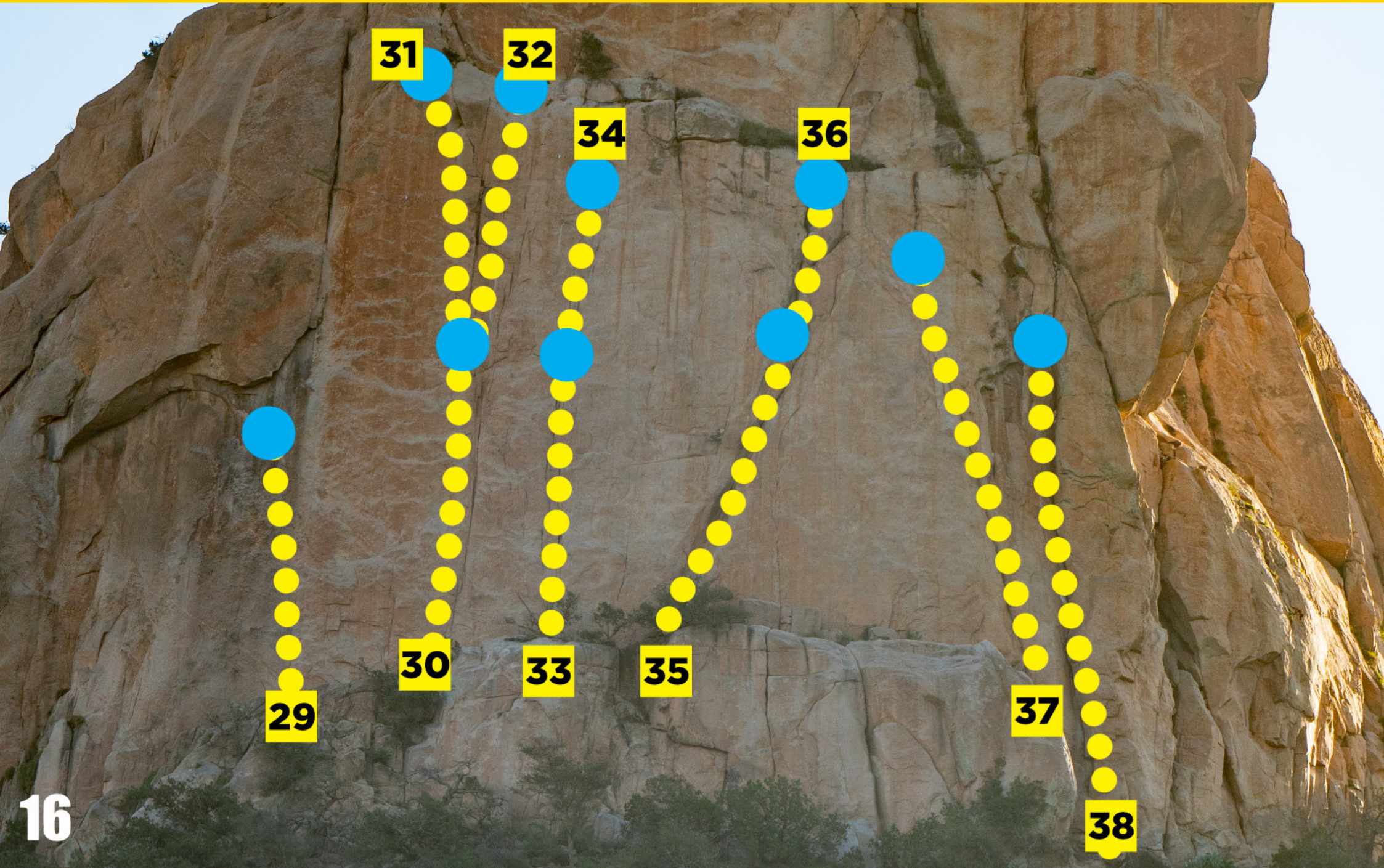
THE BIG SHOW

World class, tall, airy. These endurance test-pieces on perfect granite are all 5 star lines. In the shade all morning.

