



## AAC Publications

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### **Moro Rock, East Face, Mother of Pearl**

California, Sierra Nevada, Sequoia National Park

**On December 17, Christian Black, Chris Koppl, Josef Maier, and I completed a project that I had originally envisioned in 2016.** After multiple trips over several years, including a three-pitch false start that dead-ended at unclimbable terrain, we established the first free route up the imposing left side of the east face of Moro Rock.

While the right side of Moro's east face has easily accessible and mostly moderate routes, the left is home to dramatic overhangs that, until now, had only allowed for impressive aid lines. Our climb, Mother of Pearl (1,200', 10 pitches, 5.12-), is predominantly on knobs, which are ubiquitous on Moro Rock and part of what makes the formation so special.

Mother of Pearl starts left of Pièce de Renaissance (1,400', 8 pitches, IV 5.10 A1), first climbed by Jon Gatti, E.C. Joe, and John Vargas in 1989. The upper pitches climb through a spectacular headwall, which holds the crux. The line mostly follows new terrain, but we commandeered two pitches in the middle from an old, abandoned route simply labeled "incomplete" in the out-of-print *Southern Sierra Rock Climbing: Sequoia/Kings Canyon*. Christian, Chris, Josef, and I completed a team-free ascent.

— **Brian Prince**

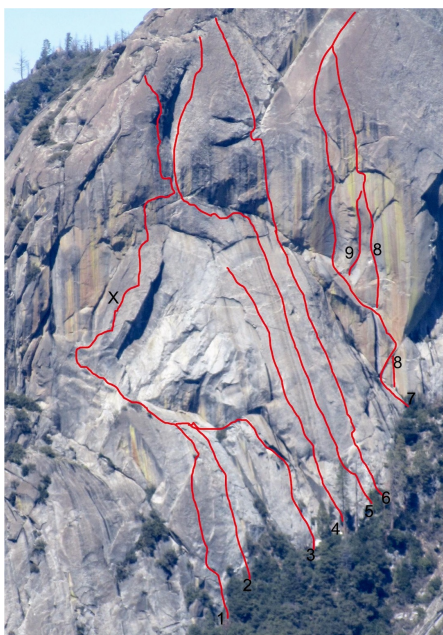
## Images



Josef Maier leads the tenth pitch (5.11) during the first ascent of Mother of Pearl on the east face of Moro Rock.



Josef Maier sending the crux ninth pitch of Mother of Pearl (1,200', 10 pitches, 5.12-) on the east face of Moro Rock, Sequoia National Park, Sierra Nevada, California. Castle Rock Spire and the Fin are in the background in the upper left of the frame.



The east face of Moro Rock, Sequoia National Park. (1) Mother of Pearl (1,200', 10 pitches, 5.12-, Black-Koppl-Maier-Prince, 2023); (2) "Incomplete route" listed in Southern Sierra Rock Climbing: Sequoia/Kings Canyon (X marks the high point of this route); (3) "Unknown route," also according to the SEKI guidebook; (4) False start attempt to Mother of Pearl (600', 3 pitches, 5.12-, Musiyenko-Prince, 2017); (5) Pièce de Renaissance (1,400', 8 pitches, IV 5.10 A1, Gatti-Joe-Vargas, 1989); (6) Moro Oro (1,600', 9 pitches, IV 5.10 A3, Cook-Hickey-Joe, 1988); (7) Full Metal Jacket (1,500', 7 pitches, V 5.10 A3, Joe-Hickey, 1988); (8) El Niño (9 pitches, V 5.10 A3+, Gardner-Pennycook-Thau, 1998); (9) El Principe Pequeno (A4+, Gardner-Thau, 1999).

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