



AAC Publications

North Chasm View Wall, Airiana Grande

United States, Colorado, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park

The black line shows the first two pitches of Airiana Grande (13 pitches, 5.13 R) Photo by Matt Reeser

This climb is more Matt Reeser's story than mine, but I have the pleasure of sharing it with you. In 2021, after several years of Black Canyon climbing, Matt felt ready to contribute his piece of history to the canyon. All he had to do was discover the right line. He found it after several scouting missions on North Chasm View Wall. During climbs of Air Guitar (17 pitches, V 5.12+, Donahue-Ogden, 2007) and 827 GO! (15 pitches, V 5.13-, Coyne-Haffner, 2005), he spotted subtle weaknesses that start about 40' right of Air Jordan (11 pitches, Hughes-Schaffer, 2014) and lead up to a pair of impeccable golden dihedrals. Matt partnered up with Cody Scarpella and began to scope the rest of the line from the South Rim using binoculars.

That spring, they started the route ground-up, the prevailing ethic in the Black. After two moderate pitches, they found themselves at the base of the corners. Their attempt on the right-hand one ended in a useless aid seam, and they bailed off a half-driven knifeblade. Left corner it was! That pitch, which at 5.13- became the first crux of the route, follows juggy flakes to an outrageous dynamic throw to a sloper, then finishes with a final 5.12 section into a splitter finger crack. Matt and Cody finished the season by completing a couple more pitches to a massive ledge system halfway up the wall.

In the fall of 2021, Cody opted to focus on other projects, and this is when my infatuation with the route began. Matt approached me about finishing the climb with him, but it came with a warning: The most difficult and scary climbing was still above. My first weekend on the line confirmed just this. We did only two-thirds of a pitch, hand-drilling bolts off hooks once the cracks disappeared. We rapped and made the "walk of shame" out of the canyon.

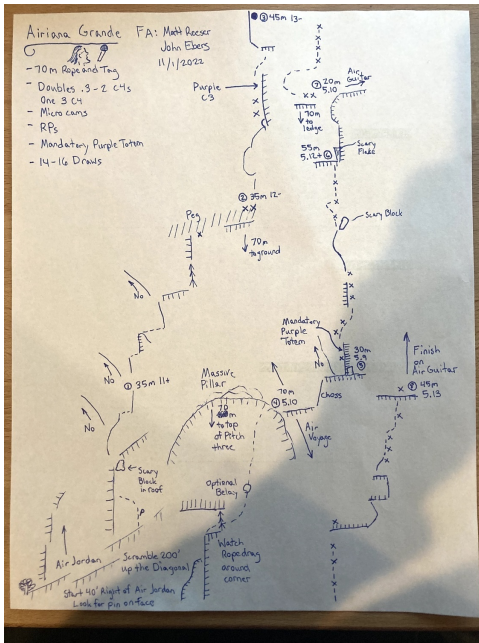
Weeks, and then seasons, went by in this manner. We inched up the wall. Terrifying hook placements, sore arms, and fear became the norm. Finally, in the fall of 2022, we completed the last three pitches of the route, after which we connected with some of the highest- quality sections (pitches 13–17) of Air Guitar to reach the canyon rim.

At 5.13, the last pitch before joining Air Guitar is the hardest. It has desperately thin boulder problems and dynamic lunges to flakes; the redpoint crux is a final throw to a massive dish. With 1,500' of air below us as we each pulled this move, we could think of only one appropriate name: Airiana Grande (13 pitches, 5.13 R).

It was our goal to uphold the bold ethic that is prevalent throughout the Black Canyon, but also to keep the route approachable for ground-up ascents. While there are several serious runouts, they should be reasonable for climbers of this grade. The cruxes are well protected. Matt and I are excited for it to be repeated and hope people enjoy the route as much as we did.

— John Ebers

Images



The topo for Airiana Grande (13 pitches, 5.13 R), North Chasm View Wall, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Colorado.



The black line shows the first two pitches of Airiana Grande (13 pitches, 5.13 R).



Pitches 5-8 of Airiana Grande (13 pitches, 5.13 R).



Cody Scarpella on pitch two of what would become Airiana Grande during an early mission up the North Chasm View Wall.



Cody Scarpella putting in the single bolt on pitch two (5.12-) of Airiana Grande (13 pitches, 5.13 R), North Chasm View Wall, Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Colorado.



Cody Scarpella scoping out the North Chasm View Wall from the South Rim of the Black Canyon.



John Ebers bolting pitch six (5.12+) of Airiana Grande (13 pitches, 5.13 R).



John Ebers lounging on the belay ledge at the top of pitch five of Airiana Grande (13 pitches, 5.13 R), waiting for the wall above to come into the shade.



Matt Reeser and Cody Scarpella (in the rainbow umbrella hat) during an early mission up the route that would become Airiana Grande.

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