ROUTE NAME		GRADE	BOLTS	LENGTH	DESCRIPTION
29	BLADES OF STEEL	7c+/8a	10	24m	Technical vertical climbing on small holds
30	MAN OF STEEL L1	7a+	11	20m	First part of Steel Pulse and Iron Man. Bouldery beginning and then endurance in and out of the crack
31	STEEL PULSE L2 LEFT	7c	20	32m	Left extension of Man of Steel. Resistance climbing until the end
32	IRON MAN L2 RIGHT	?	18	32m	Will likely become the toughest route in Saudi Arabia when it is freed
33	IN MY MIND L1	7a+	11	22m	First part of In My Head. Slippery jamming down low
34	IN MY HEAD L2	8a	18	32m	Second half of in My Mind. Crux at the end very end. Sustained
35	WHAT I'M WAITING FOR L1	7b	10	22m	The groove tube. 3d climbing on granite. Simply incredible
36	WHAT I'M WAITING FOR L2	7c	13	30m	The full groove tube. Adds a boulder after the chain of L1
37	SAUDI JAM	8a	13	32m	Depart from the small ledge. Insecure jamming for the first part then break out onto the face at the top
38	YALLA TIME	7a+	0	32m	Crack Climbing masterpiece. Magnificent. Onsighted by Carlo.

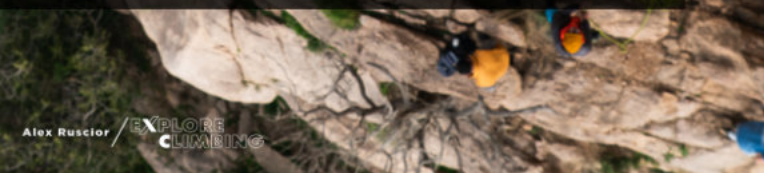
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World class, tall, airy. These endurance test-pieces on perfect granite are all 5 star lines. In the shade all morning.





Piergiorgio, Lotito. Blades of Steel 7c+



Alex Ruscior, Steel Pulse 7c



Read Macadam, What I'm Waiting for 7c



Carlo Giuliberti, Yalla Time 7a+

LIST OF CLIMBS IN ORDER OF DIFFICULTY

TOPO REF.	ROUTE NAME	GRADE	BOLTS	LENGTH	DESCRIPTION	AUTHORS	FIRST ASCENT	SECTOR	PAGE	ORIENTATION
2	BAYROU PIZZA	4	6	12m	Easy slab. Named in honour of our friend who fed us at his great place to eat in Taif.	C.Giuliberti & R.Macadam	C.Giuliberti	School of Rock	6	North North West
13	SHAMAL SHARQ	5a	8	14m	Easy slab and groove running up and right	I.A.Ruscior	I.A.Ruscior	Basecamp	9	North North West
22	BASEETA	5a	5	12m	Big holds. Trend up and left towards the trees.	C.Giuliberti	Kenny	Lower Wall	12	West
9	MATAR L1	5b	6	10m	Follow the left trending crack	C.Giuliberti	C.Giuliberti	Basecamp	8	North North West
18	LINA	5b	7	14m	A small crux to reach the slab and then cruisy to the top	R.Macadam	Jose	Basecamp	9	North North West
6	SABIQ	5c	7	14m	Left trending crack and slab	R.Macadam	R.Macadam	School of Rock	7	North North West
17	ADNAN	5c	6	14m	Balancy friction slab climbing	P.Lotito	Y.Gahtani	Basecamp	9	North North West
1	MOKLEY	5c+	7	12m	Technical friction slab	C.Giuliberti & R.Macadam	C.Giuliberti	School of Rock	6	North North West
12	LO BAGI LAILA	6a	7	14m	Technical climbing to reach the chains	P.Lotito	P.Lotito	Basecamp	8	North North West
15	FLOW L1	6a	11	10m	Belay up the gulley, follow the easy crack after LAIL	I.A.Ruscior	I.A.Ruscior	Basecamp	9	North North West

