



AAC Publications

Atlantis Wall, The Odyssey

California, Sonora Pass

Inspired, in part, by the new wave of Grade V big-wall climbs in Yosemite Valley featured in recent AAJs, Tim Tuomey and I established a new route on Atlantis Wall this summer. The south-facing, ca 1,000' wall is located on Broad Dome, along the Sonora Pass highway corridor, in the Stanislaus National Forest. [Atlantis Wall has four other reported Grade IV–V routes. See "Broad Dome" on www.summitpost.org for more information.] This region hosts solitude and wildness typically unavailable in the Valley. Logistics involved a 4WD, canoes, PFDs, paddles, and a mountain of gear and ropes. As working stiffs, and without the abilities of guys like McNeely or Caldwell, we primarily toiled on weekends. Objective challenges included 12 miles of dirt road, humping loads and canoes to the water line, and paddling full loads across Donnell Reservoir in windy class 2 whitewater conditions—on a lake! There's no cell service in this remote area.

Our line climbs a buttress on the right side of the formation. Most of the existing lines on Atlantis start directly out of a boat. Fortunately, we were able to use the beach below, which we called Talus Island. An oak tree at the base kept us from sweltering at the low elevation of 4,700' while preparing gear.

Once we had fixed pitches above the Lifeguard Station ledge, we started to feel the route was possible. Using telephoto images, we were able to piece together a series of cracks up high. We just had to overcome a steep headwall. With some deep-soul wide climbing, using mixed free and aid, Tim got us past the first part of the Sea of Despair pitch. The next day I was able to get us past the second half of this hollow section, which rang like a Japanese funeral bell. The psychological crux was now behind us.

Weeks later our canoe was stolen. It took four days to bring in a new canoe, finish the remaining pitches, and strip our gear. Tim got the upper crux, a crystalline crack system covered in dirt and filth. Above this, a final technical pitch brought us to lower-angled territory, from which we descended and paddled back with our loads. Given the unknowns, trials, and the inherent water factor, we named our route the Odyssey (V 5.9 C2+). "By hook or by crook this peril too shall be something that we remember."—Homer

– Robert Behrens

Images



Tim Tuomey on lead on the Odyssey (V 5.9 C2+).



Paddling to the Atlantis Wall.



Looking out from the portaledge while establishing the Odyssey (V 5.9 C2+).

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