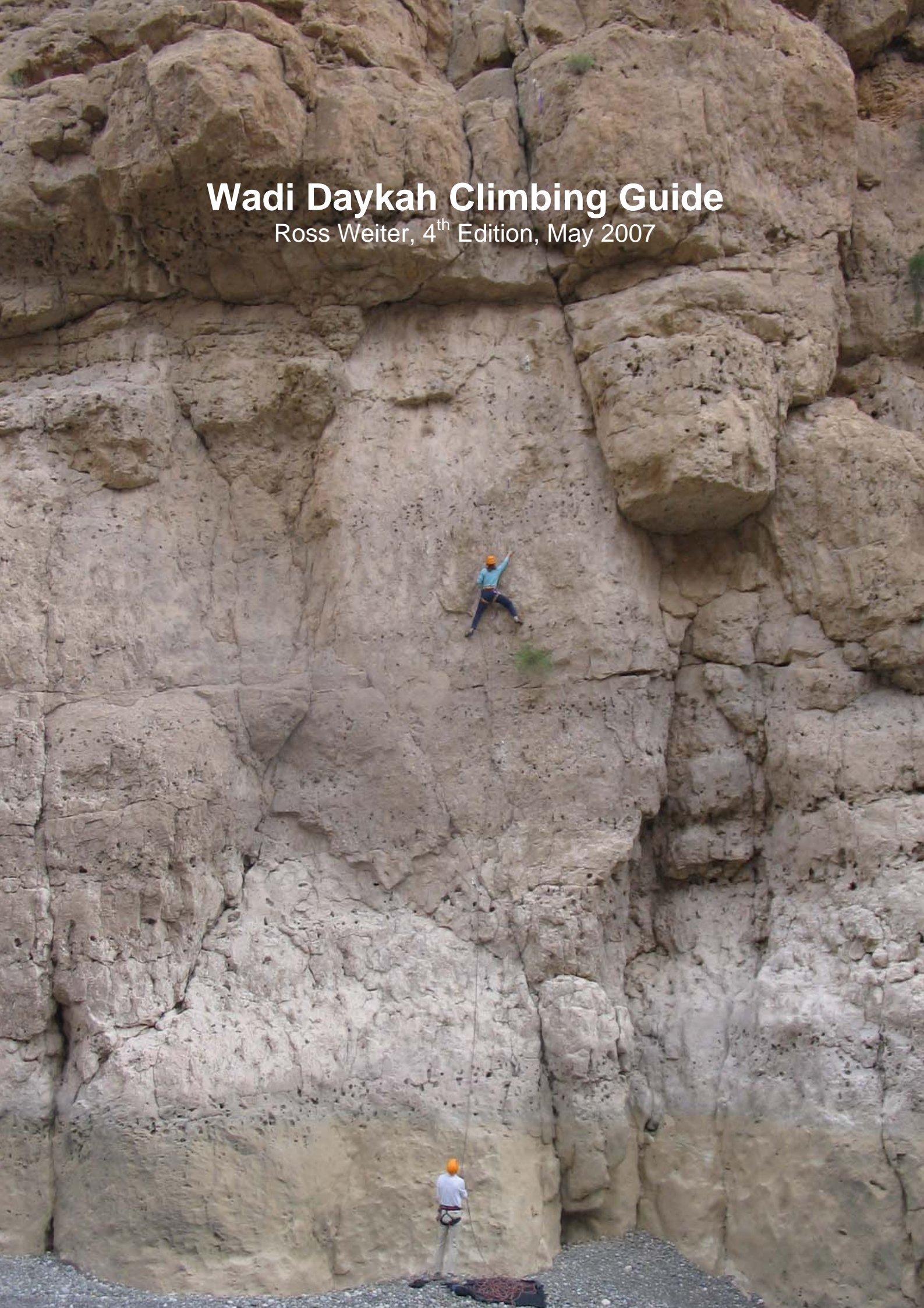


Wadi Daykah Climbing Guide

Ross Weiter, 4th Edition, May 2007



A WARNING ABOUT ROCK CLIMBING

Climbing is a sport where you may be seriously injured or killed. Read this before you use this guide.

This guide is a compilation of often-unverified information gathered from many different climbers. The author(s) cannot assure the accuracy of any of the information in this guide, including the route descriptions and the difficulty ratings. These may be incorrect or misleading as it is impossible for any one author to climb all the routes and confirm all the information. Some routes listed in the guide have had only one ascent and the information has not been verified. Also, ratings are subjective and depend on the physical characteristics such as height, experience, technical ability, confidence and physical fitness of the climber who supplied the ratings.

Therefore, be warned that you must exercise your own judgement with regard to the route location, description, difficulty and your ability to safely protect yourself from the risks of rock climbing. Examples of these risks are: falling due to technical difficulty or holds breaking off, falling rock, climbing equipment dropped by other climbers, equipment failure and failure of protection including fixed protection such as bolts.

You should not depend on any information gleaned from this guide for your personal safety. Your safety depends on your own experience, equipment and climbing skill. If you have any doubt as to your ability to safely attempt any route described in this guide, do not attempt it.

INTRODUCTION

Wadi Daykah is the best climbing crag reasonably close to Muscat. It offers shade, serene privacy and great water-polished rock. It only takes 80 minutes (90km) to get there from Quorum, and only 3km of dust-free 4WD.

