

# SINAI ROCK CLIMBING GUIDE



A silhouette of a person rock climbing a large, textured rock face. The climber is positioned on the left side of the frame, reaching up with one hand and foot. A rope is attached to a carabiner on the rock face. The rock face is depicted with various shades of brown and tan, giving it a rugged appearance. The climber is wearing a helmet and a harness.

# SINAI ROCK CLIMBING CENTRE

[www.sinairockclimbing.com](http://www.sinairockclimbing.com)  
A DESERT DIVERS Adventure



## **Foreword**

"Perfect cracks and chimneys... golden and bulging slabs... vast areas of unclimbed lines."

These are new words to me. Words that I, and other Bedouin, have learned from the climbers. For the climbers are the most recent pilgrims to the Sinai desert of Egypt, and they love our mountains (our "warm dry granite crags") as much as we do!

Rock Climbing is the big new adventure in the Sinai, and there are a few people we need to thank for helping us get it started.

First & foremost, a very big thank you to all of the early climbers who have found their way to the Sinai. You have given us a new way to share our desert with adventurous, eco-minded tourists. We are happy to guide & cook for you, and to use our jeeps (and sometimes even our camels!) to carry your gear from crag to crag. The climbers adapt easily to the Bedouin life, and it is nice to share a piece of it with you.

I would also like to thank the journalists who are helping us spread the word:

- ❖ In 2006, Wynand Groenewegen added the Sinai to "Rock Climbing Atlas, Greece & Middle East". (Rocks Unlimited Publications, Utrecht, Netherlands)
- ❖ In 2009, Nic Fleming published a feature article in the UK's Climber magazine (August 2009). They are his words I've used to introduce this Foreword.
- ❖ More recently, the home crowd has started to get interested in Rock Climbing. In May 2010, Egypt Today's Erik Stier described rock climbing as, "The New Diving".

Finally I would like to thank the European Union's South Sinai Regional Development Programme (SSRDP). Their grant in 2007 helped us move from a fledgling climbing operation to the fully equipped Sinai Rock Climbing Centre that we have today, offering courses & guided climbs, opening new areas and training Bedouin guides.

And now I would like to thank you for taking an interest in our new climbing destination. We are happy to welcome you & your friends, and to help anyone who would love to climb the Sinai.

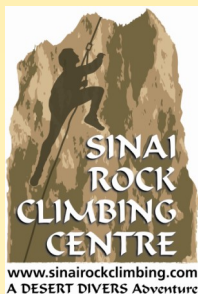
Enjoy the guide book & enjoy the rocks!

**Said Khedr**

Managing Director  
Desert Divers & Sinai Rock Climbing Centre

Desert Divers is the first & only company developing Rock Climbing in the Sinai. They recently launched the Sinai Rock Climbing Centre, which you can keep in touch with at [www.sinairockclimbing.com](http://www.sinairockclimbing.com)





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Although we have put every effort and taken reasonable care in preparing this guide, we cannot guarantee and we do not accept any liability for the accuracy or completeness of the content. Holds change, new routes are added, etc. Please visit our website, [www.sinairockclimbing.com](http://www.sinairockclimbing.com) for updates and please email any corrections & additions to [info@sinairockclimbing.com](mailto:info@sinairockclimbing.com). Your comments are very much appreciated.

The publisher, authors and editor accept no responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of this guide, and do not accept any liability for any damages or injuries incurred. This guide is not a climbing safety book and has no instructions or directions with regards to any aspect of climbing safety. You are strongly advised to seek professional instruction before participating in any climbing related activity. Climbing is an activity with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own involvement.

The Sinai is not a place to venture on your own. The wadis are difficult to navigate, weather is extreme and water sources few and far between. The Egyptian Authorities have deemed a Bedouin Guide necessary for any and all desert activities.

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First edition of this guide was produced with support from the European Union's South Sinai Regional Development Programme (SSRDP).

We would like to thank everyone at the SSRDP for helping us develop and promote sustainable tourism in the Sinai. Rock climbing brings employment opportunities to Bedouin, who might otherwise be forced to forsake their way of life in order to make a living.







Fred Stone bouldering in Wadi Qnai

## **History of Rock Climbing in the Sinai**

Someone once asked one of our climbing instructors what she was doing in the Sinai. Her reply was, *"I'm putting myself out of a job"*.

20 years ago, the only professional divers in the Red Sea were foreign. Today, you will find many local dive guides and instructors, working alongside foreign guides. So sometime around 2020, we expect to have a well-developed and amazing climbing scene led by local Bedouin guides. But we will always welcome and remember the committed climbers and instructors who helped us get to this point – sport climbing in Dahab and Nuweiba, trad climbing in St Catherine, bouldering everywhere and desperately trying to write it all down!

Before going any further, I should say that this is a working history. It is what I know, but I am sure that I don't know it all! I apologise in advance to any climbers who deserve to be mentioned here but haven't been, and welcome all corrections and contributions for the future. This is the 2nd update to the guide, but there will certainly be many more editions as we explore and discover this vast land.

By all accounts, the first climbers in the Sinai were Israeli and Russian, recording more than 100 routes in St Catherine during the 1970s and 80s. You can find these on [www.israelalpine.com](http://www.israelalpine.com) and [www.sinaidclimb.h12.ru](http://www.sinaidclimb.h12.ru). We've used some of the original route descriptions in this guide.

As diving and adventure tourism developed along the coast, it's not surprising that someone spotted the potential for sports climbing. In the late 1990s, Enzo Ferrara (or as Said calls him, "Dahab's famous Italian"), bolted the first routes at the beginning of Wadi Qnai (Gnai).

The routes were re-bolted a few years later by Erik and Ralph Oostra, who also added a few more. The result was a versatile climbing area, with something for almost everyone.



Photo courtesy of [www.jbhphotography.photoshelter.com](http://www.jbhphotography.photoshelter.com) (view from Mount Sinai)





Annelie Pompe in Wadi Qnai

[Fred Stone](#) (UK) and Annelie Pompe (Sweden) were the next climbers to take up the Sinai mantle. They joined [Desert Divers](#) and helped us bring equipment, write an introduction to Wadi Qnai and spread the word via rock climbing web sites.

Bouldering got a big boost around this time. John & Anne Arran mapped the boulders near Sharm ([www.thefreedclimber.com](http://www.thefreedclimber.com)), and Fred Stone spent the best part of 6 months making his first maps of Dahab's endless bouldering wadis.

Ten years and many visits later, Fred has finally published A Dahab Bouldering guide — and it was worth the wait! More than 400 problems beautifully mapped and described. We've edited our bouldering section to tie in with the new guide and give you a few of its highlights.

Trad climbing in St Catherine is also set for a boost. After more than 10 Sinai expeditions, Dave Lucas has mapped +180 new routes, +250 bouldering problems, re-climbed old routes and is working on getting them into a guidebook for St Catherine.

And let's not forget trekking. Two trekking guides have now been published: Zoltan Matrahazi's "Sinai Trekking and Safari", Dec 2013; and Benn Hoffler's, "Sinai the Trekking Guide", June 2014.

From Dahab, we would also like to thank a growing group of climbers who have taken time from their holidays to help us open new routes and train Bedouin guides. Special thanks to:

- ❖ Jürg Meyer (Switzerland, 2009) for taking time from his children's PADI Open Water course to install the top roping area "Middle Gnai", perfect for children and beginner courses.
- ❖ The Hot Rock Team 2010, for joining us on a fabulous 4 day mission to open "Camel Canyon".
- ❖ The [Rocksports](#) team Feb 2014, for a wonderful 2 weeks opening "Bedouin Garden".
- ❖ And to the many instructors who, over the years, have helped train our first local climbing guides.

And the project continues.

There is still so much to do and to see. This guide is intended more as an introduction to the area, and an invitation to all climbers to come, to help us discover and create an incredible place for others.

Keep in touch as we grow and develop on [www.sinairockclimbing.com](http://www.sinairockclimbing.com).

See you soon – insha Allah :-)

**Tanis Newman**  
Editor  
Sinai Rock Climbing Guide







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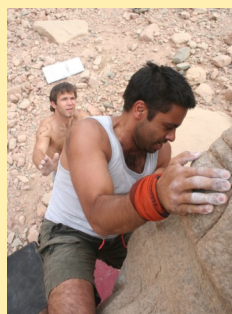
Photos:

Mahmoud at Waterfalls

Julian Watson and Mike Robertson bouldering Car Park

Jim Richards on Jebel Fara

Sama's first climb









# Wadi Qnai, Dahab



Hazel Johnson climbing Waterfalls

## **Dahab & Wadi Qnai**

Just 20 minutes from Dahab, Wadi Qnai (also translated as Qunai or Gnai) is the birthplace of Egyptian sport climbing and bouldering:

- ❖ Vast amounts of perfect bouldering on granite boulders in shaded, sand-floored valleys
- ❖ Single and multi-pitch equipped sport routes for all levels of climbers in Qnai Adshan, Waterfalls, Camel Canyon and Bedouin Garden
- ❖ Top roping area for beginner courses and junior climbers at Middle Qnai
- ❖ Plus new routing possibilities in many easily accessible areas.

Wadi Qnai means 'Valley of the aqueduct' in Arabic, named after the natural aqueducts that spring from the ground after a rare and joyous rainfall. If you're lucky enough to witness rain in this part of the world (1-3 times a year, during which you should stay out of the wadi as it flash floods), you just might see the Waterfall crag as a waterfall! The rest of the time, the main thing you will notice is the absolute silence of the place.

At first you see crumbling granite and sandstone, shot through with lines of black dolerite and possible daydream lines up fragile and risky faces. Then as you go deeper into the Wadi, past



Saad, at Wadi Qnai campsite

the lush green shock of life at the oasis, the rock begins to change. Soon it begins to grow steep, smooth and harder to the touch. Unexpectedly, you are surrounded by rock, endless lines of every kind, and almost overwhelmed by the sheer quantity of it all. This is where a guidebook comes in useful!

### **Access**

Most visitors arrive via Sharm El Sheikh airport. For a short stay up to 15 days, the Sinai Pass is free on arrival at the airport. For anything longer you now need to apply in advance to the Egyptian embassy in your country: normally \$20 for a Full Egyptian Visa up to 30 days, longer stays are also relatively straightforward just cost a bit more.

Wadi Qnai is a Bedouin and National Park area. It is possible to get to the climbing areas by foot from Dahab, and this takes 2+ hours. The most convenient means of access is via jeep with a local Bedouin driver who knows the area well. There is a 20 LE fee per person, which supports the local Bedouin and helps them operate toilets and keep the wadi clean.

### **Staying in Dahab**

Dahab used to be a hippy breakaway and something of the old spirit remains. Many visitors are divers and this means that the rates are slightly better than pure tourist spots. You can stay for as little as 35-50 LE per person per night in some camps along the seafront. There are also many mid and upmarket places to stay for cheap European rates. Restaurants are plentiful and vary vastly in quality, but expect to pay 40-100 LE for an evening meal. Alcohol is available and there are several bars open until late. You can also find services like Yoga and

massages. Like most places in Egypt, Dahab is safe for travelers and you are very unlikely to ever feel threatened or in danger. Theft is uncommon and single women are generally safe, although a measure of common sense obviously comes in handy.

## **Seasons, times of day for climbing**

Due to the steep nature of the valleys in Wadi Qnai, it is possible to climb all day in shade. It is even advisable to take a long-sleeved top for inbetween climbs. Conditions are always very dry and arid (apart from next to water springs or waterfall areas in the days following a rare rainfall). The most sensitive areas to heat are the boulder fields at Bir Wadi Qnai (Car Park Sector). In summer, it is advisable to climb early morning (before 10) or late afternoon (after 2:30).

## **What to take, precautions**

Mobile phone reception is poor/unavailable in most locations in the Wadi. Therefore you should keep your driver with you at all times. At the oasis itself there are usually Bedouins and tour guides with jeeps. There is also a police checkpoint at Qnai Adshan with a radio.

Emergency Medical Assistance is available in Dahab, but anything serious is likely to be referred to the International Hospital in Sharm El Sheikh:

- \* Egypt Search and Rescue: Dr Heikel, 0100 1433325. New location 2014, Old Mubarak Flats Road, inbetween last flats & the beach. 24 hours, phone first as he is sometimes in his clinic near to Mirage Village.
- \* Dr Ahmed Sadek: 0122 348 6209. Mashraba Street.

You will need to take several litres of water for one person per day. Warm clothing is advised for evenings/shaded areas. During the day, hats and sunglasses are useful and it is recommended not to underestimate the sun here as the wind can make things feel much cooler than reality.

## **Ethics & Gradings**

All the grades proposed here are approximative and based on European scales. The bouldering grades are Font grades and the sport routes French sport grades.

Please remember that just because you are off the beaten track does not mean that standard climbing ethics cease to apply! Categorically NO chipping/improving holds. Do not use pof on the boulders if you think you're in Fontainebleau. Also, if you're thinking about equipping a sports route, please check with us as there is an overall plan for the sustainable development of sport climbing in Wadi Qnai and other areas. And of course let us know if you notice changes to existing routes or discrepancies in this guide.



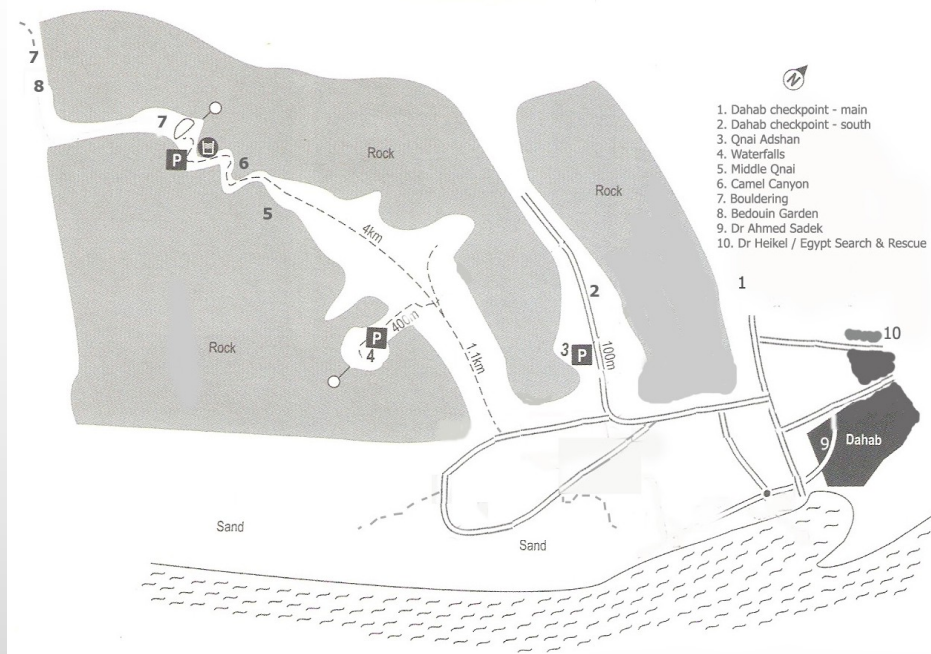
The guide is compiled at *Desert Divers*, based at Marine Garden Camp. From here you can also arrange transportation, equipment hire, guides and anything else you might need.

