



## AAC Publications

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### **Patterson Bluff, Wedding Wall/Altar, Tying the Knot**

California, Western Sierra

Daniel Jeffcoach casting off on pitch seven of (5.9) Tying the Knot (9 pitches, 5.12d). Photo by Brian Prince

**On February 28, Daniel Jeffcoach, Joe Maier, Brian Prince, Tristan Thau, and I** completed Tying the Knot (9 pitches, 5.12d). The new route begins on a face called the Wedding Wall, right of the main Patterson Bluff (Patterson Left), which rises high above the North Fork of the Kings River in the western Sierra foothills.

The Wedding Wall is the lower half of a large granite dome, and it hosts several unreported lines by Herb Laeger, Kris Solem, and friends from the late 1980s and early 1990s, notably the Laeger-Brand Route (5 pitches, 5.10d, 1993) and In Slickness and in Stealth (3 pitches, 5.11, Laeger-Laeger-Solem-Yoho, 1989). Chris Koppl and Brian Prince added a route called Love Vigilantes (5 pitches, 5.10) in 2022.

After three long pitches of face climbing, we reached the top of the Wedding Wall by our own new line. We coiled our ropes and walked about 150 feet over a large ledge system to reach the base of the steeper upper face we had named the Altar—the top half of the dome—which had no known routes.

We started with the right side of the prominent pillar in the center of the face. This led to a bouldery crux pitch (5.12d), then four more pitches, up to 5.11, on the upper half of the wall. The climbing is protected with bolts and a single set of cams. We established the route over two days in “party wall” mode: One person was always on lead, while the other four socialized, laughed, and generally took their time following on Micro-Traxions. This was my 17-year-old son Tristan’s introduction to establishing long first ascents in the Sierra Nevada.

—**Brandon Thau**

#### **ROUTE INTO**

Tying the Knot, 5.12d. First ascent by Daniel Jeffcoach, Joe Maier, Brian Prince, Tristan Thau, Brandon Thau. February 28, 2025.

On top of the dirt rise and about 20 feet left of Made of Honor, 40 feet left of Golden Anniversary, this route starts on the left side of a dark black streak with obvious triangular pedestal at the base. This route continues to the midway ledge and up The Altar (upper dome).

Gear:

- ~14 Draws
- Single set of cams #.3 - #3
- 2x70m ropes

Descent: 6 Double rope 70m rappels (3 on The Altar (upper dome), 3 on Wedding Wall). Raps are equipped with quicklinks and carabiners.

#### Pitch Description:

P1(5.9, 70m). 13 bolts & rap anchor. Rope stretcher to amazing ledge up featured sometimes flaky slab.

P2 (5.10, 70m). 10 bolts & optional cams fingers to hands to rap anchor. Climb face with right hand arete into a wide crack easy to traverse out left. At grassy ledge head up shallow corner with cam & past 7 bolts of friction. Easy terrain to good stance below black-streaked slab. Rap anchor

P3 (5.9, 60m). Straight up streaked slab past 4 bolts to top of Wedding Wall & rap station. From anchor coil ropes & move up to upper dome's (The Altar) obvious central pillar on its right side.

P4 (5.11a, 65m). 11 Bolts, 1x yellow totem or #2. Time to OW. Low-angle corner to hand crack appearing on the left. Up the chimney w/ a bolt to protect exit & bolted OW to a roof easily bypassed on left to good stance & 2 bolt anchor. Move belay around left to top of pillar & rap station.

P5 (5.12d, 15m). 7 bolts. Lie back flake that begins hollow, but becomes more solid up higher. Cruxy face leads to technical undercling traverse right. Pull roof at obvious weakness to great stance and two bolt anchor.

P6 (5.11b, 35m). Rising traverse left following amazing bulbous granite past bolts. Leads to fun groove straight up to anchor. Optionally continue on to next pitch, traversing back right to amazing ledge, but ensure to extend farthest left bolts.

P7 (5.9, ~15m) Follow more featured slab rightward past 3 bolts to an amazing ledge w/ a rap station.

P8 (5.11c, 50m) Face to horizontal crack w/ finger-sized gear(#.3). Difficult traverse right protected by bolts onto amazing dyke & tricky mantel. Aim for obvious flake system. Belay at a great ledge on top of the upper flake w/ rap station.

P9 (5.9, 35m) Final stretch of slab protected by some friction moves and a blocky traverse up & left to the summit. 4 bolts and rap anchor.

## Images

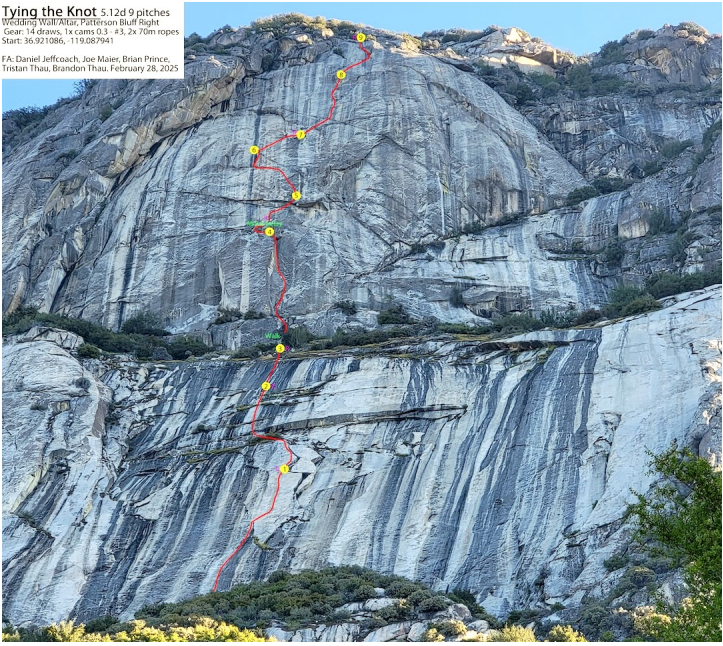


Tristan Thau following pitch six (5.11b) on Tying the Knot.



Daniel Jeffcoach casting off on pitch seven of (5.9) Tying the Knot (9 pitches, 5.12d).

**Tying the Knot** 5.12d 9 pitches  
Wedding Wall/Altar, Patterson Bluff Right  
Gear: 14 draws, 1x cams 0.3, #3, 2x 70m ropes  
Start: 36.921086, -119.087941  
FA: Daniel Jeffcoach, Joe Maier, Brian Prince,  
Trestan Thau, Brandon Thau, February 28, 2025



Tying the Knot (9 pitches, 5.12d) on the Wedding Wall (lower face) and the Altar (upper dome), part of Patterson Bluffs, Sierra National Forest, Sierra Nevada, California.



Joe Maier and Brian Prince contemplating the crux fifth pitch (5.12d) of Tying the Knot.

## Article Details

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