The area was first discovered for climbing in the winter of 1989-1990 by the government-sponsored Adventure Tourism Team (ATT) of M.Colonna, B.Domenech, M.Verin and Tony Howard and many trad (not bolted) routes were put up. Development then ceased until 2002 when the local French guides Patrick Cabiro and Nathalie Hanriot bolted some lines in the Middle Canyon and all the Lower Canyon lines. These two can be credited with introducing sport climbing to Oman by bolting up La Gorgette (Wadi Bani Auf), and a few climbs at Wadi Adai, Wadi Mayh and Hadash. In 2006-7 Americans Bill Huguelet and Kim Vaughn and Australian Ross Weiter added many other climbs to the Wadi Daykah Middle Canyon. Thanks for the money and effort spent and information provided.

The rock is dolomite: a variety of limestone rich in magnesium carbonate, river polished and not sharp.

Due to its low altitude and heat trap features the area is at its best in winter (November-March).

GEAR AND ETHICS

Helmets are essential, especially for belayers, as there is some loose rock. Many of the routes are 35m long so you will need either a 70m rope or two shorter ropes tied together to return to the ground. Most routes are bolted, all bolted routes have lower-offs. Bring 10 draws plus 2 slings for the belay.

Drive through the Hail Al Ghaf village slowly and carefully due to people and goats on the narrow road. Climb preferably in long trousers. It will not only be in keeping with local customs but also save your legs from scratches.

THE CLIMBS

Routes are bolted spot climbs unless indicated otherwise as trad. "Trad" climbing means climbing on nuts and cams, i.e. removable gear, i.e. no bolts. On photos, trad routes are shown by smaller dashes. Grades are French, see comparison table at the end. All climbs are described from left to right.

For all new routes and comments to help keep this guide correct and up to date, please utilise the *New Routes* forum on www.omanclimbing.com (set up by Tony Robson).



HOW TO GET THERE / CAMPING

From the Quorum roundabout in Muscat drive towards Ruwi on the inland branch of the freeway, passing the Mina Al Fahal exit. Exit on the next roundabout posted al Amerat/Quiryat. Drive almost to Quiryat for about 80km. After descending the steep hairpin road to the plain, take right turn at the OmanOil petrol station to Hail Al Ghaf. Drive straight through Hail Al Ghaf village, to the end of bitumen. In front of you will be Wadi Daykah. Zero your trip meter here. 4WD is required, or alt. drive as far as you can and then walk for about 30 minutes.

To get to Middle Canyon turn right alongside the palm trees and drive for 2.4km to the Utopia Area (to left, at the concrete "submarine turret" of the covered falaj). The main area is 500m further on, just after a tributary wadi on your left side, with the shady North Side on left (most climbs) and South Side on right. The last 300m can be very rough even with good 4WD. To avoid car damage, investigate the road ahead on foot and, if in doubt, park early.

It is also possible to access the Middle Canyon from the upstream direction, see map. The best camping area is marked on the map: there are some large shady trees on the right as you drive into the canyon at that place. There are further (treeless) spots between this place and the Main Area. Camping at the crag is not a good idea as a small-scale sand-mining operation springs up there occasionally, in between rains. Hopefully the next flood will put an end to that.

To get to the Lower Canyon go straight ahead, pass football field to your left and drive down the canyon, which can be a zig-zag process. 4WD is essential. The Norbert & Christopher Area is on the right after 1km and the Rocher-des-Vautours (Vultures' Rock) Area is on the left bank 3km from bitumen end.

International Grade Comparison Table

France climbing	USA climbing	Australia climbing	UK climb adjective	UK climb technical	USA bouldering	France bouldering
5a	5.7	15	HS	4b		
5b	5.8	16	VS	4c		
5c	5.9	17	HVS	5a		
6a	5.10a	18	E1	5b		
6a+	5.10b	19	E1	5b		
6b	5.10c	20	E2	5c	V0-	4a/b
6b+	5.10d	21	E3	5c	V0	4c
6c	5.11a	22	E3	5c	V1	5a/b
6c+	5.11b/c	23	E3	6a	V2	5c
7a	5.11d	24	E4	6b	V3	6a/b
7a+	5.12a	25	E4	6b	V4	6c

Index to first ascentionists: (thanks a lot /merci beaucoup!) (ATT) Adventure Tourism Team, see introduction; (E) Etienne; (KB) Kim Vaughn & Bill Huguelet; (PN) Patrick Cabiro & Nathalie Hanriot; (R) Ross Weiter; (S) Soren Henningsen, (T) Thierry Renault, (BL) Ben & Laurie, (D) Dinah Pantic

Star ratings: *** fantastic, ** good, * worth doing, <no star> only if you have done everything else.