Cheers,

Fred Stone  
[archclimbingwall.com](http://archclimbingwall.com) London, UK  
Desert Divers Climbing Guide 2004-05



# Wadi Qnai - Overview Map and Waterfalls



Adapted from Rock Climbing Atlas, Greece and Middle East, 2006.

Waterfalls is a good 1st stop in Wadi Qnai. A versatile crag, with something for almost everyone. All the routes are closely bolted. The lower-offs for routes 1-7 consist of two chains linked by a large maillon. Routes 8 and 9 have a dodgy bolt and piton, but continue past those to two further (and rather more secure) bolts. Routes 10-12 have two bolts each with a maillon on each bolt. All the routes are around 20m with the exception of Bedouin Take Away which is around 26m (but is possible on a 50m rope if you strip the route as you descend) and Hampus Digit which is around 29m.

There are a few bolts above Bedouin Take Away to enable access to the top, they are on loose rock, and fairly widely spaced.

Routes are described left to right.

1. **Kid's Dream 3a** 8 Bolts. Easy scramble up the left to right diagonal rib. Lower-off shared with Bedouin Dinner and Mundi's Snack.

2. **Bedouin Dinner 4c** Follow the crack straight up, more vertical than it looks.

2a. **Bedouin Dinner Light 4b** 9 Bolts. An easier variation, escape to the left just before the 'roof' of Bedouin Dinner.

3. **Mundi's Snack 5a** A fine, fingery crack line between Bedouin Dinner and Bedouin Take Away. Unbolted at present.



4. **Bedouin Take Away 5b/c** 11 Bolts. A meandering line following the positive hand and foot placements.
5. **Heartbeat 5b/c** 12 Bolts (inc. 1 extra long on bolt 9). The slab route to the right of the obvious crack. Believe in the friction!
6. **Who Ate The Bolt? 6b** 10 Bolts. The main line up the centre of the slab.
7. **Hala's Camel 6b+ /c** 9 Bolts. Follow the vertical crack up to the water carved half pipe.
8. **The Entertainer 6c+ /7a** The left hand line up the top waterfall.
9. **Right Waterfall 6c+ /7a** The right hand line up the top waterfall.
10. **Hampus Digit 6a+** 13 Bolts. The line of the crag. Start at the base of Hala's Camel for three bolts, then traverse along the horizontal break, heading up the crack next to the frictionless slab.
11. **Oasis 6b** The second pitch of Hampus Digit. Head up the centre of the wall to the right.  
\*January 2010 a large section came away to the left of the line, so staying on route (close to the bolts) is advised\*
12. **Shwia Shwia 6b+ (7a?)** Two variations, the right being slightly more protected.



## Qnai Adshan — Police Checkpoint

Qnai Adshan crag is directly in front of the checkpoint, before the main entrance to Wadi Qnai. Permission maybe required before climbing, but the police are often happy to have some entertainment.

Routes 1-6 are on the East side of the road and get the sun in the morning even in winter; 7 and 8 are on the West side and are more shaded.

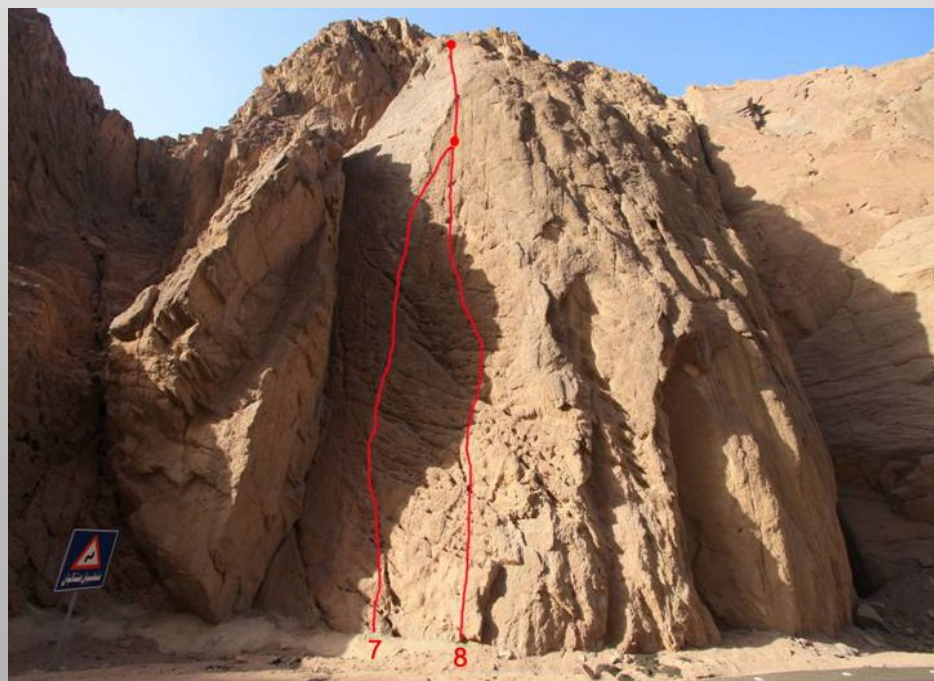
It is possible to descend after one or two pitches on all the routes.  
Routes are described left to right.

1. 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch 4a 12m 6 bolts. A good warm-up slab route up the crack on the far left the crag. 6<sup>th</sup> bolt loose.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Pitch 6a 28m 9 bolts. A good initial start gives way to loose rock further up. 2 bolts at top - no chain. Not recommended!
2. 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch 5c+ 26m 13 bolts. Friction start leads to big holds, more of a 'power' route than most in the area.  
Slings (4ft)/long quick draws needed on bolts 3 and 11.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Pitch Unknown 10m
3. 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch 6a 26m 10 bolts. Easy angled slab with very fine, delicate moves.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Pitch 6c 26m 13 bolts. Continue up the right face and around the corner onto the main face for maximum exposure! Long traverse to the right is made slightly less intimidating by closely spaced bolts. Watch out for rope drag around the corner! \*It is JUST possible to abseil down to the lower off of pitch one on route 4 on a stretched 60m rope.\*



Philip Caine & Margoux Cemon

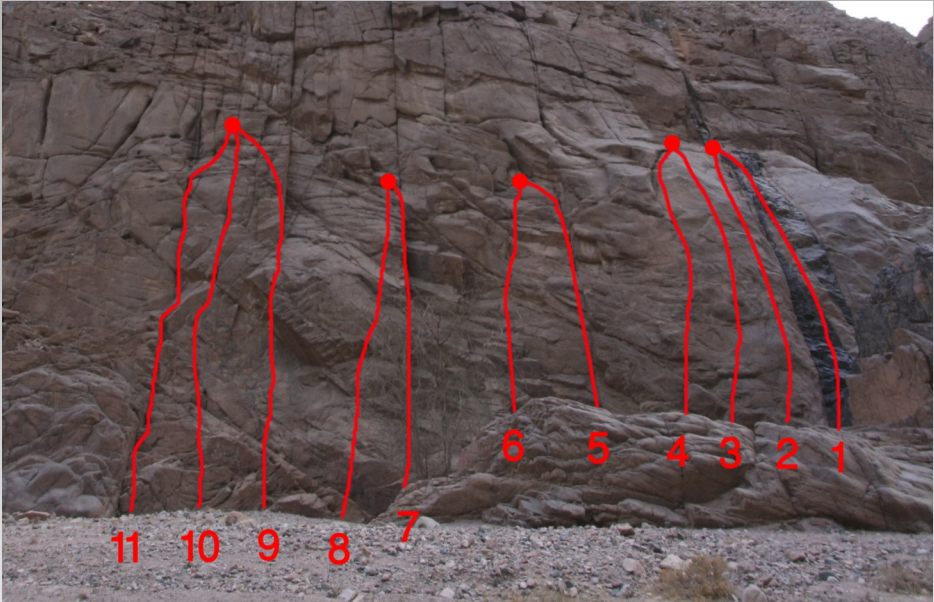
4. 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch 4c 20m 4 bolts.  
High first bolt, the rest widely spaced.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Pitch 7b 30m.  
Straight up the crackline on the main face.
5. 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch 4a 22m 5 bolts.  
High first bolt, rest is widely spaced.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Pitch 6b+ 15m 7 bolts. Head straight up the obvious hand jam crack, to the large belay ledge. Another 'power' route, with an overbearing feel. More vertical than it looks.  
3<sup>rd</sup> Pitch 20m.
6. 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch 6b 24m 10 bolts.  
An easy slab start, progressing steadily more difficult to the steeper crux at the top. Sling (4ft)/long quickdraw recommended on bolt 4. A good alternative start to route 5.
7. 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch 4a 20m 2 bolts!
8. 1<sup>st</sup> Pitch 4b 25m 5 bolts, 1<sup>st</sup> bolt loose.





# Middle Qnai

During Easter 2009, Jürg Meyer & Judith Safford brought their children to Dahab to learn to dive. The kids started diving alongside their mother, and Jürg took to the rocks. A Swiss mountaineer, he spotted this great area for top roping and set to work with our help. Short lines 10-15m, perfect for beginners and children.



## Middle Gnai

No	Name	Grade	Type of Climb
1	Judy	3+	wall climbing on black basalt
2	Katia	5b	wall climbing
3	Inka	5a	wall climbing
4	Melina	5b	wall climbing
5	Mariam	4a	corner / piaz
6	Anna	4b	wall climbing
7	Simone	4a	spread corner
8	Lena	6a/4a	little roof
9	Fatima	5b	little overhang
10	Nora	4a	crack / wall
11	Fola	3-	mixed



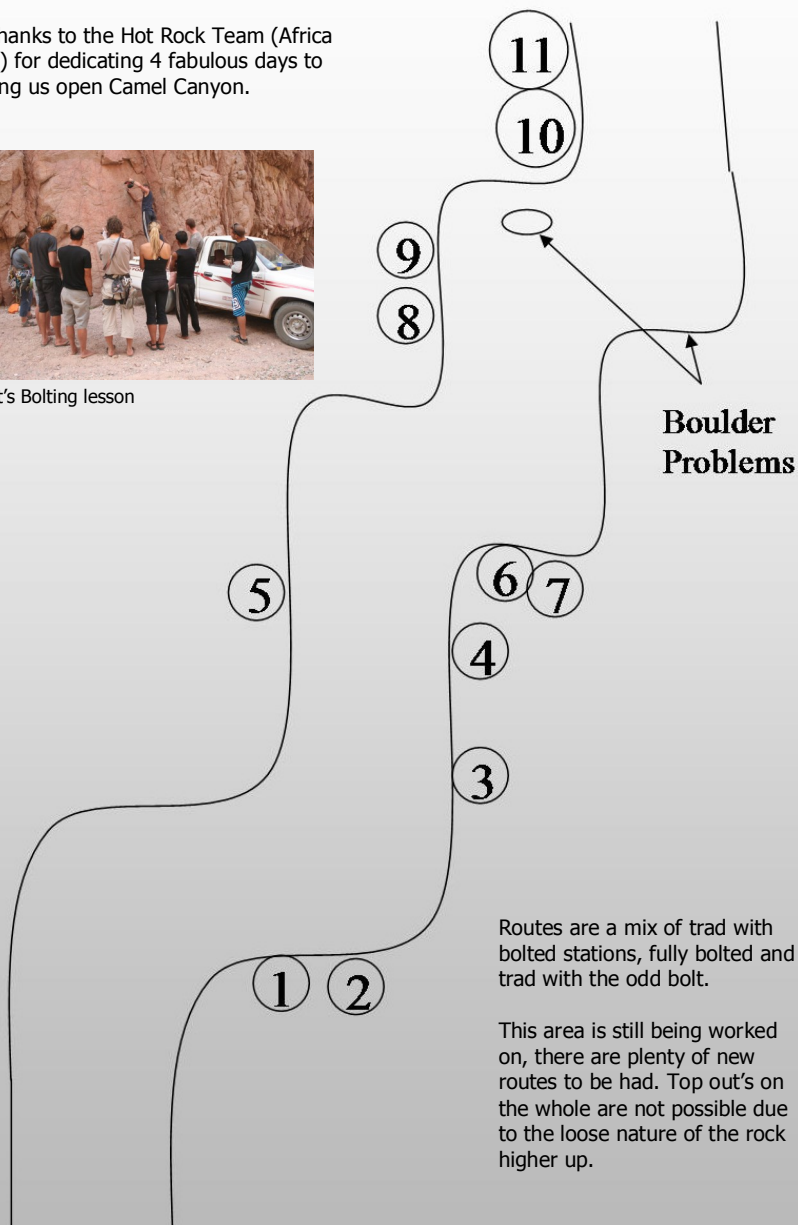
Rock strata, Judy

## Camel Canyon

Big thanks to the Hot Rock Team (Africa 2010) for dedicating 4 fabulous days to helping us open Camel Canyon.



Pat's Bolting lesson



Routes are a mix of trad with bolted stations, fully bolted and trad with the odd bolt.

This area is still being worked on, there are plenty of new routes to be had. Top out's on the whole are not possible due to the loose nature of the rock higher up.



1. **Tony's Slippery Moustache (Burning Camel)** 20-25m Sport 6a+/5.10b Slippery layback up through an overhanging crack to hand crack and flakes above (bolted belay, 5 bolts on route). Belle classique! Roger Buser and Laura Knogler

2. **The Sensitive Drummer** 25m Sport Sloping grade 5 ledges lead to an exposed boulder (5+) beyond which there is easier low angled slab (4-4+). Bolted belay, 6 bolts on route. Roger Buser, Rhonda Shippy and Laura Knogler





3. **The Sand-Witch** 6a/b? Start in the corner (bridging), up above small roof to the right in 2<sup>nd</sup> corner. To ledge. Climb last face (2 moves) to belay. Remi Tourmier and Roger Buser



Jo at Middle Gnai



4. **First Bolt** 20m 6a+? Follow the slab straight up to bolted station on the right. Unfinished project.