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TOPO REF.	ROUTE NAME	GRADE	BOLTS	LENGTH	DESCRIPTION	AUTHORS	FIRST ASCENT	SECTOR	PAGE	ORIENTATION
14	LAIL	6a+	8	16m	Belay up the gulley, take the first exit at the strenuous crack on the left.	I.A.Ruscior	I.A.Ruscior	Basecamp	9	North North West
19	YAMEEN	6a+	7	16m	A crux at mid-height guards the traverse.	R.Macadam	P.Lotito	Lower Wall	12	West
25	E3TAMID	6a+	0	16m	Perfect hand jam crack.	R.Macadam	P.Lotito	Lower Wall	12	West
21	ANQITHOONI	6b	6	16m	Follow the pink band of rock	C.Giuliberti	Jose	Lower Wall	12	West
27	LA TAI'AS	6b	0	14m	Wide flared crack.	P.Lotito	C.Giuliberti	Lower Wall	12	West
10	MATAR L2	6b+	14	22m	From the top of the crack continue up the corner	C.Giuliberti	C.Giuliberti	Basecamp	8	North North West
23	BAHR AL KHAYAL	6b+	7	14m	Up the left side of the small buttress. Layback!	C.Giuliberti & I.A.Ruscior	C.Giuliberti & I.A.Ruscior	Lower Wall	12	West
3	MADRASAT AL KUNG FU	6c	12	20m	Direct up the obvious arch feature.	P.Lotito, I.A.Ruscior & R.Macadam	P.Lotito	School of Rock	7	North North West
5	LA TATARADAD	6c	5	16m	Follow the left trending undercling rail. Mantle finish. Belay from the ground	C.Giuliberti	C.Giuliberti	School of Rock	7	North North West
8	MENTAL MANTLE	6c	6	15m	Directly up the two bulges	C.Giuliberti	C.Giuliberti	Basecamp	8	North North West

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28	LA TABKI	6c	0	14m	Begin on the crack right of la TAI'AS and traverse into the same finish	P.Lotito	C.Giuliberti	Lower Wall	12	West
7	TA'ANI WA ITQAN	7a	7	14m	Shares the first three bolts with SABIQ and then up the bouldery face to the right	R.Macadam	R.Macadam	School of Rock	7	North North West
20	MAHARAH	7a	8	16m	Bouldering on a rope	R.Macadam	R.Macadam	Lower Wall	12	West
11	BLADE RUNNER	7a+	13	22m	Technical with a sting at the top. Shares the first bolts with LO BAGI LAILA	P.Lotito	P.Lotito	Basecamp	8	North North West
24	LA TFAKKER FEEHA	7a+	7	14m	Traverse up and left off of the large flake feature. Think less, climb more!	C.Giuliberti & I.A.Ruscior	C.Giuliberti & I.A.Ruscior	Lower Wall	12	West
30	MAN OF STEEL L1	7a+	11	20m	First part of Steel Pulse and Iron Man. Bouldery beginning and then endurance in and out of the crack	R.Macadam & I.A.Ruscior	I.A.Ruscior	Big Show	16	West
33	IN MY MIND L1	7a+	11	22m	First part of In My Head. Slippery jamming down low	P.Lotito & C.Giuliberti	P.Lotito	Big Show	16	West
38	YALLA TIME	7a+	0	32m	Crack Climbing masterpiece. Magnificent. Onsighted by Carlo.	C.Giuliberti	C.Giuliberti	Big Show	16	West

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TOPO REF.	ROUTE NAME	GRADE	BOLTS	LENGTH	DESCRIPTION	AUTHORS	FIRST ASCENT	SECTOR	PAGE	ORIENTATION
4	AL FAWZO MO'AKKAD	7b	8	18m	Small crimps to a tricky finish	R.Macadam	R.Macadam	School of Rock	7	North North West
35	WHAT I'M WAITING FOR L1	7b	10	22m	The groove tube. 3d climbing on granite. Simply incredible	P.Lotito & C.Giuliberti	P.Lotito	Big Show	16	West
26	TEARS OF JOY	7c	7	14m	Technical face climbing. Incredible Rock.	C.Giuliberti	C.Giuliberti	Lower Wall	12	West
31	STEEL PULSE L2 LEFT	7c	20	32m	Left extension of Man of Steel. Resistance climbing until the end	R.Macadam & I.A.Ruscior	R.Macadam	Big Show	16	West
36	WHAT I'M WAITING FOR L2	7c	13	30m	The full groove tube. Adds a boulder after the chain of L1	P.Lotito & C.Giuliberti	C.Giuliberti	Big Show	16	West
29	BLADES OF STEEL	7c+/8a	10	24m	Technical vertical climbing on small holds	I.A.Ruscior	C.Giuliberti	Big Show	16	West
34	IN MY HEAD L2	8a	18	32m	Second half of in My Mind. Crux at the end very end. Sustained	P.Lotito & C.Giuliberti	C.Giuliberti	Big Show	16	West
37	SAUDI JAM	8a	13	32m	Depart from the small ledge. Insecure jamming for the first part then break out onto the	C.Giuliberti & P.Lotito	C.Giuliberti	Big Show	16	West
32	IRON MAN L2 RIGHT	?	18	32m	Will likely become the toughest route in Saudi Arabia when it is freed	R.Macadam & I.A.Ruscior	Untried	Big Show	16	West



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