MIDDLE CANYON - UTOPIA AREA

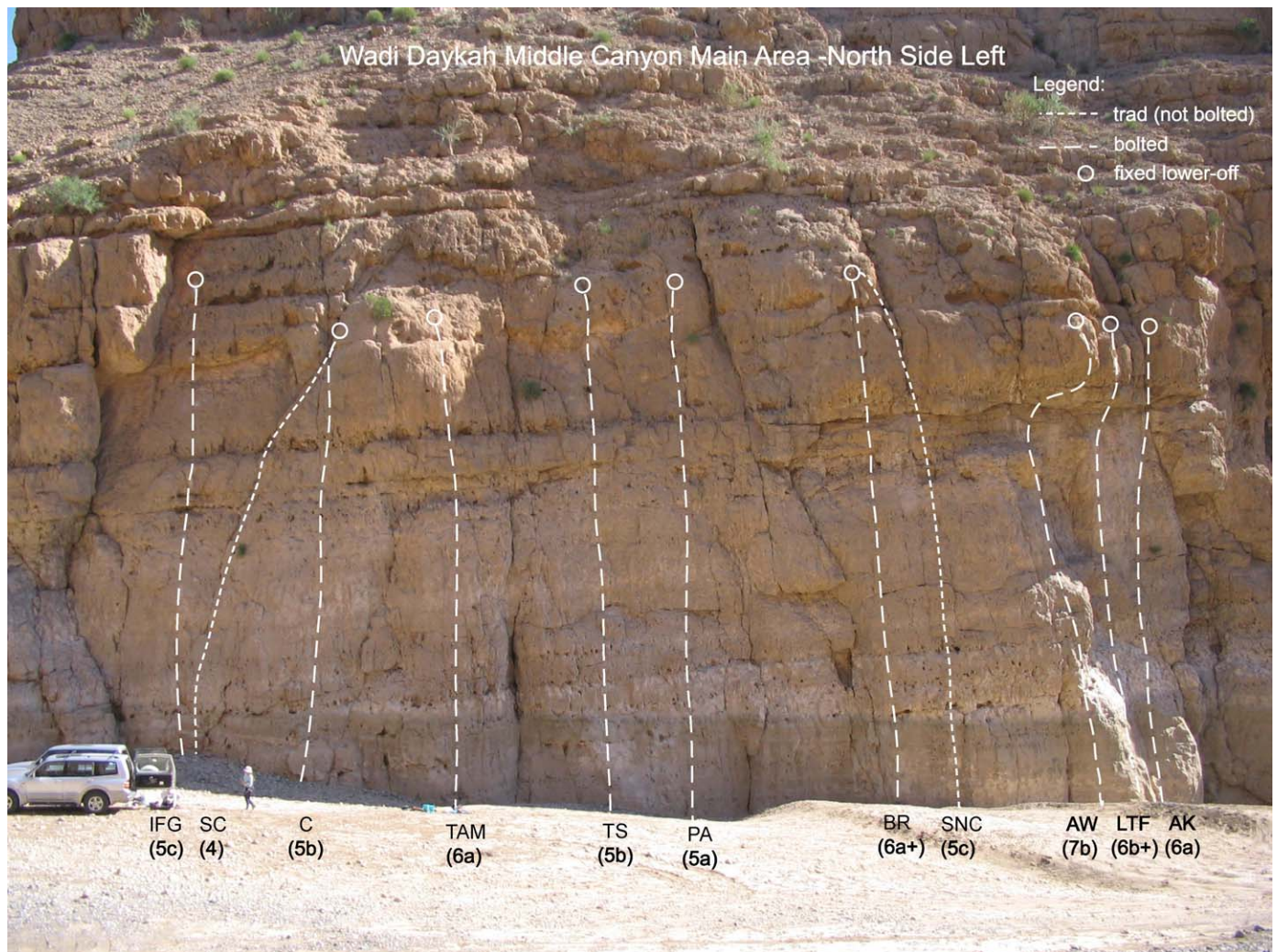
In the shade longer than elsewhere, until 3pm. Not subject to flooding after rain.

**** Utopia (32m, 6b) (KB+R) 2/06**

A reachy start and an airy finish up a hanging block.

Atmos Fear (35m, 6b+) (KB+R) 2/06

A much more severe version of *Utopia*, with an airy hand traverse left past last bolt thrown in.



MIDDLE CANYON MAIN AREA - NORTH AREA

The easiest climbs in the Wadi Daykah are here, and the hardest one. In the shade until 2pm.

*** I Feel Good (25m, 5b) (BL) 12/06**

The long ramble with some small overlaps, just right of the corner. Ben feels good about it; so does James Brown.

Slanted Crack (25m, 4) (KB) 11/06

This trad climb finishes at the lower-offs for *Casper*.

***** Casper (22m, 5b) (KB) 11/06**

You will not give up the ghost on this one, as there are many bolts.

**** That's a Moray (22m, 6a) (KB) 1/07**

For an explanation of the name, look into the hole half way up.....yes, rock climbing is a silly pursuit!

**** The Skull (25m, 5b) (KB) 4/06**

An easy climb to keep the boyfriends occupied while the chicks crank 6b. Name refers to the shape of rock on top.

Petit Ami (25m, 5a) (KB) 4/06

4m R of TS. Another one of the boyfriend" routes, says Kim....ouch. A bit loose.

*** Baby Roof (25m, 6a+) (KB) 3/06**

For baseball fans. This is a pumpy lead and hence not a good warm-up!