5. **Smokey Broadside** 45m Climb the block to the ledge and up the crack, trend R to a small ledge and traverse R up the ramp to the corner crack to a bolted belay. Charles Upton and Rhonda Shippy



6. **Castle Anthrax** 20m 5. Go up bulgy corner. 4 bolts, to 2 bolt anchor. Rhonda Shippy and Charles Upton

7. **Camel-lot** 20m 6a Up the crack! Small crux at the beginning. 2<sup>nd</sup> crux after 5m, then very easy to belay. Remi Tourmier and Shu Gok





8. **Africa King** 15m 6b/c 2 bolts and small cams for the top. Big move (6b if tall, 6c if short!). Climb to the anchors. Patrick Davey

9. **Africa Queen** 15m 5- Climb the crack to the right of 2 bolts to stance and bolt belay. Patrick Davey and Lauren Walters



10. **Up Periscope** Follow obvious crack on left side of crack. Small wires to protect. Rhonda Shippy and Charles Upton

11. **Dive, Dive, Dive!** Climb up slab to the right of crack to 2 bolt anchor. TR



## Camel Canyon Boulder 1



## Camel Canyon Boulder 2





## Bedouin Garden

Bedouin Garden has German roots. The [Rocksports](#) team had planned to climb Oman, Turkey or Morocco, but found themselves drawn to the Sinai desert of Egypt. It was the first time any of them had put together climbing and Egypt, and even as they booked, they wondered what they would find. Here's what they said by the time they left:

*"The climbing in Sinai is rewarding, family-friendly, weather favored and versatile, but still in its infancy. The potential is incredible.*

*If you are a climber who likes to combine climbing with general travel, or who places special emphasis on family, you will have found your paradise.*

*The area around Dahab is ideal for climbing families. The combination of sun, sea and climbing with a flat sandy bottom in the canyons leaves nothing to be desired. We will definitely be planning another climbing holiday in Egypt soon!"*

Silke Hamm, March 2014

Right: Silke Hamm on Let yourself drift  
Bottom left: Khaled Saba Mousa equipping Timo



Bedouin Garden also has bouldering roots. In November and December 2013, Khaled and Fred walked through this area daily when working on the Dahab Bouldering Guide. They decided then that it would make a great sports area. The Rocksports team also loved its potential to create greater route diversity in Wadi Qnai.

The result: 9 new routes from 4a to 7b+ including the powerful crack and slabby bulges on Testosterone Curve, Caveman's odd movements, the wonderfully diversified Let yourself drift, and Khaled's first route, named after his fire buddy Timo. Enjoy!

1. **Ritzenflitzer (Ritz Streaker)**, 4a,  
4 bolts + 1 chickenhead sling, 25m. Plaisir  
climbing along the cracks, crux after the  
second bolt. EB: Christian Hamm



Stephan on Ritzenflitzer



2. **Lass dich Treiben (Let yourself drift)**  
6a, 7 bolts, 25m. Wonderful diversified route,  
do not be afraid of the slab, just let it flow.  
EB: Martin Zoller



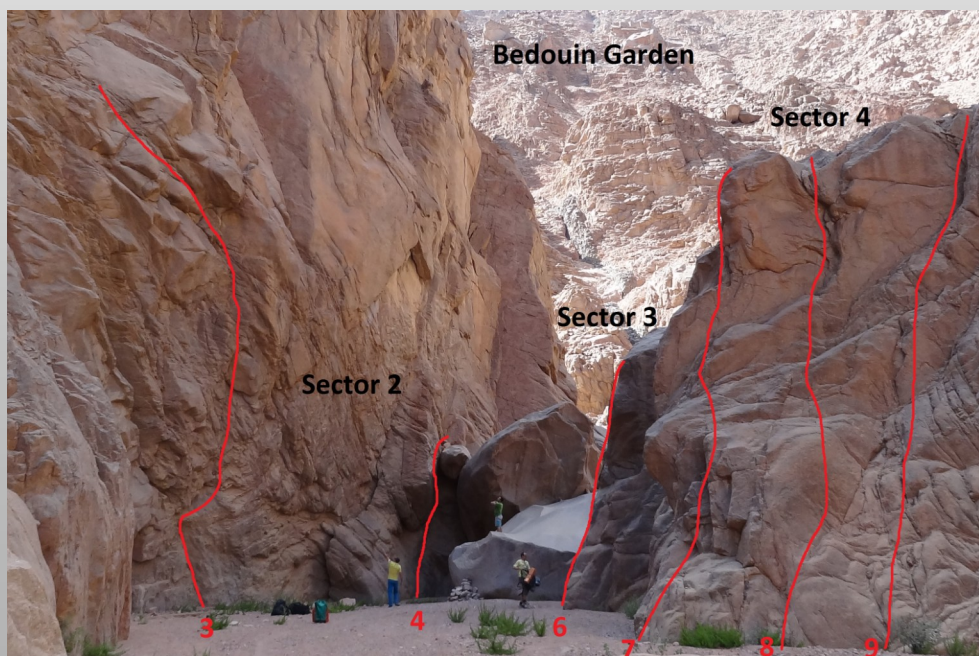
Heike at the crux of Let yourself drift







View from Ritzenflitzer



### 3. Testosteronkurve (Testosterone curve)

7a, 10 bolts, 35m. First the route follows the powerful crack and then it crosses far to the left on round and slabby bulges.

EB: Martin Zoller, Christian Hamm



### 4. Höhlenmensch (Caveman)

6c, 4 bolts, 13m. Odd movements, surely the easiest way to relive your own birth!

EB: Martin Zoller, Christian Hamm



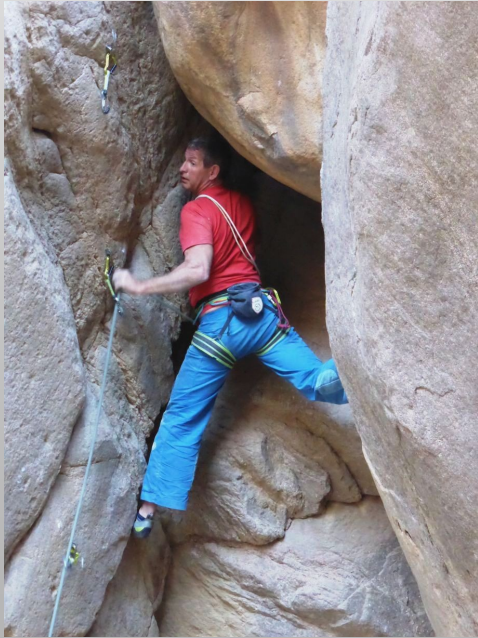




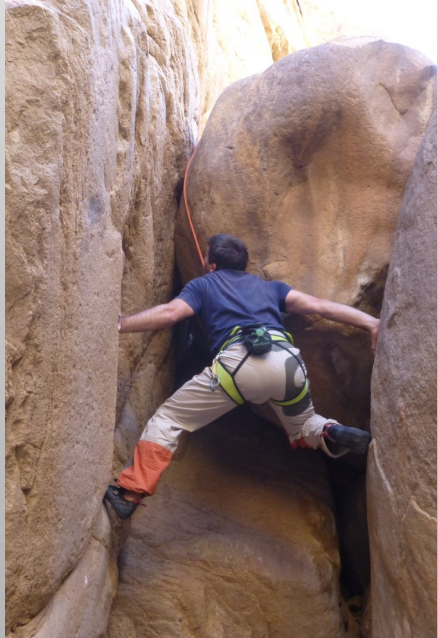
Martin starting Testosterone Curve



Christian on Testosterone Curve



Martin on Caveman



Christian on Caveman



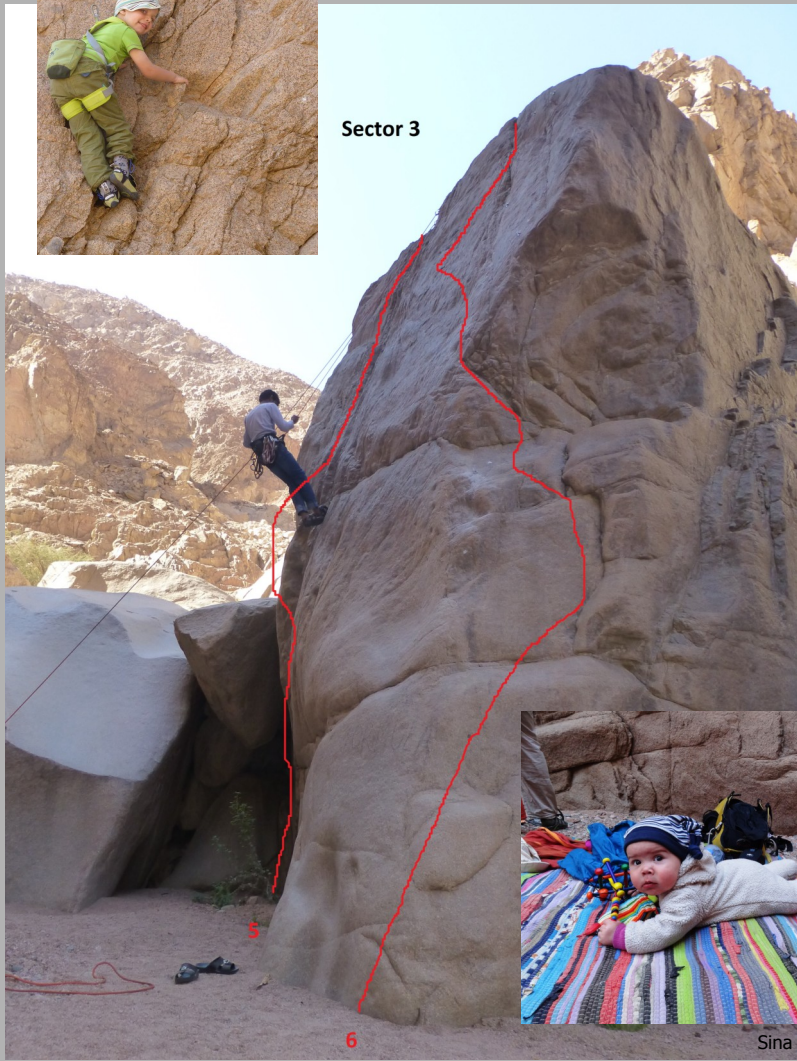
5. **Timo**, 7b+?, 5 bolts, 10m. Fairly slick slab, cross to the rock after the second bolt and then move dynamically to the next hold. EB: Khaled Saba Mousa

6. **Sina in Sinai**, 7a+? (6c A0), 3 bolts, 10m. Again a slick slab with crux at the third bolt, take a left curve to the belay anchor. EB: Christian Hamm, Martin Zoller



Timo Hamm (4 yrs) following in Qnai Adshan

Sector 3



Sina Hamm (5 mths)

Silke, Sina and Susanne, lunch break



Khaled making Bedouin tea

7. **Wüstenfuchs (Desert fox)**, 4c, 4 bolts, 10m. Nice climbing, first right of the ridge, then left of it. EB: Christian Hamm

8. **Streck dich (Stretch yourself)**, 5c, 4 bolts, 12m. After a comfy start, you have to stretch yourself at the end. EB: Silke Hamm

9. **Oase der Ruhe (Haven of peace)**, 5b, 4 bolts, 12m. Joyful and calm climb, crux just below the belay anchor. EB: Christian Hamm

Bedouin Garden - Sector 4





## Wadi Qnai Bouldering

One morning in 2005, Fred Stone stood in a sea of granite boulders, and decided he'd map a few. And then a few more. And then he brought friends to map a few more. And then he and Khaled spent a month in Wadi Qnai trying to complete the job. And finally, after 10 years, we have 'A Dahab Bouldering Guide'.

This is just a taste of the +400 problems you will find in the guide. A true labour of love, you can order the guide from [archclimbingwall.com](http://archclimbingwall.com)

Excerpts here are copied directly from the guide, with full permission from Fred Stone.

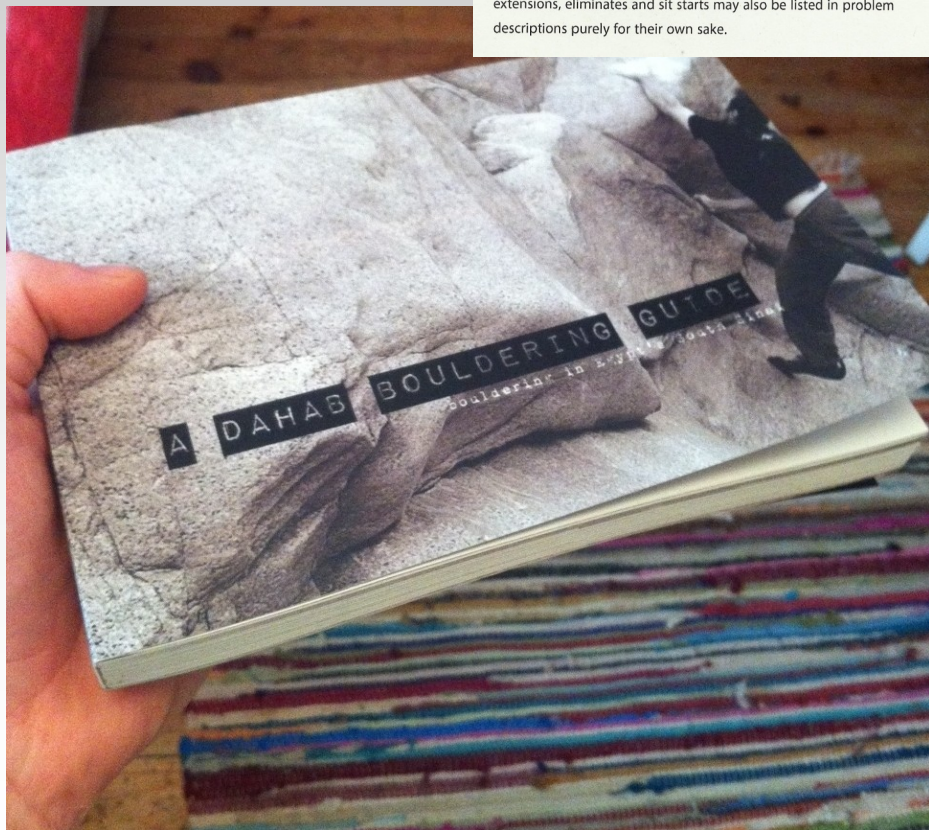
And if you think this is more bouldering than any climber could ever get through... just wait until you see the next wadi on our list!

The bouldering at Bir Wadi Qunai is on solid granite with occasional lines of black volcanic stone. Many of the boulders in the valley are blank. Where there are holds they are solid and mostly quite smooth to the touch.

