



AAC Publications

Forsyth Peak, Torre del Caballo Salvaje

California, Northern Sierra, Hoover Wilderness

The afternoon sun beat through the smoke-filled air. My mind was delirious and my legs ached from the previous 50 miles. I had left Tuolumne Meadows 19 hours and 15 minutes earlier, running northbound on the Pacific Crest Trail. Passing Dorothy Lake that day in mid-July, my eyes wandered to an attractive tower in the distance. I snapped a grainy photo with my phone and continued toward Sonora Pass.

In early September, Ryan Evans, Dylan Thomas, and I left Kennedy Meadows Pack Station, accompanied by my good friend Steve Anker, our horse-packing expert. We rode horses and mules carried our gear for about 20 miles to Dorothy Lake, where we set up base camp. Steve was left to tend to the livestock that evening as we carried gear to the base of the tower and scouted our line of ascent. The formation is a detached subsummit along the north-northeast-facing ridgeline of nearby Forsyth Peak (11,091', 38.15770°N, 119.5797°W).

Awaking lazily the next morning, we prepared ourselves, gathering our gear, finishing breakfast, and downing the last of the coffee. We were impressed with Steve's skills as all the pack animals calmly walked into camp from the meadow where they had spent the night and stood by the tie lines. Not paying much attention, we continued packing. Suddenly the horses and mules were in a gallop, headed for their home in Kennedy Meadows. Steve yelled as he tried to control the mule he was leading, and we sprinted after the horses, only making them run faster. After a couple hours of running through the high country, all the stock was retrieved and tied up.

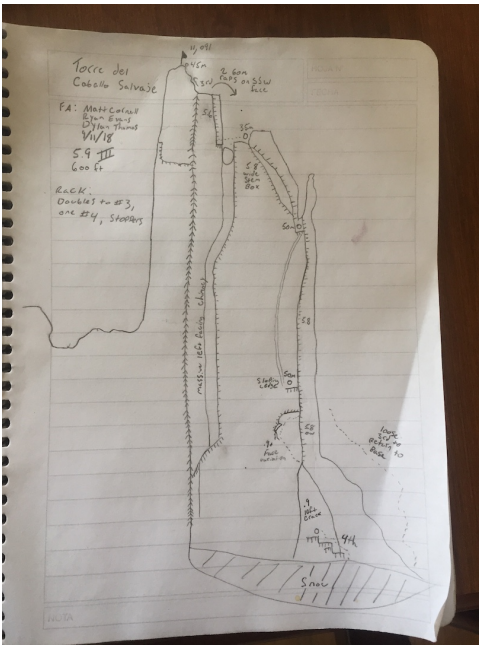
We were exhausted, time was lost, and there was still much unknown about the tower. We approached anyway, crossing the snowfield below the formation and scrambling 4th-class ledges to the base of two splitter-looking cracks. It was obvious the rock was not the typical clean, white granite of the High Sierra; however, it was far from choss and was well featured with great edges and seams and occasional perfect cracks.

I began up the left of the two cracks, passing a 5.9 step to the left that led into the prominent left-facing corner that defines the route. At this point the crack widened and I opted to lead onto the face on 5.9+ edges, rejoining the corner below a body-length roof. I built a belay above the roof on sloping ledges. Dylan took off on the second pitch, following the path of least resistance up the corner. He found a nice stance next to a large gendarme and belayed. Ryan continued from here, avoiding large loose blocks that we later trundled. He began stemming through a wide slot, finding good gear in discontinuous cracks that led to a large ledge at the top of the corner. I stepped across a chockstone that capped a massive chimney and continued up 5.6 terrain to the summit.

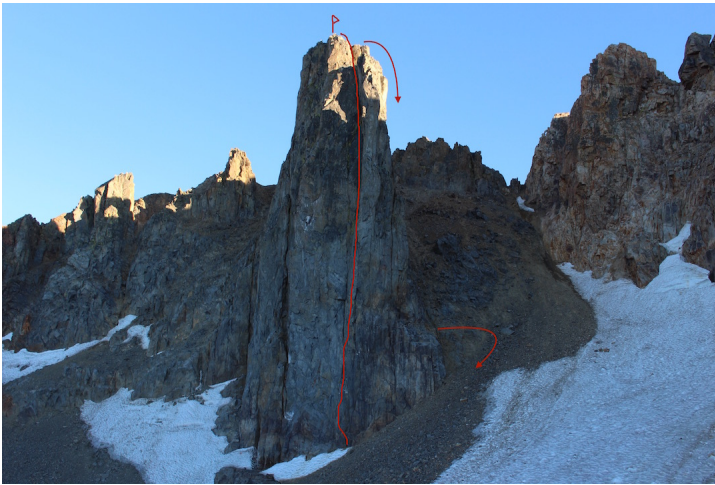
We downclimbed from the summit to a ledge on the southwest side of the tower and made two 60m rappels to reach loose 3rd-class terrain that led the base of the route. We found no trace of other climbing on the tower, and the only gear we left was a nut at the top of the second pitch and our two rappel anchors.

We named the feature Torre del Caballo Salvaje (600', 5.9)—Tower of the Wild Horse—due to all shenanigans associated with the trip. It's also worth noting that there is much more potential on the tower. With a selection of pins and a hand drill, there would be many options on the steeper north face.

Images



Hand-drawn topo for Torre del Caballo Salvaje (600', 5.9) in the Hoover Wilderness north of Yosemite National Park. Matt Cornell, Ryan Evans, and Dylan Thomas made the probable first ascent of this formation in the summer of 2018.



Torre del Caballo Salvaje, a subsummit of Forsyth Peak in the Hoover Wilderness north of Yosemite National Park. Matt Cornell, Ryan Evans, and Dylan Thomas climbed the line shown (600', 5.9) for the probable first ascent of this formation in the summer of 2018.

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