Stuck Nut Crack (25m, 5c) (KB) 3/06

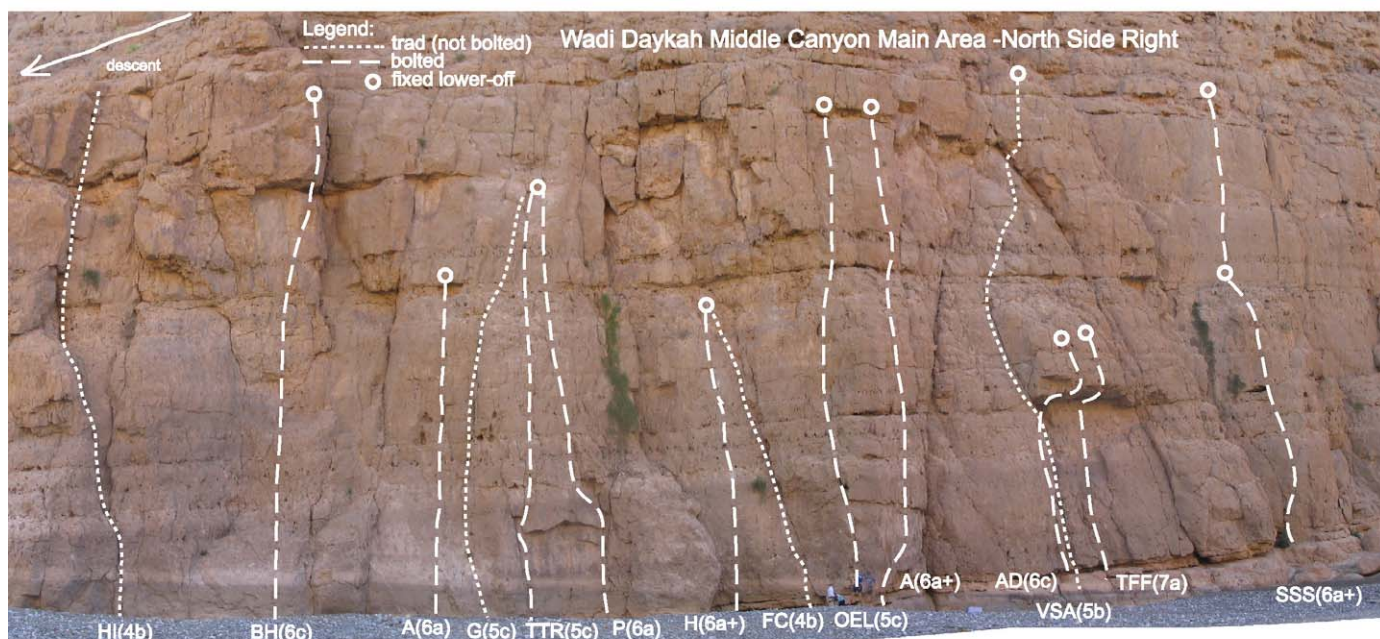
Wander up the face using trad gear, the crux is getting into the overhanging crack.

**** All Weather (25m, 7b) (E) 2/06**

Easily up to roof, then ape to its lip on big holds, then meet the anti-social slopers on top! Aaaargh!!!

**** Learning to Fly (25m, 6b+) (R) 3/06**

The little brother of AW. Don't let it mess you around and just go for it on big holds.



*** **Al Kirobi (25m, 6a) (KB+R) 1/06**

Up easy face on great holds, through overlap into hanging corner. Best climb here.

H.I. (40m, 4b) (ATT) 1/90

The wide crack. Trad.

** **Bosch90-Hilti04 (35m, 6c) (ATT) 1/90 (PN) 1/04**

Climb the pocketed wall to stance, then pull-up to get established on top wall and the crux awaits at the last bolt! A historical pun title.

* **Annie Zet (20m, 5c) (PN) 1/05**

Steep second half on good holds, well bolted.

Gnome (40m, 5c) (ATT) 1/90

Crack and groove up buttress just right of small triangular overhang at 5m. Trend right up top of crack. Trad.

The Troll's Revenge (35m, 5c) (ATT) 1/90, (T) 1/05

Bypass roof on left end, then up wall above. Under-bolted and a bit scary at the grade.

* **Patouche (35m, 6a) (T) 1/05**

Interesting start through overlap and left.

** **Hookey (20m, 6a+) (KB) 1/06**

Some determination is required to get through the bouldery start with pockets. Short but sweet.

First Crack (20m, 4b) (KB) 1/06

Good for a first go at trad climbing, the perfect crack right of *Hookey*. Use same lower-offs.

* **Où Est Lafaille? Where is Lafaille? or Where is the Crack? (30m, 5c) (KB+R) 2/06**

Named after the French alpinist Jean C. Lafaille who went missing trying to solo Makalu in winter. A French pun.

** **Anonyme (30m, 6a+) (PN) 2/06**

Nice aping at the start, and it ain't over after that, buster!

Via Sin Aqua (50m, 5b) (R) 3/06

Clip the first 3 bolts on *MP*, then turn roof on left. Wander up to top, trending right. Lower off from tree sling and maillon. Trad gear, run-out near top but good views.