The majority of the problems here are on light overhangs, vertical walls or slabs. There are also a good number of steeper climbs and roofs in certain sectors, mostly in the higher grades.

The problems are found on standalone boulders dotted along the sandy floor of the valley, or on boulders dotting the terraces overlooking the valley bed. Quality lines on the sidewalls have also been included in the guide, usually only where there is an obvious finishing hold, downclimb or line of escape.

The problems in this guide tend not to be eliminates, but where any "rules" are mentioned in the description, it is where eliminating a feature increases the quality of the climb, rather than just the grade. The same philosophy goes for the starting holds - sit starts are used only where they really add to the quality of the line. Worthwhile extensions, eliminates and sit starts may also be listed in problem descriptions purely for their own sake.



great white

basins

big waterfall

turkish bathpump

blackface

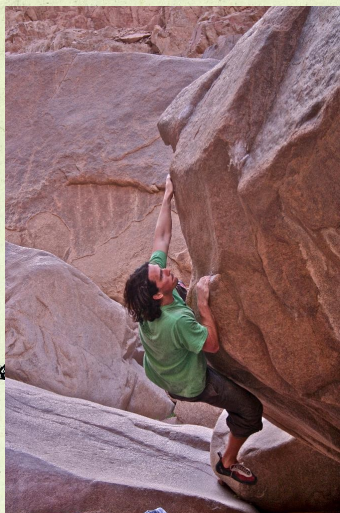
upper corridor

lower corridor

lower waterfall

science friction

carpark



Fred Stone  
Mahamudra, Lower Waterfall Sector

SECTORS OVERVIEW

SECTORS



## CAR PARK SECTOR

### OVERVIEW

The car park is the first sector you arrive at, usually parking up right in front of the Mordor boulder. It is a great introduction to the bouldering on offer at Bir Wadi Qunai.

The Bedouin drivers tend to relax here throughout the day, making tea and food underneath the large Peace and Love boulder. If you plan on trying "Peace and Love Forever" (page 24) kindly ask them to make a fire elsewhere.

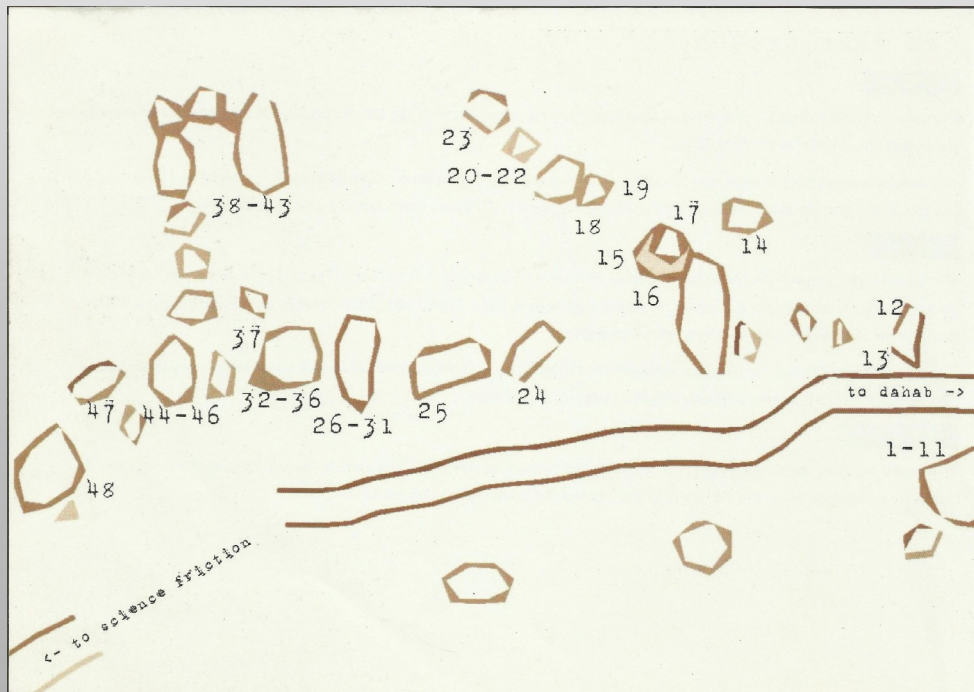
### CLIMBING

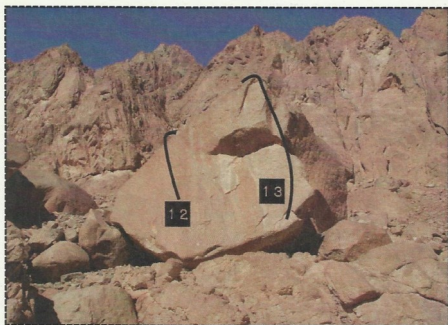
The boulders are concentrated and close together. There is a good variety of styles and difficulties of climbs in the Car Park sector, mostly on medium sized boulders and light overhangs to slabs. Expect lots of small crimps and smooth footholds. The landings are all excellent with only a couple of exceptions.

Stand out problems in this area include: Elephant (7b+); Digital lip (7a+); Aerodynamique (6a); To be taken away (6c+); Peace and love forever (7b); Sharma el sheikh (7a); Rockabye (6a); Ishta (6b).

### CONDITIONS

This area is exposed to the sun throughout morning and midday, so either get here early in the morning, or else from around 3pm in the afternoon when the sun starts to get blocked out by the high valley walls.



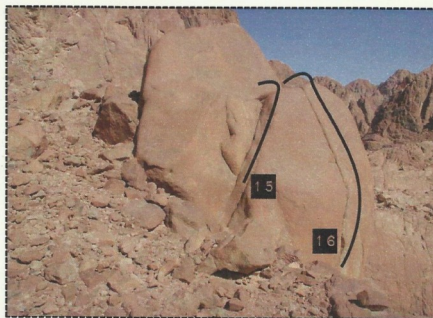


12 AERODYNAMIQUE 6A

Follow good edges up the blank looking wall.

13 DIGITAL LIP 7A+

Sit start with feet on block underneath and right hand on the chunky edge and grapple the arete to a scary high finish.



15 BABAR 5+

Sit start with a hard pull off a layback crimp and use a good hold to reach the sloping top out.

16 ELEPHANT 7B+

Beautiful highball line with a hard start on small crimps to gain obvious crack line and an easier finish. Spotters needed!



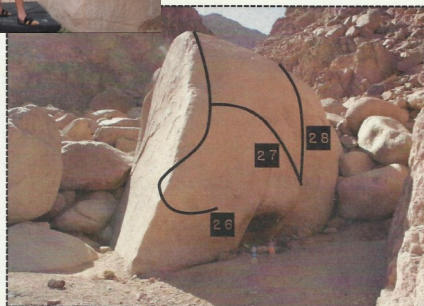
Hot Rock team, Car Park Sector



23 TO BE TAKEN AWAY 6C+

Sit start using left hand hold and move around the overhanging mini prow to an enjoyable top out.

It's considered good luck to replace the covering pebble to the start handhold of the problem afterwards!



26 SAKARA 7A

Compression moves on poor holds from sitting under the overhanging prow lead to a high top out slab.

27 PEACE AND LOVE FOREVER 7B

Sit start on the A feature above the fire spot up to small crimps leading leftwards towards the arete.

28 SALAAM 7C

Head straight up the overhanging wall on small crimps from the same sit start as problem 27.



## WATERFALL SECTOR

### OVERVIEW

Waterfall sector is one of the best areas in Bir Wadi Qunai, with lots of varied climbs including the classic Holy Moses! (p.45), good day round conditions, and the smooth and beautiful white granite waterfall boulder itself.

### ACCESS

The Waterfall boulder is about 3 minutes walk from the Car Park sector. Getting up the waterfall boulder can be tricky for children or non climbers, in this case an easier but longer way up is to follow the easy slab up to the right of Gumshoe (p.41) and head up underneath the huge chock boulder to the hidden clearing and campfire overlooking the whole area.

### CLIMBING

The boulders are very concentrated and easy to find. There is a good variety of climbs, from highball slabs to short and brutal overhangs. Top outs tend to be fairly tricky, and make sure that you are well spotted off problems 35-37 as the smooth waterfall boulder can be unforgiving to land badly on. Most other landings are good.

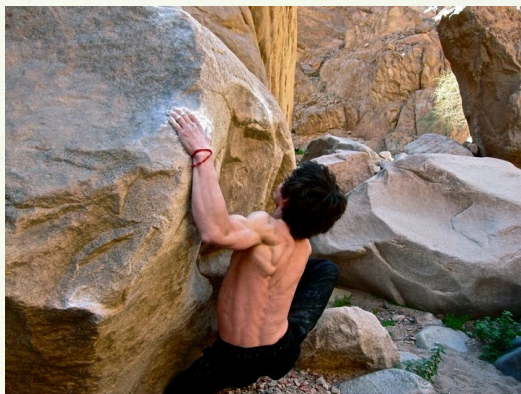
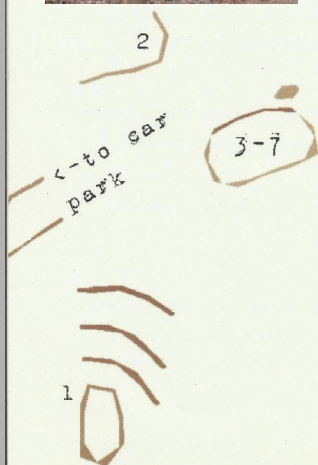
Stand out problems include: Science friction (6a); Spoonvich (7a+); Magadir (6c); Holy Moses! (6a+); Dressed as Mephisto (6b+); Throw them to the lions (7a); The fly (7a+); Yalla (6a); Zapa (7a); Mahamudra (6c+).

### CONDITIONS

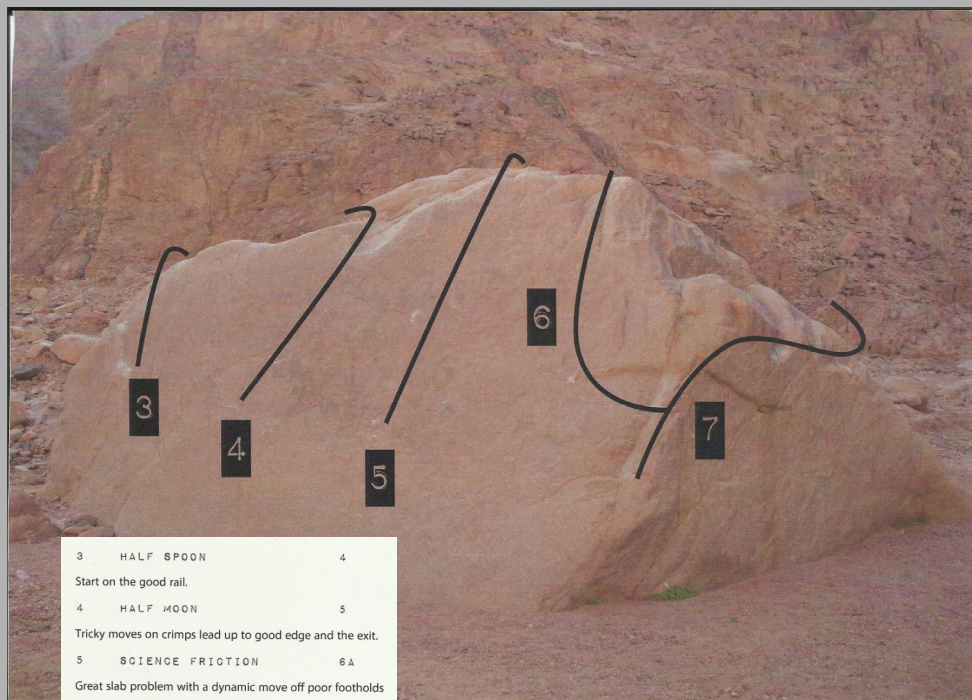
Most of this area, especially the problems on the large outcrop below the waterfall and the problems on that same side above the waterfall, are shaded from the sun throughout the day and the waterfall area seems to often catch a pleasant cooling onshore breeze. The lower area, with the Science Friction boulder (p.37) has the same conditions as the Car Park sector.



Left: Am Abdullah waiting with Bedouin tea in the fire  
Below: Clem on Compression Midget, Arch Bouldering holiday 2011







### 3 HALF SPOON

Start on the good rail.

### 4 HALF MOON

Tricky moves on crimps lead up to good edge and the exit.

### 5 SCIENCE FRICTION

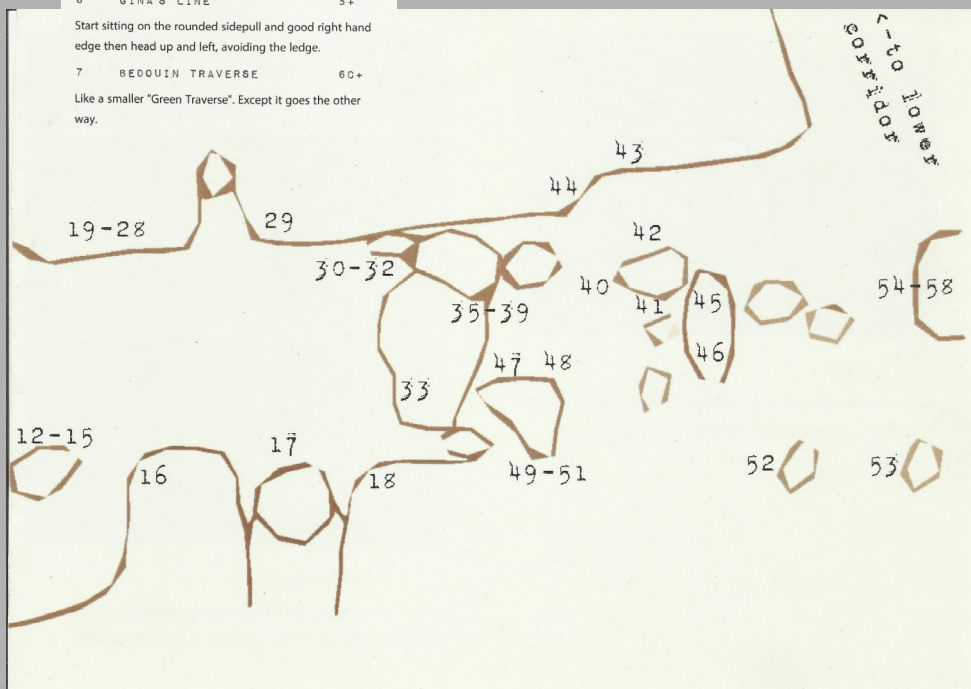
Great slab problem with a dynamic move off poor footholds to catch the top sloper.

