



AAC Publications

The Chief, Parallels Wall, New Routes

British Columbia, Squamish

The leftmost end of the Chief's north walls is braided with splitter cracks, coarse-grained corners, and ledge systems. Apart from a couple of seeps down low, the Parallels Wall dries out quickly after storms.

In 2011, Eric Huges and I redpointed the first of two new routes on the Parallels Wall: Inside Passage (350m, 5.11a), located about 100m left of Alaska Highway. This 12-pitch route originally was conceived as a more moderate way to reach Astro Ledge than Alaska Highway (a notoriously strenuous 5.11+), though it now goes to the top of the wall and is a worthwhile route in its own right. The route begins up a series of steep, blocky corners just past Alaska Highway on "Strato Ledge." Most of the pitches average 30m and fall in the 5.9–5.10 range. The technical crux, a steep, thin corner, comes on pitch six; however, I'm sure many climbers will appreciate a few #5 and #6 Camelots for the strenuous 50m offwidth on pitch eight. The start of Inside Passage can also be linked with the seldom-climbed and classic North North Arete to stay mostly in 5.9 country to the top.

I completed a second route just left of Inside Passage in 2011, which I redpointed with Crosby Johnston (starting on the route New Life), and then I revisited the climb in 2013 with Eric Hughes to free a direct start. Finally, in 2014, Jason Kruk joined me for the completion of the integral route: Parallel Universe (450m, 5.12b). The name refers to the fact that most pitches follow sustained, parallel-sided cracks. The third-pitch crux finger crack, which we dubbed "Parallelojam," is a particular joy (45m, 5.12b). Many of the individual pitches had old, rusty evidence of previous attempts, but this is the first known free ascent of a complete line. The 11-pitch route begins at the base of the Saturn V Tower with 100m of 5.11 climbing right off the ground. From there it gains a steep headwall with two 5.12 pitches and a number of others in the 5.9–5.11 range. Many of the pitches contain difficult, heartbreaker moves near the end of the climbing.

Both routes can be descended easily by walking off climber's right on a good trail to the Zodiac summit.

– Paul Cordy, Canada

Images



Jason Kruk on the final crux pitch during the first integral ascent of Parallel Universe (450m, 5.12b), Parallels Wall, the Chief.



The Parallels Wall (a name coined by Paul Cordy), located on the left side of the Chief's north walls. Inside Passage (350m, 5.11a) is shown by the blue circles and Parallel Universe (450m, 5.12b) by the red circles.

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