



AAC Publications

Oak Creek Drainage, Kora

Utah, Zion National Park

Deep in the drainages and up the sandy scree slopes of Oak Creek, Landon McDowell and I wandered below the cliffs in mid-October, itching for an adventure. When we saw a horizontal roof 400' off the ground, we knew we'd found it. It was about 300' right from the beginning of The Omen (IV 5.11, Banach-Padgett, 2009), on a west-facing wall south of Meridian Tower. My partner's excitement quickly fizzled after we dislodged multiple fridge- and microwave-sized blocks on the first pitch. I still thought the line had amazing potential. Climbing, of course, generally requires two willing participants. We rappelled.

Connor Baty and I returned in November and put in four 14- to 16-hour days preparing the 1,000' wall. We cleared out substantial choss, ate lots of sand, and hand-drilled bolted anchors.

In early December, it was time for a free attempt. After some moderate fist cracks, we came to what was always going to be the crux: the roof, pitch four. We had named it the Temple Eave—when you look out from below the roof, its upper edge frames the West Temple across the valley almost perfectly.

Connor took off, jamming the uncomfortable, awkward crack as it alternated between tight hands and loose fists. He smeared his feet against a blank wall and kept so much body tension that I was waiting for a diamond to shoot out of his butt, but he peeled off the wall at the desperate transition to shallow fingers. After a few more attempts, Connor redpointed this crux pitch, and we raced for the summit in four more pitches and some bushy scrambling.

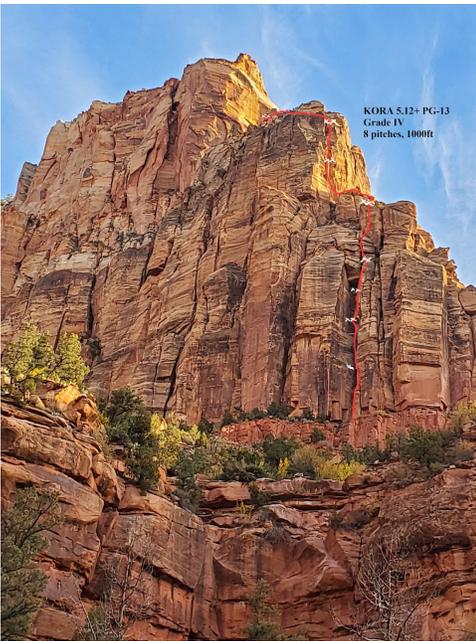
We descended the route in five double-rope rappels. Since Connor had redpointed the rig, I felt it was only right that he choose the name. He was adamant that we name the route Kora (1,000', 8 pitches, IV 5.12+ PG-13) in honor of my first child, who was soon to be born.

— **James Barrow**

Images



A view of the upper pitches from the approach to Kora (1,000', 8 pitches, IV, 5.12+ PG-13).



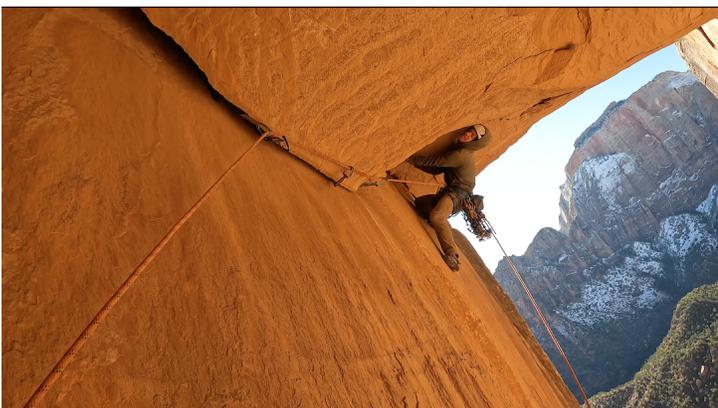
The line of Kora (1,000', 8 pitches, IV 5.12+ PG-13), starting on a west-facing wall south of Meridian Tower, Zion National Park, Utah.



James Barrow bolting an anchor above the crux roof of Kora (1,000', 8 pitches, IV 5.12+ PG-13).



Connor Baty making a blind reach in the crux roof of Kora (1,000', 8 pitches, IV, 5.12+ PG-13).



Connor Baty exiting the first crux on pitch four of Kora (IV 5.12+ PG-13), before the second half of the roof.

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