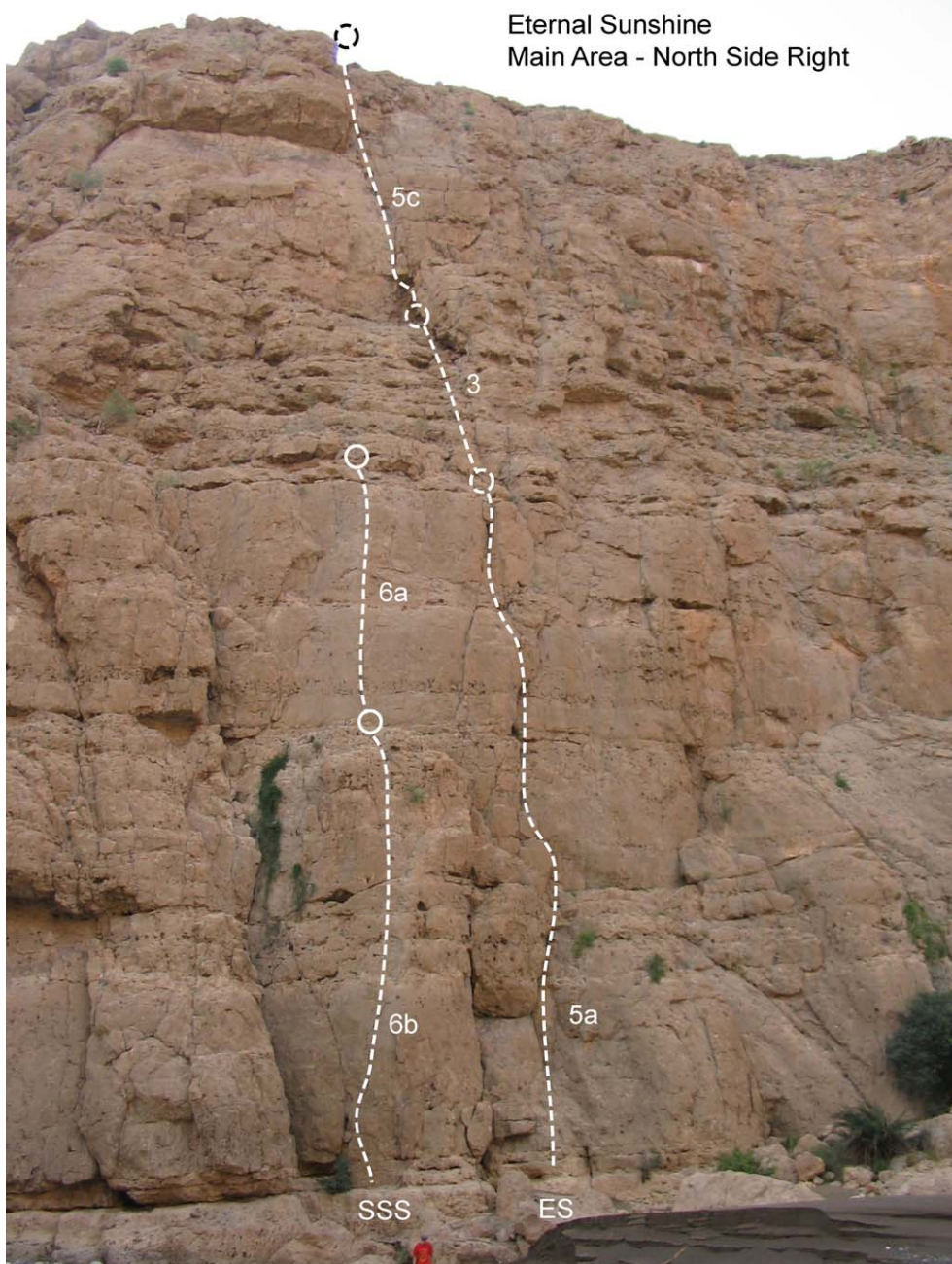
*** **Abraca Dabra (15m, 6c) (R) 1/07**

Three bolts up a face and then 2 more bolts traversing the left side of the *Flying Frog* roof. Powerful and committing, but with huge holds! Find them...

** **The Flying Frog (15m, 7a) (ATT) 1/90**

The middle of the 4m roof with 2 bolts (tested to hold!). Outrageous and strenuous, the crux at the lip is legendary, the key is in footwork. Just reee-lax!

Bill is not counting his chickens
on *The Flying Frog* (7a)



Eternal Sunshine
Main Area - North Side Right

*** Short Sharp Shock
(45m, 6b) (R) 4/06**

i. 25m, 6b The name says it all! Pull up and then follow thin vertical crack over bolts to 8m, do not use the large flake on right (else it is 6a). Lower-offs at ledge.

ii. 20m, 6a Up the comfortable face, enjoying the relaxing angle and good pockets; with the odd stretch move. Don't use crack on right. Lower-offs at ledge.

**** Eternal Sunshine
(120m, 5c) (R+D) 3/07**

The only climb that goes all the way to the top of the canyon rim and well worth it for the views. There is some loose rock but good protection is available.

i. 50m, 5a Start 6m R of SSS. Follow the crack line to the top of the solid rock.

ii. 25m, 3 Wander up the easy ramble, past L-facing corner, ending up in a small cave.

iii. 25m, 5c Up the corner for 2m, place good gear and traverse 1m L along horizontal crack. Directly up crack, then up corner R of huge roofs at top. To get down, walk off left, following first the main canyon, then a side canyon to its source. Scramble down this, which is easy but takes 40 minutes and is best done in sneakers, not climbing shoes.

MIDDLE CANYON MAIN AREA – SOUTH SIDE

In the shade only until 10am so be early or fry.