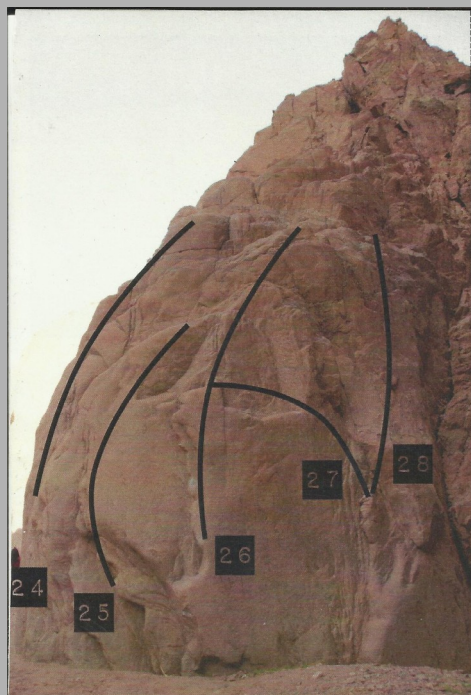
### 6 GINA'S LINE

Start sitting on the rounded sidepull and good right hand edge then head up and left, avoiding the ledge.

### 7 BEDOUIN TRAVERSE

Like a smaller "Green Traverse". Except it goes the other way.





25 MAGADIR

6C

Sit start from the chunky undercut block and follow the line of holds up to a tricky reach move and exit on slopers.

26 HOLY MOSES!

6A+

One of the classic problems of the whole area. Follow the sloping rail via a small crimp to the topout.

27 DRESSED AS MEPHISTO

6B+

Dyno from the head high jug up and left to the two holds on the right of the rail, then traverse along to exit up problem 26.

28 STUCK UP

5+

Start as problem 27, but head up and right to a slightly worrying but relatively easier exit high up.

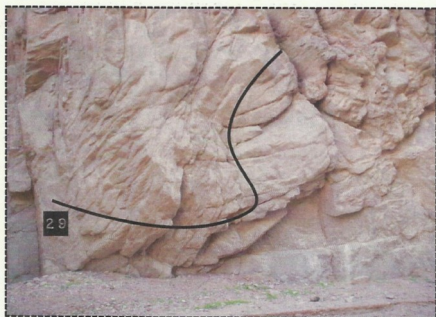
To downclimb problems 19-28, the easiest way is to traverse along to the crack between problems 20 and 21 and come down using the chockstone hold

Lower Waterfall 45

Khaled Saba Moussa on Marmarea Slab

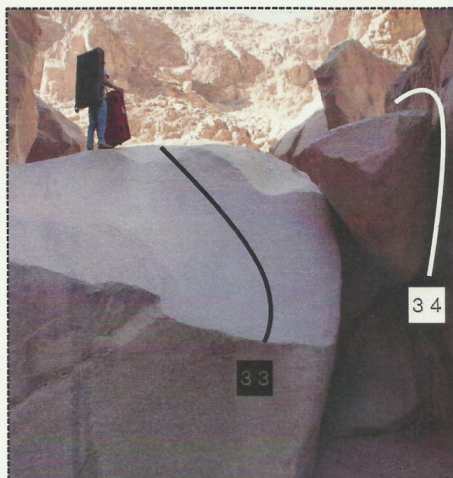






## 29 THROW THEM TO THE LIONS 7A

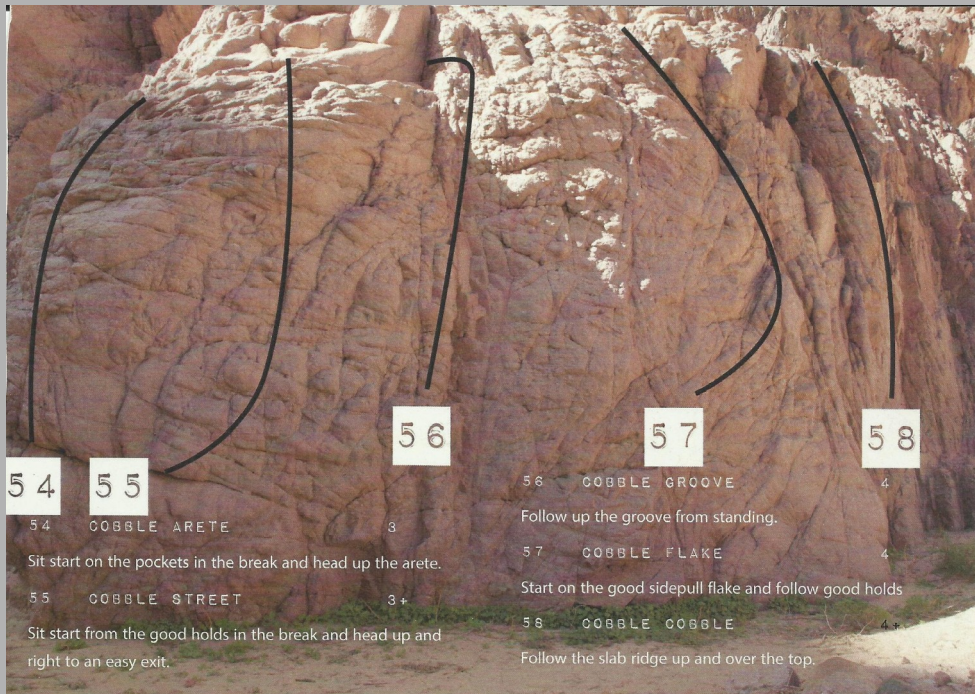
Long traverse with a great crux section around the middle.  
Finish by topping out around the large sidepull ledge.



## 34 CHOP SHOP

6C+

Start from the holds around the back of the chockstone boulder and follow up the offwidth using anything you can reach or wedge yourself into.



54

## 54 COBBLE ARETE

3

Sit start on the pockets in the break and head up the arete.

55

## 55 COBBLE STREET

3+

Sit start from the good holds in the break and head up and right to an easy exit.

56

57

58

## 56 COBBLE GROOVE

4

Follow up the groove from standing.

## 57 COBBLE FLAKE

4

Start on the good sidepull flake and follow good holds

## 58 COBBLE COBBLE

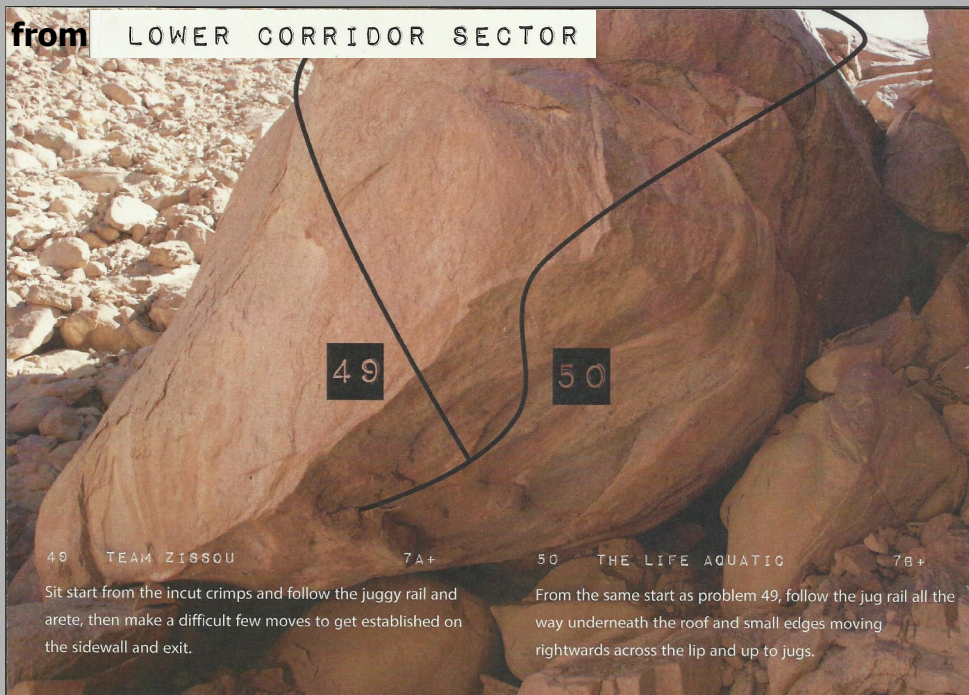
4+

Follow the slab ridge up and over the top.



from

## LOWER CORRIDOR SECTOR



49

50

49 TEAM ZISSOU

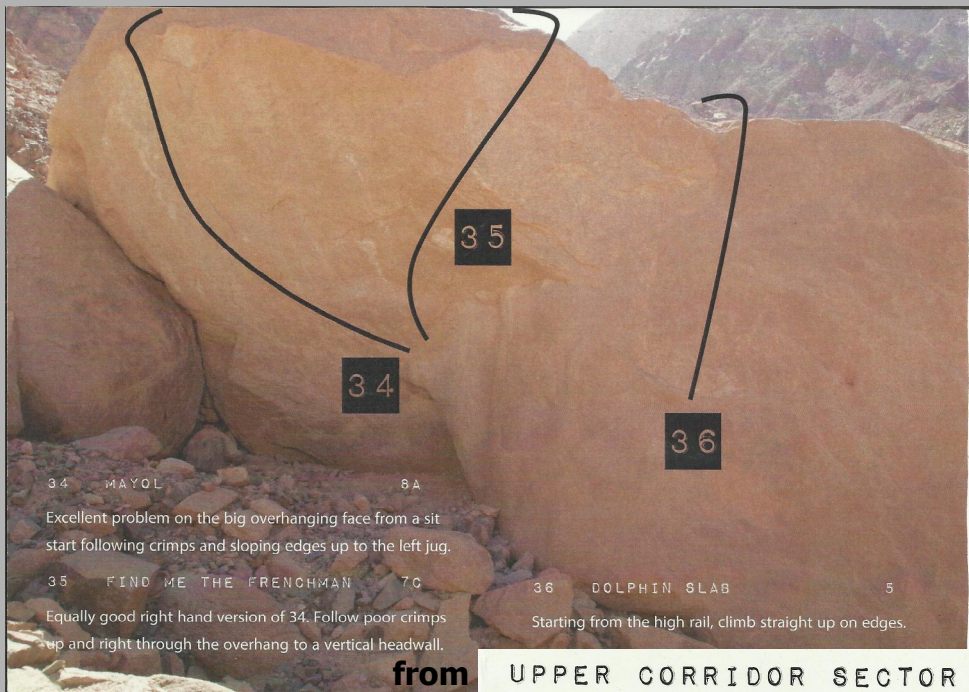
7A+

50 THE LIFE AQUATIC

7B+

Sit start from the incut crimps and follow the juggy rail and arete, then make a difficult few moves to get established on the sidewall and exit.

From the same start as problem 49, follow the jug rail all the way underneath the roof and small edges moving rightwards across the lip and up to jugs.



34

35

36

34 MAYOL

8A

Excellent problem on the big overhanging face from a sit start following crimps and sloping edges up to the left jug.

35 FIND ME THE FRENCHMAN

7C

36 DOLPHIN SLAB

5

Equally good right hand version of 34. Follow poor crimps up and right through the overhang to a vertical headwall.

Starting from the high rail, climb straight up on edges.

from

## UPPER CORRIDOR SECTOR

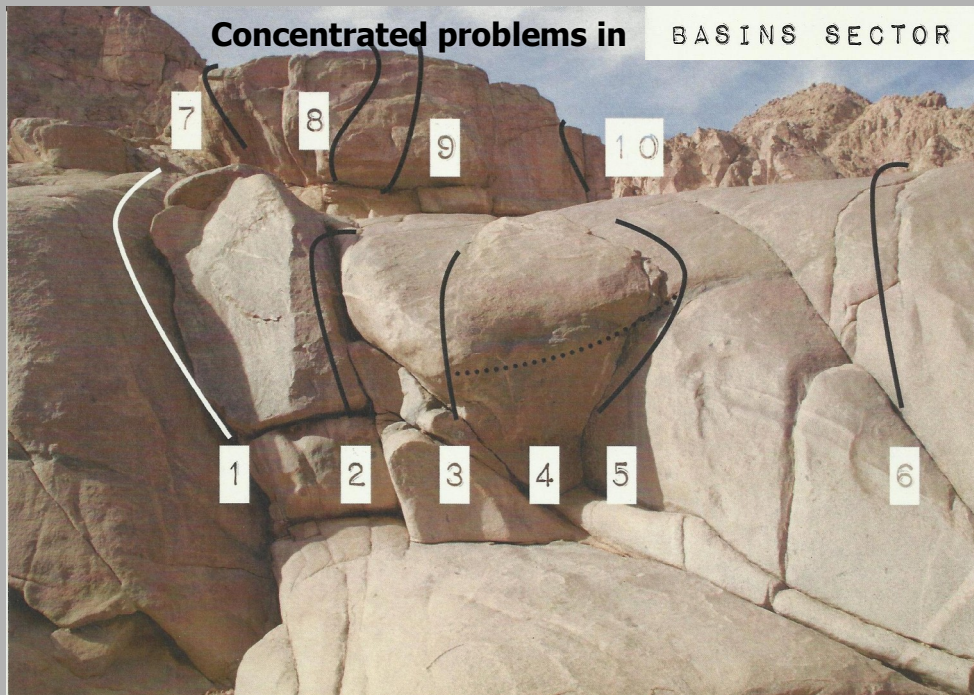




Below: Cholo sitting on Bushwhacker Man, Basins Sector



# Concentrated problems in BASINS SECTOR



## 1 LAYBACK CRACK

4

Layback up the wide positive crack feature to a high finish over a landing that could be better.

## 2 STUK

5+

Start crouching on juggy break and move up crack using features on both sides. Bad landing again.

## 3 COBRA LEFT

6C+

Start from sitting on the incut break in the crack and move up and over the blank looking feature on crimps.

## 4 PREMIER SNAKES

7A

Sit start problem 3, then head across the lip on edges to top out problem 5.

## 5 COBRA RIGHT

6A

Sit start on the finger crack and follow up to a juggy exit.

## 6 SNAKE CHARMER

5+

Starting from the jug in the break, move up via the shallow seams to an easy top out. Bad landing.

## 7 FARMING MAN

7A

Starting from the deep sidepull flake, move right and follow the overhanging face to a good exit up high.

## 8 PLUG HOLE

6C+

From a crouching start on the break, move up and left through the roof to a high exit.

## 9 SPIDER IN THE SINK

7A+

From a crouching start on the break to the right of problem 8, make some hard moves through the roof to better holds on the vertical face. High.

