



AAC Publications

Bastille Buttress, South Face, Small Town Throw Down

California, High Sierra

Myles Moser and I began climbing a new route on Bastille Buttress in October. Located on the south side of Lone Pine Peak, the Bastille is a whale of granite soaring about 2,000' and with only two established routes: the Beckey Route (Beckey-Brown-Haas, AAJ 1972) and Papillon (Schneider-Slate, 1987). With the help of many local climbers, we humped several loads of equipment, including a portaledge, to the base. Our goal was to start at the toe of the wall and follow dikes to a finish on the true headwall, which was still untouched.

The logistics for this route were different from our normal routine, for several reasons. First, we had two buddies, Andrew Soleman and Neil Woodruff, who wanted to partake in the adventure, but because of work conflicts could only commit to the first few days. Thus we decided to fix the first 1,000' or so, until they had to depart, then push capsule-style to the top. Next, the wall is a massive slab. Normally, we go for crack systems and only bolt the blank sections in between, but we knew this was going to involve a lot of bolting. Plus, the Bastille is deceptively foreshortened from the ground. When Beckey and his partners climbed it, they thought it would only be seven pitches—they summited on the 17th pitch!

We placed a total of 105 bolts, including bolted anchors, and climbed 11 new pitches before linking into the last two pitches of the Beckey Route. Most of the pitches were 200' or longer, and 10 of the 13 pitches are between 5.10 and 5.12. The granite was stellar and required no cleaning other than a crack on the first pitch. We encountered slabs, troughs, dikes, and black swirls on this sustained calf-killer. Unfortunately, a bolt ladder was required through the steepest part of the wall; although we were disappointed about this at first, it proved to be quiet fun once finished. It's 5.12 to reach the ladder and will more than likely go free at a harder grade now that the protection is in.

Because of all the support we received from the local climbing community, we called it Small Town Throw Down (13 pitches, V 5.12 AO). A special hat's off goes to the duo SoulMan and Sinner, who started the second ascent before we were even off the wall!

– Amy Jo Ness

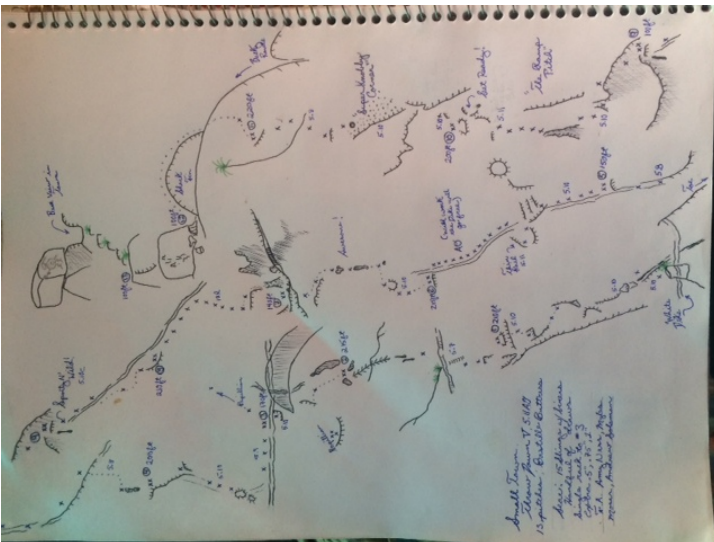
Images



Myles Moser leading a steep slab pitch high on Small Town Throw Down (13 pitches, V 5.12 AO).



Myles Moser and Amy Jo Ness near the top of the Bastille Buttress on their new route Small Town Throw Down (13 pitches, V 5.12 AO).



A topo of the new route Small Town Throw Down.



The view down the Bastille Buttress from the portaledge.

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