Arcotonic (20m, 5a) (PN) 1/05

On the left side of the triangular slab, this is a top rope using lower-offs on ATT, no bolts.

Au Thomas Tic (20m, 5b) (PN) 1/05

An introduction to slabby pocket climbing.

Stimol (20m, 5a) (PN) 1/05

On the right side of the triangular slab, up a crack. This is a top rope using lower-offs on ATT, no bolts.

***** The Corinthian (30m, 5c) (ATT) 1/90 (PN) 1/05**

Excellent face climbing with an interesting “featureless” section before the belay.

**** Trois Petits Cochons Francais, Three Little French Pigs (25m, 5c) (PN) 1/05**

Another fun face climb. Why not?

Ionic (25m, 6a) (ATT) 1/90

Follow the curving groove in the wall. Trad or top-rope this one, no bolts.

***** Doric (22m, 6a+) (ATT) 1/90 (PN) 1/05**

Starts up an off-balance corner; the moves past second bolt are très bloody awkward.

**** Gripper (12m, 7a) (R+S) 1/07**

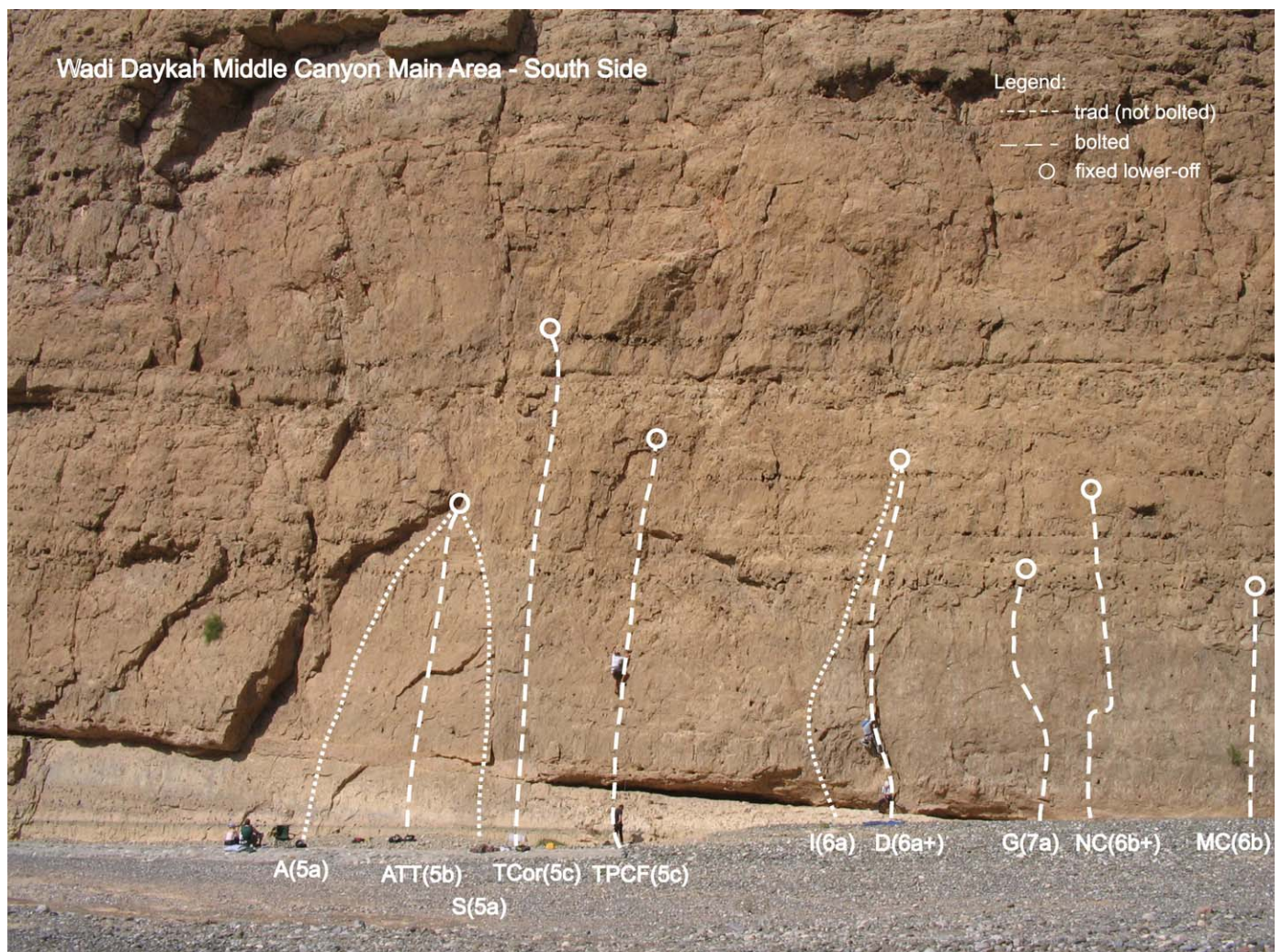
Bring your grip and power up this little ripper! 4 bolts.

*** Neo-Cleopatra (22m, 6b+) (ATT) 1/90**

6 bolts and then head for the sling which backs up a lower-off bolt. Sharp rock, steep, pumpy and sustained.