## 10 RAIN

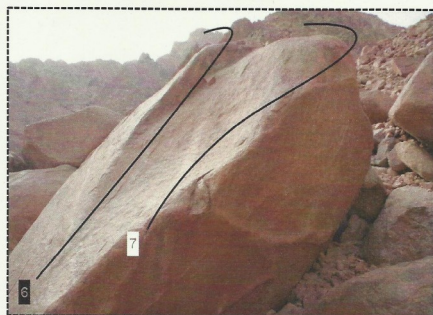
6B

From the incut crack move up and left via the positive rail and to a high exit.

Problems 7-10 are on the next terrace up, accessible further left.

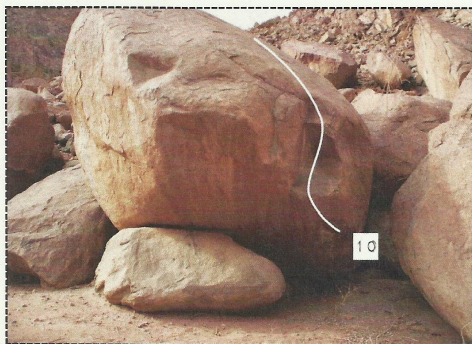


# from GREAT WHITE SHARK



7 BOURBON ARETE 6A+

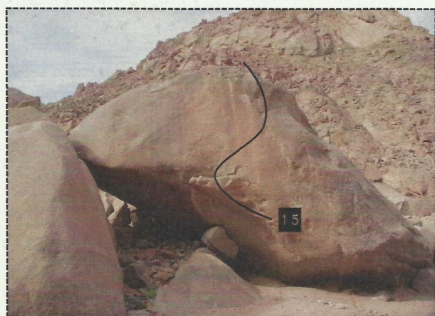
Start from sitting using the positive left hand hold and climb the slightly overhanging arete on edges, slopers and smears up to the top.



10 WHITE EYEBROWS 7B+

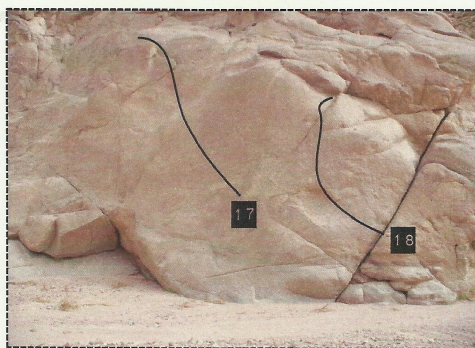
Start on the two incut crimp flakes under the overhanging ledge. Make several hard moves to reach the ledge and the exit up and left.

Also goes from standing at 7 A



15 GUNPOWDER PLOT 7C

Hard sit start on small crimps up to a good ledge followed by another hard move up and right to a gaston and a difficult top out.

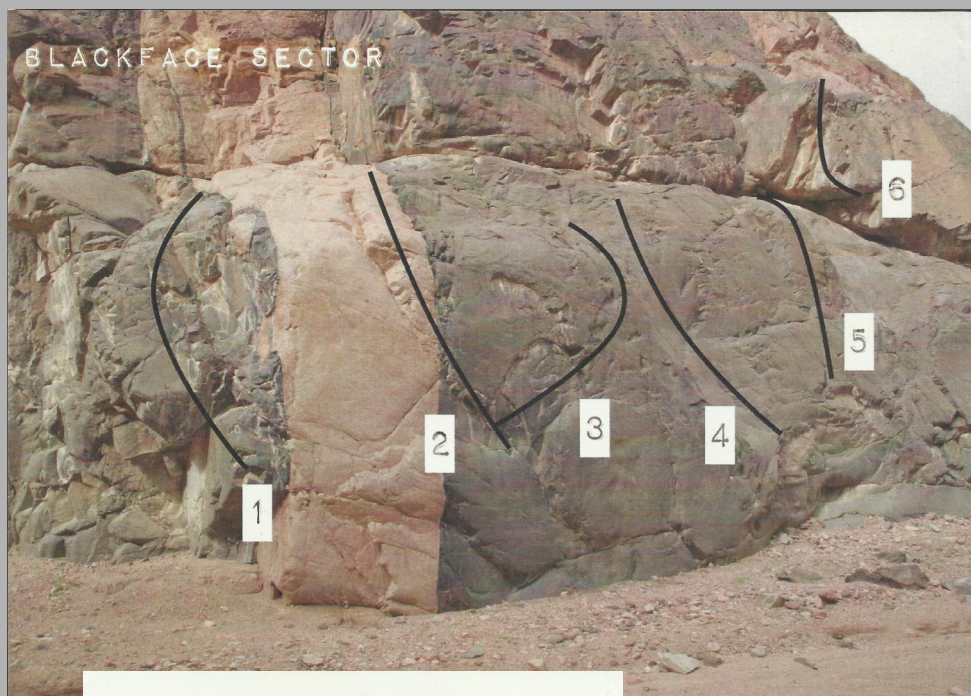


17 GRITSTONE RASH 7A+

High and exciting slab and vertical climb on vague edges starting off the sideways rail.

18 RASH DECISION 6A+

Crouching start off the positive rail, head up and left using the scooped feature and poor crimps to a sketchy exit.



#### 1 BLACKLIST

3+

Sit start on positive holds then follow jugs up the overhanging bulge.

#### 2 TWO FACE

5+

Sit start then climb up and left to reach the sloping top out.

#### 3 PAINT IT BLACK

5

From the same starting holds as problem 2, move right on undercuts and positive sidepulls leading up.

#### 4 BIG BLACK CLOUD

4

From crouching start follow the groove up and left.

#### 5 BLACKHEAD

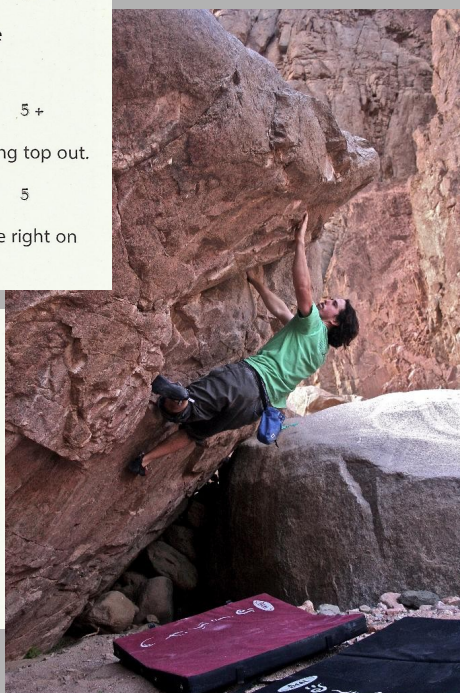
6A

Climb up the slightly harder incut ledge to gain the slab and top out.

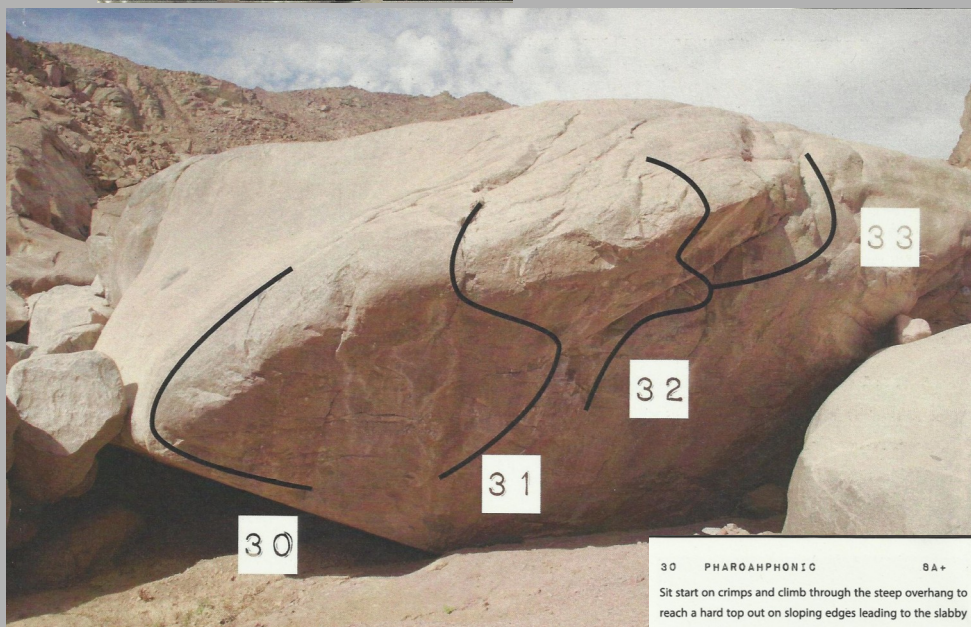
#### 6 BLACKOUT

6B

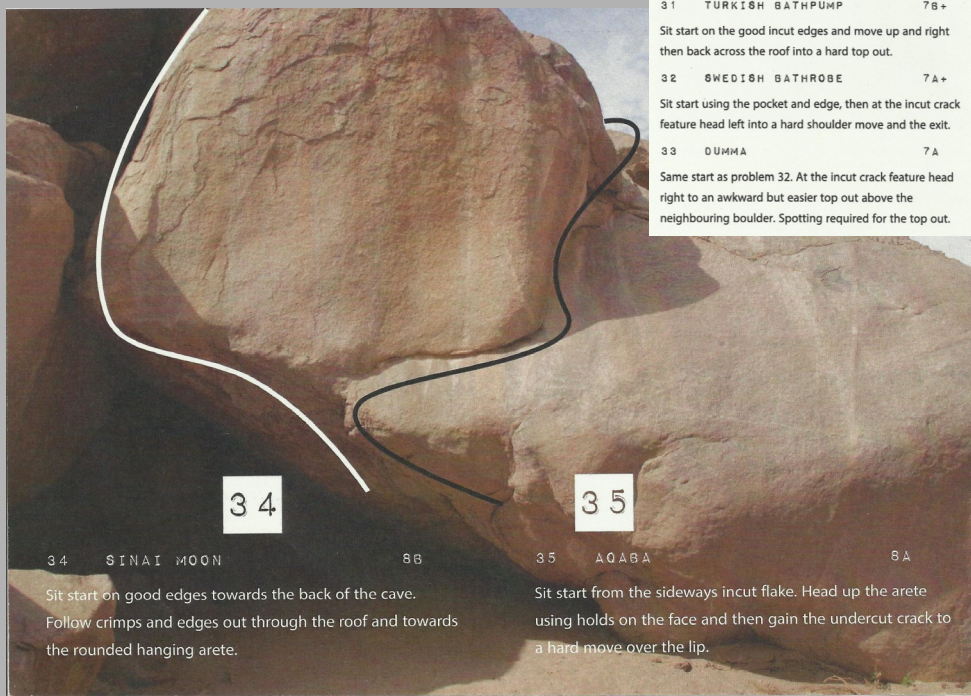
The small roof from sitting on sidepulls. Bad landing.







- 30 PHAROAHPHONIC 8A+  
Sit start on crimps and climb through the steep overhang to reach a hard top out on sloping edges leading to the slabby exit.
- 31 TURKISH BATHPUMP 7B+  
Sit start on the good incut edges and move up and right then back across the roof into a hard top out.
- 32 SWEDISH BATHROBE 7A+  
Sit start using the pocket and edge, then at the incut crack feature head left into a hard shoulder move and the exit.
- 33 DUMMA 7A  
Same start as problem 32. At the incut crack feature head right to an awkward but easier top out above the neighbouring boulder. Spotting required for the top out.



- 34 SINAI MOON 8B  
Sit start on good edges towards the back of the cave. Follow crimps and edges out through the roof and towards the rounded hanging arete.

- 35 AQABA 8A  
Sit start from the sideways incut flake. Head up the arete using holds on the face and then gain the undercut crack to a hard move over the lip.





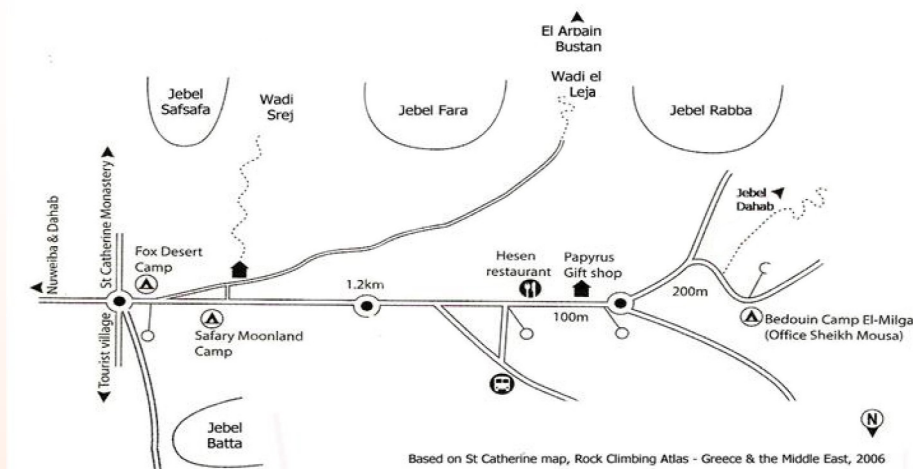


# St Catherine



Charles Upton and Rhonda Shippy, the slab on Papa Giovanni

## Climbing in the High Sinai – St Catherine



Two hours drive from Dahab is the picturesque village of St Catherine. The trad climbing here is some of the world's finest, but remains relatively unknown with much still to be discovered. There is plenty of scope for new routing and for the more adventurous, camel trips deep into the desert will reveal huge areas of virgin rock.

Much like the whole of the Sinai, at first glance the rock appears loose and crumbly, but look closer and see excellent lines all around you.

### Access

St Catherine is on the 'tourist trail', thanks to the 6<sup>th</sup> century monastery and popular trips up Mount Sinai (or Moses Mountain), making getting here very easy.

A twice daily bus service - the Bedouin Bus - leaves from Dahab and costs 50LE each way. It picks up from Jowhara hotel in Mashrab and Marine Garden Camp (where Desert Divers is located) at 5pm. Return is from Bedouin Camp in St Catherine at 1pm and 7pm. The bus service ask that you are at the hotel/camp no later than 20 minutes prior to your departure time. An excellent service that gives 10% of your fare to a local initiatives in St Catherine.

Alternatively, a private car costs around 250LE each way, but can then be used in St Catherine to take you directly to the foot of the mountains. Ensure you either book a return trip, or if taking a taxi from St Catherine, that they have the correct license to take you through the check points all the way to Dahab.

Ensure you have your passport to hand as you pass though check points and that you have the correct visa. **Visa rules have changed in Egypt.** The Sinai Pass (15 days, free on arrival at the airport) is fine for a short stay, but for anything longer you now need to apply in advance to the Egyptian embassy in your country. Visas are normally processed quickly, \$20 for a Full Egyptian Visa up to 30 days, longer stays are also relatively straightforward just cost a bit more.

At St Catherine, you will also need to buy an entrance pass, \$3 from the final check point before St Catherine.



## **Staying in St Catherine**

There are plenty of camps and hotels in St Catherine, from around 50LE for a basic room with shared bathroom, to 100 euro for an air-conditioned hotel room with pool.

Fox Camp is in the perfect position at the base of Jebel Safsafa and Jebel Fara. There is a big dining room, and the Bedouin tent is the perfect place to relax at the end of a long days climbing with a sheesha! A double room costs 150-250 LE per night for 2 people half board. They also have a large shaded camping area for tents and overlander vehicles.

## **Seasons, times of day for climbing**

The best time to go to St Catherine is September to May, although it is possible to climb year round if you can stand the heat, and choose your climbs carefully. St Catherine is generally around 10 degrees cooler than Dahab due to the altitude (1500m), and gets very cold at night; even in early April a down jacket is desirable, and in mid-winter it's a necessity. A soft-shell also comes in handy to climb in the cooler months.

As most of the climbs are full day climbs it is difficult to get out of the sun at midday, so it's advisable to stay fully covered unless very used to the sun, it's still deceptively strong here.

## **What to take, precautions**

This is an incredibly remote area and with no good maps it is very easy to get lost. A guide is compulsory when heading out of the mountains surrounding the village, although it is recommended to have one even on the local routes. The guide doesn't have to climb with you, but if you indicate the top of the route he will meet you at the top and guide you down (often the hardest part of the day!).

A guide can be arranged through Farag at Desert Fox Camp or Sheikh Mousa. Be sure to say that you are climbers, as a few of the guides are especially good with climbers. They can organise permissions, as well as buy and prepare all of your food - and there is nothing better than getting to the top of a route to be greeted with a cup of Bedouin tea, a fire and a meal!

Most of the descents can be done hiking, but a few need abseils so take plenty of tat. Take enough supplies with you to last the day, at least a couple of litres of water and a head torch. The latter is essential, even if you're not planning on descending in the dark - remember dusk is short, and darkness falls quickly here.

A helmet is also recommended, it's very easy to kick down loose rock onto people below you. Near St Catherine mobile reception is excellent, but it drops off to nothing as you head further into the mountains, so a satellite phone is useful. There is no mountain rescue in the area, and the nearest large hospital is Sharm el Sheikh, so you must ensure you are self sufficient.

## **Ethics and Gradings**

As before, standard ethics apply here. There is NO bolting allowed in St Catherine National Park. The grades listed here are French and UIAA grades, and are approximate. The routes were first published on [www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru](http://www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru), and only routes we have checked have been included here. A new guide to St Catherine including the deep desert routes is due out soon—as soon as it arrives, we'll be sure to let you know.

**Jenny Lord**

Head of Rock Climbing

Desert Divers & Sinai Rock Climbing Centre, 2009-2011

## Jebel Safsafa

Safsafa has so far the largest number of routes logged on it - unsurprisingly as it's one of the largest mountains near to the village, and is easy to access.

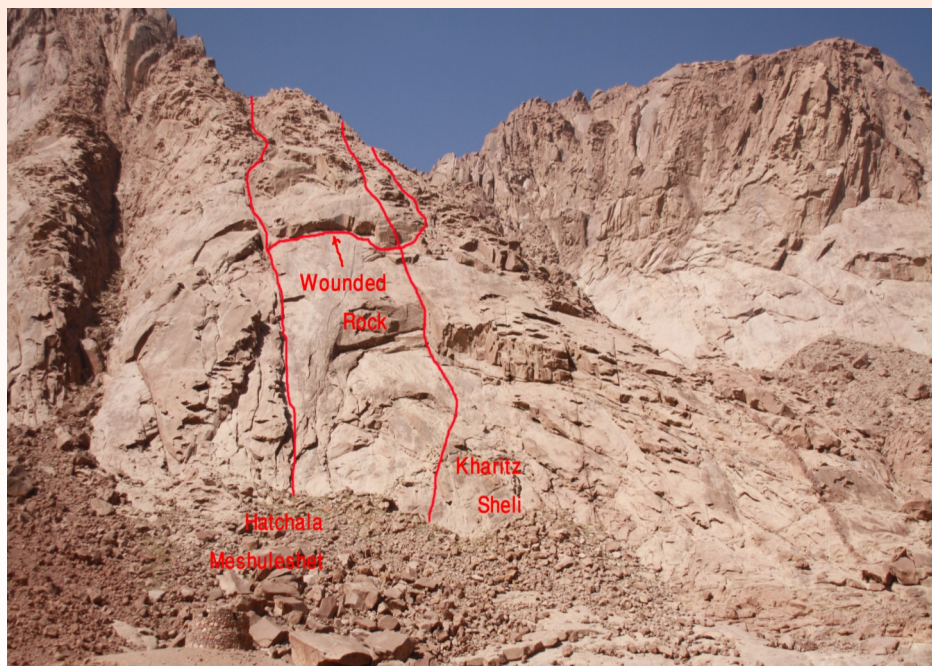
The routes run from right around the South-East face, near the monastery, anti-clockwise to the West face. Access is generally straight forward, walk along the road on the Eastern side, or the path that runs along the base from the North to the West until you find the route, then head up to the base. This can take from thirty minutes to an hour and a half depending on the route.

Descent can be difficult, the top has many false summits, and cols running down that stop in long drops. It is worth being prepared to abseil, however there are plenty of walking paths off - this is a mountain where having a knowledgeable guide can save many hours wandering in the dark. There is one very easy to follow path that runs from a large garden ("Boustan") with several small buildings down the West side to Wadi Srej (fairly easy walk) or the East side via "Boustan gully" to the monastery road (scrambling).



Khalid Moftah, jammed in the crack

***East wall, level with cafés at monastery drop off point. Large flat slab about 1/3 size of wall that looks (with imagination) like Africa.***



## **Hatchala Meshuleshet \*\*\* 5 pitches, grade V**

- ❖ Pitch 1: (50m, IV-) Follow the crack up the left hand side of the flat slab. Belay just off route, on platform on the left.
- ❖ Pitch 2: (50m, IV-) Continue up crack to large stance.
- ❖ Pitch 3: (50m, III-) Easy slab to platform below overhanging chimney.
- ❖ Pitch 4: (30m, V or 6a+, A0) Either head up the slabs on the left or right sides (poor protection), or aid straight up the chimney to next platform.
- ❖ Pitch 5: (40m, V) Straight up the crack to gain easier ground above.
- ❖ Descend to the right.
- ❖ First accent: Rani Calvo and Yoni Pantenovitz

## **Wounded Rock\*\*\* 6 pitches, grade V-**

- ❖ A right hand traverse variation of Hatchala Meshuleshet
- ❖ Pitch 1-3: Same as Hatchala Meshuleshet
- ❖ Pitch 4: (25m, V-) Go up the small crack to the right of the chimney and traverse across the slab right to the horizontal crack. Belay approx. 10m after start of traverse.
- ❖ Pitch 5: (50m, IV) Continue traverse until end of the wall, belay under large (7x3m) block.
- ❖ Pitch 6: (50m, III+) Finish traverse, then head up the slab.
- ❖ Descent: Head off to the right ridge, or across to Boustan gully.
- ❖ First accent: Chanina Kali and Airan Ziss, 1988.

## **Kharitz Sheli (also known as Monday Rush)\*\*\* 4 pitches, grade VI**

- ❖ Start 50m right of Hatchala Meshuleshet
- ❖ Pitch 1: (40m, III) Up slab (good protection). Belay on ledge under crack.
- ❖ Pitch 2: (40m, VI) Head up the crack, belay by 2 bolts.
- ❖ Pitch 3: (40m, IV) Go right on the slab (dubious bolts) until it eases off, then belay on ledge with loose boulders.
- ❖ Pitch 4: (50m, V+) Follow the parallel handjam/layback crack, until you get to easy but exposed slab.
- ❖ You can avoid pitch 4 by heading right at the top of pitch 3 (up stepped slab).
- ❖ First accent: Gil Alexandrovitch, Daniel Peikes, Doron Erel and Krysstof Pankiewicz, 1987.

## ***North East end, "Boustan Gully", near monastery's northern coach park***

## **Fistuk Chalabi\*\*\* 3 pitches, grade V-**

A Boustan is a garden - in this case of almond trees. Head up the gully, past the boustan and the huge boulder. The route is the obvious diagonal crack on the left hand wall, just to the right of the narrow gully.

- ❖ Pitch 1-3: Follow the crack until easy scrambling is found.
- ❖ Descend by scrambling around to the right, then down Boustan gully, or west down to Wadi Srej.
- ❖ First accent: Amnon Shiloni and Beni Sarabi, 1987.





## ***North Eastern side of Jebel Safsafa - facing the village***

### **The Skull** 14 pitches, grade IV+

A pleasant straight forward route, with a mix of scrambling, simultaneous climbs and pitches. Start approx half way up in the gully between the first two summits.

- ❖ Pitch 1-5: (200m, II-III+) Scramble/climb together following the dyke, then up the wall. Head up the gully until you reach a large chock-stone. Go up past it on the left until you get to a small wall.
- ❖ Pitch 6-9: (100m, IV) Climb the right hand side of the wall, then head out of the gully to a ledge. Follow the small inviting crack, then the larger diagonal (right to left) crack until you reach another ledge.
- ❖ Pitch 10-14: (200m, IV+) Above you is the boulder that gives the route it's name, go up the right hand side of it until you reach a small crack just above it. Scramble to finish.
- ❖ Descent is either by a series of 3 long (60m) abseils, followed by scrambling to the immediate left of the route, or walk right (south) to find the path that leads down to Wadi Srej.
- ❖ First ascent: Victor Kaftal and Steve Gault, 1976



Rhonda



## **Papa Giovanni** \*\*\* 8 pitches, grade VI-

A great route with a real mix of styles. Follow the Wadi Srej path for about 30 minutes until the mountain starts to curve in, the route starts a short scramble up, at the foot of a large crack/chimney.

- ❖ Pitch 1: (50m, -IV) Follow the crack/chimney to a chockstone.
- ❖ Pitch 2: (30m, III) Scramble to below a large yellow overhang.
- ❖ Pitch 3: (30m) Head up the crack on the left face (IV+) or up crack in corner over the overhang (stuck nut and friend) (VI+?), then go up the chimney in the corner to a small stance.
- ❖ Pitch 4: (30m to corner + 20m traverse) Veer left onto well protected slabs (good protection in corner and up crack in centre of slab), follow up to the corner (tat on chockstone) (V).
- ❖ Belay here, or continue traverse right along slopy undercut past jammed friend and belay (hanging) at the end of the traverse (VI-)



- ❖ Pitch 5: (30m, V) Head straight up the narrow chimney, continue straight up and pop through the hourglass shaped hole (which can't be seen until you get to it!) to belay.
- ❖ Pitch 6: (60m) Go straight up large obvious chimney, easy start (IV+) getting steadily harder (V+). Go through the chockstone to belay above.
- ❖ Pitch 7: (20m, V) Up right hand corner crack and slab to gain easier ground above.
- ❖ Pitch 8: (45m, II+) Scramble up loose gully to the top.
- ❖ Descent is the same as the Skull.
- ❖ First ascent: Daniele Chiappa and Carlo Duchini

## Jebel Fara

Jebel Fara is the middle of the three main (climb-able) mountains on the south side of St Catherine village. Three of the routes are on the Northern end, with the other three further in to Wadi el-Leja.

Descent from Jebel Fara is relatively straight forward, the easiest way is to head towards the northern end, and go down off the 'back' into Wadi Shrej.

These route descriptions are taken directly from [www.sinaidimb.h12.ru](http://www.sinaidimb.h12.ru)

### **North Corner**\* 4 pitches, grade V-

- ❖ Pitch 1: (30m, IV) Up narrow wide chimney.
- ❖ Pitch 2: (25m, IV) 2m up from stance, easy diagonally left to start clean crack.
- ❖ Pitch 3: (20m, IV) Narrow crack to terrace (2 difficult moves)
- ❖ Pitch 4: (40m, V-) Thin slanted (R) crack delicate, then easy to top.
- ❖ Descent: Walk South to nearest summit of Fara, pass it and descend to small col, turn left and walk easy down via scree gully to wadi Shrej (need short abseil ~ 5m).
- ❖ First ascent: Steve Gault and Victor Kaftal, 1976



Bustan, St Catherine

### **Big Eyes** 4 pitches, grade V

- ❖ Approach: Start below "Pharaoh's chimney" in gully.
- ❖ Pitch 1: (20m, IV-) Go diagonally for about 20m left to good balcony/ledge below two obvious cracks. Left crack attempted and ???.
- ❖ Pitch 2: (40m, IV) Walk 3m to left edge of balcony. Up chimney between main wall and large pillar and slightly to right. Short traverse right to base of vertical crack, under flake.
- ❖ Pitch 3: (25m, V) Up crack to terrace, 25m, good protection by hexes size 8,9,10 & friends.
- ❖ Pitch 4: (40m, V-) Same as "North corner". Thin delicate crack.
- ❖ Descent: Walk South to nearest summit of Fara, pass it and descent to small col, turn left and walk easy down via scree gully to wadi Shrej (need short abseil ~ 5m).
- ❖ First ascent: Gidy Hollender and Avishai Wool, 1987

### **Pharaoh's Chimney**\*\*\* 4 pitches, grade IV

- ❖ Approach: The route is situated at conspicuous unmistakable chimney on North corner of J.Fara.
- ❖ Climb chimney in 2 pitches (IV- and III). Beware of loose stones. Walk to base of "open book", climb it to good stance, then a few meters left to short crack (IV), then easy to top. It is possible to finish after 3rd pitch direct up via more difficult crack (V+).
- ❖ Descent: Walk South to nearest summit of Fara, pass it and descent to small col, turn left and walk easy down via scree gully to wadi Shrej (need short abseil ~ 5m).
- ❖ First ascent: Terry Taylor and Steve Gault, 1976





Paul on Jebel Fara



## **Penthouse \*\*\* 8 pitches, grade V+ (A1)**

A nice enjoyable varied climb on good rock, shadow in morning.