Missing Chromosomes (11m, 6b) (BL) 1/07

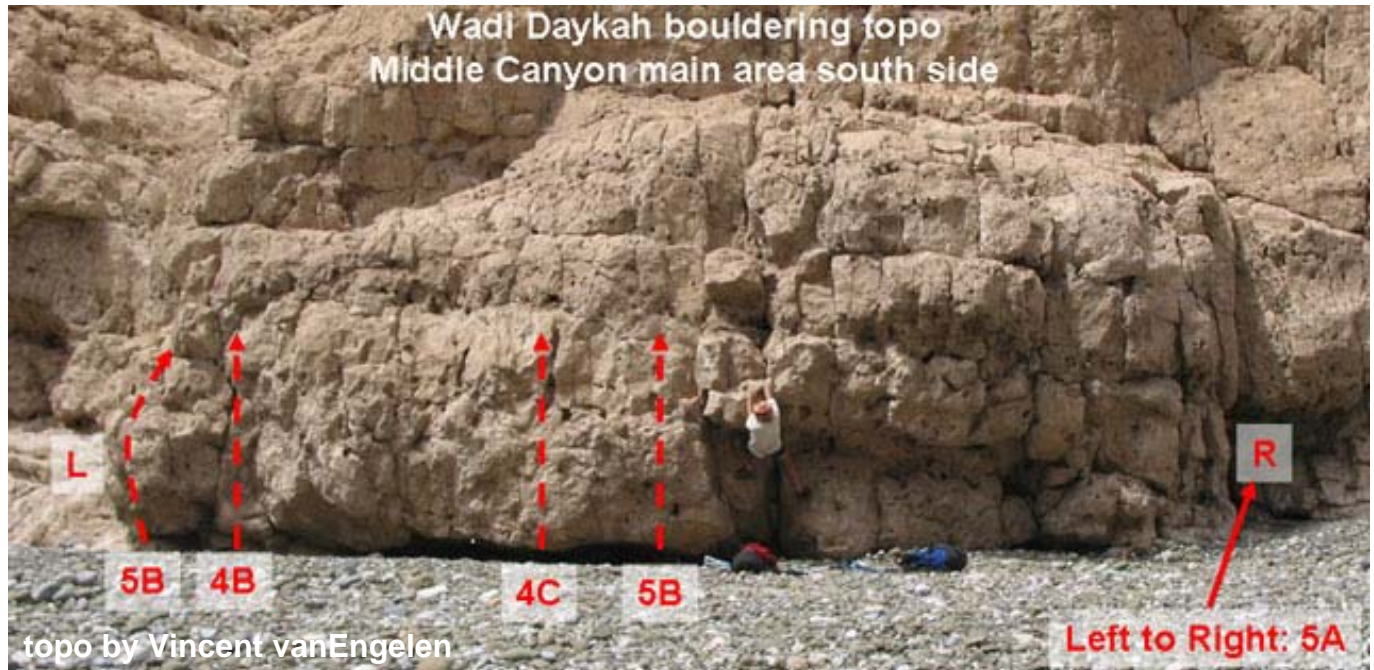
The second bolt is hard to reach on this mini climb.



MIDDLE CANYON – BOULDERING

The large boulder shown below is located on the south side, directly opposite *Patouche*. It is full of fantastic problems and a great place to get blasted.

The problems are all sit-start boulder problems about 2m high or try the endurance traverse of the whole thing. The topo below uses French boulder grades, see front of this guide for translations.



LOWER CANYON – NORBERT & CHRISTOPHER AREA

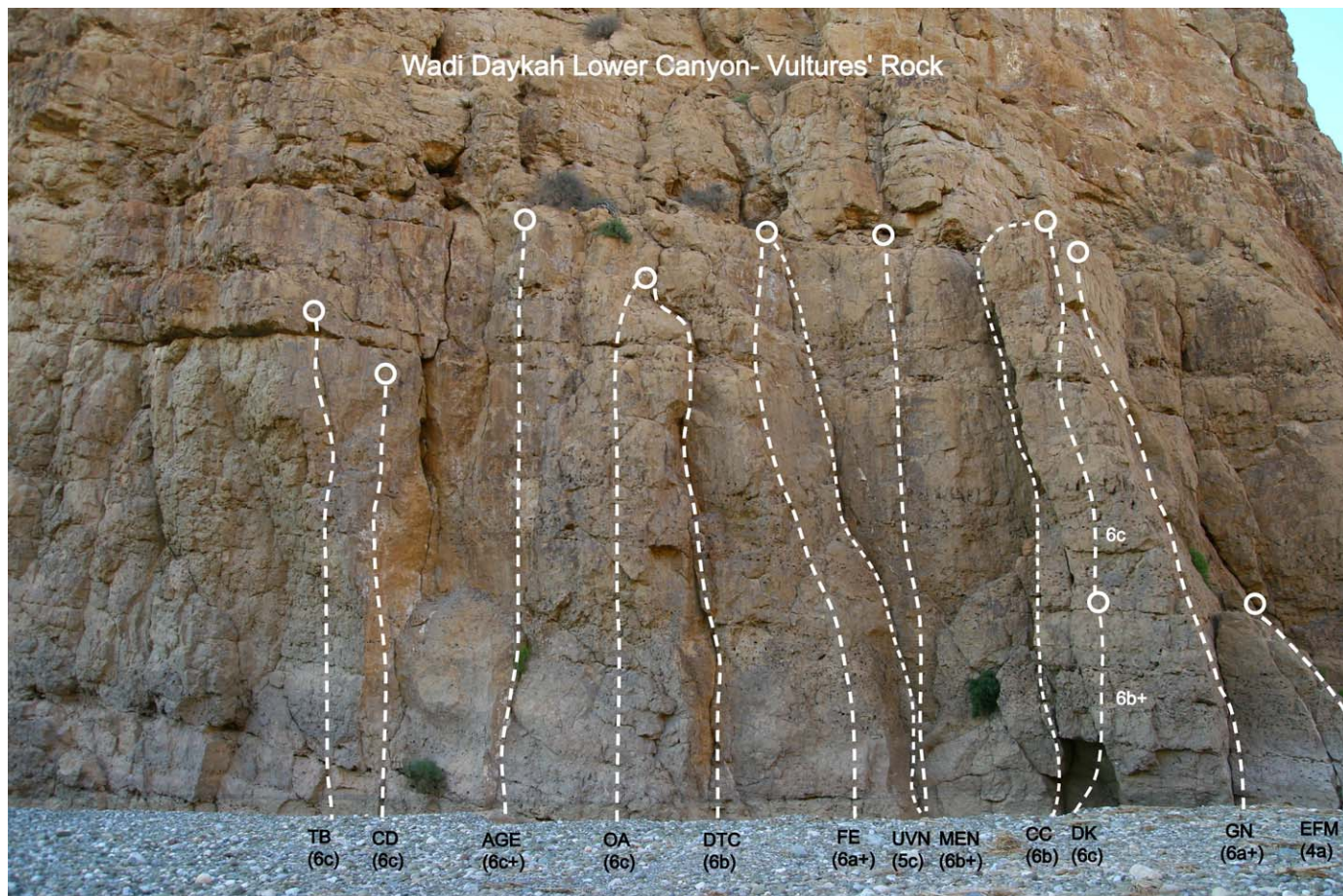
The first sector on your right, 1 km from end of bitumen. The name Norbert & Christ is painted in white on an obviously nice slab wall. This part is shaded until 2pm. There are only two bolted climbs here, a plus two bolted belays above cracks for trad/top roping.

Name Unknown (5b) (PN) 3/02

*** Norbert & Christopher (35m, 6a)** (PN) 3/02



Rocher des Vautours as seen from the approach (in the middle)



LOWER CANYON – ROCHER DES VAUTOURS (VULTURES' ROCK) AREA

Best rock in Oman! Located 3km from bitumen, where the wadi makes a curve to the right. Sometimes, after rains, the track is not graded in which case walking is the only option for getting in, but it is worth it!

The climbs are on the left side of the wadi, when facing downstream. This part has the best rock and longest, most consistent climbs. It can be climbed in the sun in December or January but in otherwise wait for the shade which comes around 2pm. Climbs are described from left to right and most are named in French puns, with the names written on rock. If it says "TR" after the grade, bring a trad rack, even if there are bolts!

** Turbo Barbecue (30m, 6c) (PN) 1/06

That's Oman for you. Top of this climb overhangs its base by 5m, giving pure endurance climbing on big holds. 10 bolts and chains.

*** Cool Daphnee (25m, 6c) (PN) 1/06 The red face left of the corner, with big pockets and memorable balancy crux. 9 bolts to lower-off chain. Not in topo.

** A Gathe Exit (38m, 6c+) (PN) 3/02

Starts behind the large detached boulder with label. Not in topo.

* OmanAdventure.com (35m, 6c)

Not in topo. (PN) 1/06

** Dany Tete a Casque (35m, 6b, TR)

(PN) 3/02 Follows the pleasant crack, well protected with medium cams, large nuts and 3 bolts, to lower-off. Crux at the top.

* Frank d'Ecolier (35m, 6a+, TR) (PN) 3/02 Nice and pleasant wandering without particular exciting features. Bring a trad climbing rack unless you like long run-outs between the old threads and 5 bolts.

* Una Via Nee (35m, 5c, TR) (PN) 3/02

A trad crack.

*** Marie Est Nette (35m, 6b+)

(PN) 3/02 Very long and pleasant, with fantastic rock and a nice crux.

Cadichon le Crapaud (35m, 6b, TR)

(PN) 3/02 Top-roped, no bolts.

***** Doctor Khalid (40m, 6b+, 6c)**

(PN) 3/02 The classical traverse right under the intimidating roof. Second pitch is the crux (or lower-off).

**** Geraud Nimo (35m, 6a+) (PN) 3/02**

On the right side of the pillar, in the shade first, a good warm-up. Bolts and slings, but it is a good idea to bring a large nut or cam to protect below the first and above the second bolts (slippery dust). See for yourself.

Ecole Francaise de Muscat (15m, 4a) (PN) 1/06

10m right of the GN corner. An introduction to climbing for school children. Not in topo.

A Bas l'Ecole (20m, 6b) (PN) 1/06

This is actually the 2nd pitch of the previous climb. Not in topo.

On the opposite side of Wadi Daykah is a great little bouldering area with a tiny cave next to a shady tree. A good place to rest or let rip.....magic!



Vincent feeds the birds of prey at *Rocher des Vautours*