- ❖ Approach: Access is via Wadi El Arbain after 2<sup>nd</sup> Boustan. The start is 150-200m right of Passover on same level. The start point is marked by visible rudjim.
- ❖ Pitch 1: (30m, II) Start on base of sloped ledge, scramble right and up ledge to big horizontal ledge (possible unroped).
- ❖ Pitch 2: (50m, IV) Straight up via 3 short body-size chimneys (7, 5, 3m, IV), separated by ledges (middle one has a big chockstone). After that right and up hand-jam crack (IV), and entrance gully (II-III). Stance on stone edges.
- ❖ Pitch 3: (30m, III-IV-) Follow gully, take crack on right side to base of wall, turn right on ledge 3m. Stance in base of crack/chimney (piton and tricam #3).
- ❖ Pitch 4: (50m, IV-V+) Up crack (first few meters like chimney) full pitch till big roof. Stance under a roof on small chockstone stacked in hand-size crack. For protection need big sizes of hexes, tricams or friends.
- ❖ Pitch 5: (40m, III-IV) From stance straight up vertical tunnel 7-10m (IV). Exit tunnel and follow short gully up and just left to short wall (II-III), beware of loose stones!!
- ❖ Pitch 6: (25m, II, A1) Up vertical wall with 2 thin cracks (finger-jam) (A1 3-4m, small stoppers and friends). After wall, left over big boulder near beautiful cave ("penthouse").
- ❖ Pitch 7: (40m, III-IV-) Up crack from left of cave (IV-), turn right on wide ledge and follow crack/chimney mainly horizontally between wall itself and detached big edge, scramble big chockstone (over or under), climb down 10m into big gully with vertical side walls.
- ❖ Pitch 8: (50m, IV) Up right enjoyable gully/chimney with chockstones to summit.
- ❖ Descent: Walk down to other side of Fara's ridge towards Wadi Srej and Safsafa massif; firstly via sloped granite ledges/fields, then left down steep gully towards village (second one from wall Fara), might need short (7m) abseil.
- ❖ First ascent: Sergey Goncharov, Vadim Chebishev and Vitaly, 2004
- ❖ Source: [www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru](http://www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru)



Trad climbing, St Catherine





Rajab, Bedouin Guide.

## **Passover route** \* 11 pitches, grade V+

- ❖ Approach: Start in front of 2<sup>nd</sup> Boustan (garden) of Wadi El Leja. The route is the impressive vertical chimney, which starts as a dyke that you can see from the end of the Boustan with cypress trees.
- ❖ Climb the chimney in 8 pitches (250m) (IV to V+) to scree ledges under the huge jammed chockstones. Daylight can be seen above. Follow the tunnel and then climb to wall on right of gully chimney in three easy pitches to top.
- ❖ It is possible to climb inside the chimney and find rotten rock and good protection or outside with poor protection.
- ❖ Descent: Walking towards Safsafa to Wadi Srej via winding gully
- ❖ First ascent: Terry Taylor and David Gorney, 1977
- ❖ Source: [www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru](http://www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru)





## **Hourglass \*\*\* 9 pitches, grade V**

A nice enjoyable climb on good rock. Mental balance essential! Severity: IV - V. Recommended!

Approach: Access via Wadi El Arbain, in between Jebel Rabba (right) and Jebel Fara (left). Pass 1<sup>st</sup> peak with Pharaoh's Chimney. Pass 2<sup>nd</sup> peak. Before boustan with tall cypresses on right, you will see 3<sup>rd</sup> peak, it looks like two horns. This is the starting point. Ascend without rope to dark colored crystalline dyke (magma that broke its way through cracks). This dyke cut across Pyramid, the lower truncated part is depressed and after 3m its upper part continues.

- ❖ Route starts on left bottom of Pyramid.
- ❖ Climb narrow dyke (= left bottom of Hourglass) to the truncated part of Pyramid and traverse upper part of depression a little more than its half way point (here is 1st stance).
- ❖ From depression, move to upper part of the pyramid. Continue to its top (2nd stance) and enter at the conspicuous chimney which goes right up middle of mountain face. Climb over first overhanging flat chockstone, blocked in the chimney. After that continue straight up the chimney to the next wedged block, below this grows several branches with leaves. Overcome this overhanging blocked chockstone by stretching on side walls of the chimney (above this stone is 3rd stance).
- ❖ Continue straight up chimney. Several meters before end, turn left on first ledge. It has a rounded top and just enough space for 3 climbers (4th stance without any protection! - before next leading we succeeded enter "symbolic" chock halbmond No. 1 Salewa).
- ❖ Our attempts to continue via 3m high ejecting wall above stance risky and we could not overcome it, even when building lead climber on knees and shoulders of belayers. To continue, use 2 stone heads on right side of stance. Keep left leg on lower head and with right leg step into the wall on an almost invisible undulated surface. As soon as you transfer your center of gravity onto the right leg and rise on it, you can reach a small, but good catch for the first phalanges. As soon as you move left hand here, the problem is solved and one step up you can provide protection with a tricam. Continue several meters across to left up (= left upper part of hourglass) and after that climb straight up through easier terrain to a large, wide, downward leaning terrace. On its left side is the 5th stance.
- ❖ Walk on terrace 30m to right (6th stance).
- ❖ Continue across to left up (beware of loose stones!) towards final chimney between two horns at top of wall. Enter this chimney and below an overhanging stone is the 7th stance (very dusty, but overhead rock will protect you later from falling rock of lead climber).
- ❖ From here we approach using the left wall, and the stones in the chimney above this overhanging stone. Continue on the left side of the chimney over free stones - be careful not to topple stones onto your fellow climber! (8th stance between horns on other side of top, where steep groove descends right; stance is about 15m from stand 7). You'll now see that the double-top was an illusion.
- ❖ Climb forward using steep groove to left. On its top we turn to the right and protect ourselves at the last, 9th stance at big fixed block.
- ❖ From here one can easily climb on good rock to the top without rope.
- ❖ Descent: Immediately after climbing the steep groove from 8th stance we take turn to the right and start the descent (already without rope), as low as is safely possible, to the right. On a good platform is a big block. From this block (abseil sling left in place) abseil 40m to steep gully, then several 10m lengths over a relatively steady surface of big stones to an overhanging step, about 20m high. One can get over by abseil (sling left on the spot around big stone block). Final descent by walking and scrambling to Wadi El Arbain path (about 2 hrs partly in dark).
- ❖ First ascent: Sergey Bubel, Gadi Bereznitsky and Lumir Hanus, 2004
- ❖ Source: [www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru](http://www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru)

**Why hourglass?** This name is symbolic. If you look at the whole wall, you can see the shape of an hourglass - the main chimney at its centre. We also finished our climb at the end of the day – we had filled our hourglass with the climb and now had to turn it upside down for the descent. Finally, the chockstones in the chimney are like falling granules of the sand.



## Jebel Rabba

Jebel Rabba is the mountain at the Southern end of the valley in which the village lies. This route is on the North West face, and is accessed via the South West road out of the village.

### **Pillar between Chimneys** \* 8-11 pitches, grade IV+

**Approach:** Locate the (first) small crack a few meters right of and parallel to the large crack.

**Description:** Starting from the base of this (first) small crack, there is a conspicuous line of dark rocks, a kind of half formed crack, going at about 30 degrees right of the (first) small crack. Visually, these two small cracks are forming a letter 'V'. This is where the route starts, on the right hand of 'V'. Do not confuse with another, much larger crack going right at about 70 degrees from about the same point (starting slightly below).

Middle: follow the crack line up, aiming a little bit to the left of the top of a large pillar protruding from the mountain at about 1/2 of its height. Left of the top of pillar there is a distinguished dark vertical chimney. This is a crux 6th pitch.

End: After the dark vertical crack follow up and left to end on the ridge (classical version - about 8-9 pitches total), or gently take to the right, aiming to the mountain top (11 pitches - our version, which follows the easiest path to the top as it appeared to us).

- ❖ Pitch 1: First 10m IV, exposed. Then easy III.
- ❖ Pitch 2: Continue the crack at about grade III. Then climb its vertical continuation (easy IV or III+), take left at the end. You'll see the rappelling station around big boulder.
- ❖ Pitches 3 & 4: Follow crack line up to small plateau just below and to the left (north) of the pillar. About III.
- ❖ Pitch 5: Easy walk (but be cautious - there's space to fall on the left) to the base of the dark vertical crack. Another crack just continues behind the pillar. Probably it is possible to skip pitch 5 altogether, by making full rope pitches 3 and 4.
- ❖ Pitch 6: Crux. Vertical, body width chimney with two small overhangs. About IV+ or V. Place protection, don't think twice and climb. Friends (medium & small) are recommended for faster protection placement.
- ❖ Pitch 7: Follow the line up, and slightly to the right. Pitch ends under the huge stone. Grade IV-.
- ❖ Pitch 8: Climb up, passing the huge stone from the left. (It also seems possible to climb the first part under the huge rock, and then take to the left). Grade IV or IV+, about 20m. After stone, take the obvious walk right with a little climbing up, until the easy walk ends.
- ❖ Pitch 9: Climb a crack up and a bit to the left, until you find the good place under a big rock (a little bit to the left of it). Grade III.
- ❖ Pitch 10: Climb 10m around the rock to the top and then right (III) and walk to the right until the rope allows.
- ❖ Pitch 11: It's almost the top. Climb the series of slabs (III), aiming left from the top. Finish on the ridge. Follow around the rock outcrops to the summit (south).





**Descent:** Follow the ridge south until the col. From the col, start descent to the right (to the same side as you came up). Keep to the left side of the gully, do not go down the first gully to the right, traverse one ridge and descend via the next (second) gully to the right. At the end of (second) gully, just before you get to some Bedouin trails, a short abseil of 5-7 meters may be required to get around a HUGE stone in middle of gully. (We took the left side of second gully, it may be possible that in right side the descent is more comfortable). At the end a little scrambling (III) in the chimney to get down. Then follow the Bedouin trails to the village.

First ascent: K. Jerhot, L. Paleniek, 1981 , 8-11 pitches, IV+, J.Rabba, NW face  
 Description by Dmitry Rusakov and Tatiana Plazner (27/05/2004), [www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru](http://www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru)

## Jebel Batta

Jebel Batta is a five minute car ride from St Catherine village, north from the main roundabout. It is the easiest in terms of access, with the routes starting a ten minute walk from the road. All routes are on the North Eastern face, so are shaded for most of the day in the winter.

Descent is also straight forward, head West to scramble down off the main 'summit' block, then wind back around North to eventually come back down the North Eastern face.

### **Stolen Mirror \*\*\* 6 pitches, grade IV+**

- ❖ Start on the middle chimney for the classic route.
- ❖ Pitch 1: (50m, IV+) Head up the chimney to obvious stance.
- ❖ Pitch 2: (40m, IV-) Continue up chimney past chockstone until easier section (III).
- ❖ Pitch 3: (50m, II) Scramble straight forward then follow the easy route left to the base of the next large wall.
- ❖ Pitch 4: (40m, IV-) Go up the short crack until you reach base of chimney.
- ❖ Pitch 5: (40m, IV) Head straight up the chimney (with a 2m tall column formation about half way up) until you reach the top.
- ❖ Pitch 6: (50m, III+) Follow the corners up until easy scrambling.
- ❖ First ascent: Andrea Anati and Gil Alexandrovitch, 1987
- ❖ Source: [www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru](http://www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru)

### **Andrea's Variation of Stolen Mirror \* 6 pitches, grade IV-**

- ❖ Start one crack to the right of Stolen Mirror
- ❖ Pitch 1: (50m, II) Scramble up the middle chimney
- ❖ Pitch 2: (50m, IV-) Continue up corner, head back (on right hand side of wall) until bolts are reached (stance).
- ❖ Pitch 3: (50m, III) Easy climb/scramble up to the left until large platform.
- ❖ Pitches 4-6: As Stolen Mirror.
- ❖ First ascent: Adrian Hill and Alon Parnes, 1988.
- ❖ Source: [www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru](http://www.sinaiclimb.h12.ru)



# Grade Conversion Table

Climbing						Bouldering		
UIAA Central Europe	Sport Grade French	Sierra USA	British		Australia	V grade Hueco	B grade Peak	Fb Foutainebleau
			Tech	Trad				
I	1	5.1			9			
II	2	5.2		M	10			
III-								
III		5.3		D				
III+	3a/3c+				11			
IV-		5.4		VD				
IV				HVD				
IV+	4a/4c+	5.5			12			
V-		5.6		S	13			
V	5a/5b	5.7	4a	HS	14			
V+			4b		15			
		5.8						
VI-	5b+/5c+		4c	VS	16			4-
VI		5.9		HVS	17	V0	B0	4
	6a							
VI+		5.10a	5a		18	V1	B1	4+
VI+/VII-	6a+	5.10b			19	V1+		5-
VII-		5.10c		E1	20	V2	B2	5
	6b							
VII		5.10d	5b	E2	21	V2+	B3	5+
VII+	6b+	5.11a			22	V3	B3+	6A
				E3				
VII+/VIII-	6c	5.11b	5c		23	V3+	B4	6A+
VIII-	6c+	5.11c				V4	B4+	6B
VIII	7a	5.11d	6a	E4	24	V4+	B5	6B+
VIII+	7a+	5.12a			25	V5	B5+	6C
VIII+/IX-	7b	5.12b		E5	26	V5+	B6-	6C+
IX-	7b+	5.12c	6b			V6	B6	7A
IX	7c	5.12d			27	V7	B7	7A+
IX+	7c+	5.13a	6c	E6	28	V8	B8	7B
IX+/X-	8a	5.13b			29	V8+	B9	7B+
X-	8a+	5.13c		E7	30	V9		7C
X	8b	5.13d	7a		31	V10	B10	7C+
X+	8b+	5.14a		E8	32	V11	B11	8A
XI-	8c	5.14b			33	V12	B12	8A+
XI-/XI	8c+	5.14c	7b	E9	34	V13	B13	8B
XI	9a	5.14d			35	V14	B14	8B+
XI+	9a+	5.15a			36	V15	B15	8C
XII-	9b	5.15b	7c	E10	37	V16	B16	8C+

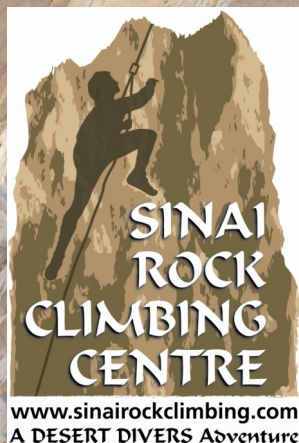
Source: Rock Climbing Atlas 2006



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