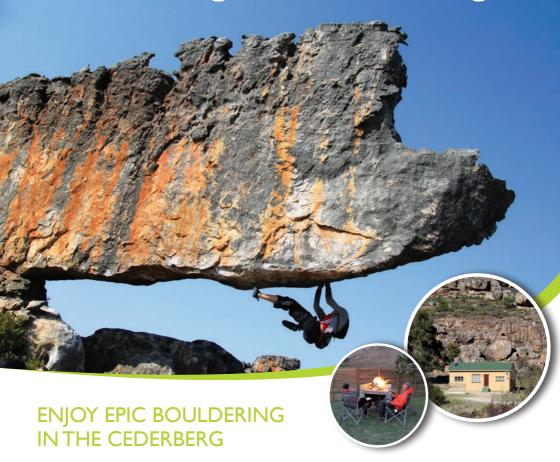
Tierkloof

Gamkaberg - A Climber's Guide



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Tierkloof

Gamkaberg

A CLIMBER'S GUIDE

Johann Lanz and Tony Lourens



Tierkloof, Gamkaberg - a climber's guide

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Cover photo: Tony Lourens feeding on the fine crack climbing on Finger Food (16), Easter Island Wall.

Photo WILLIE KOEN

Disclaimer

Although every effort has been made to ensure that the information, top photos and diagrams in this quide are as accurate as possible, one can never be certain that some errors have not crept into the system. Therefore users of this guide must use their own discretion and judgement before utilising any of this information.

This book is essentially a guide and in no way should it encourage people with little or no experience to attempt climbs which are out of their depth. Rock climbing is a dangerous sport which can lead to injury or death.

Blue Mountain Publishers nor CapeNature will accept any responsibility or liability for any accident or incident arising from the use of this book.

Acknowledgements

The climbers would like to thank CapeNature and the MCSA for working together and making it possible to open this awesome venue to climbing. And particularly to the Gamkaberg manager. Tom Barry and his staff for their hard work in constructing the paths to the various crags and erecting the necessary signage.

Thanks also go to Johann Lanz for his energy and work in Gamkaberg – opening many routes, creating the first guidebook and working together with CapeNature to make climbing possible in Tierkloof. Also to Tony Lourens, for his work with CapeNature regarding Gamkaberg and producing this 'official' quidebook. And to Ed February for his input and efforts during the negotiations with Cape Nature.





Memorandum of Understanding between CapeNature and the Mountain Club of South Africa (MCSA)

Rock Climbing is an outdoor activity at Gamkaberg, which is supported by CapeNature, and subject to certain conditions listed in this book, in order to minimise any negative impact on the environment or other visitors to the reserve. Please note that in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Mountain Club of South Africa (MCSA), CapeNature reserves the right to cancel all climbing access to the reserve at any point if the activity is not taking place in an acceptable manner. Your cooperation as a visitor and climber is therefore of utmost importance in order to uphold this understanding in perpetuity.

Cliff Habitats, the very place climbers like to climb, are some of the last pristine remaining areas on earth due to their inaccessibility to the average human. Please treat all plants and animals in Gamkaberg with the utmost respect.

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Sebastian Lanz on his second trad lead ever, *DV8* (17), Jacqueline's Wall. Photo JOHANN LANZ

Introduction

Gamkaberg is an isolated mountain range in the Klein Karoo, lying between the Swartberg and Outeniqua mountains. The nature reserve, which was recently declared a World Heritage Site, due to the rich and unique biodiversity found in the area, and managed by CapeNature, was established in 1974 in order to conserve the local population of endangered Cape mountain zebra and their natural habitat. The terrain is rugged, with mountainous plateaux incised by deep ravines.

The reserve aims to provide visitors with a first class nature experience while at the same time creating awareness about treading lightly on the environment. Those interested in hiking the two day Tierkloof Trail can overnight at Oukraal in the herders huts.

The climbing areas in the pristine Tierkloof are situated in a unique habitat with some extremely rare cliff-dwelling plants and animals. Please respect this environment and climb with the utmost caution in order to minimise any disturbance.

How to get there

Gamkaberg nature reserve is situated south of the R62 between Calitzdorp and Oudtshoorn, about 400 km from Cape Town.

From Cape Town take the N1 north towards Worcester for 110km. Turn right on to the R60 at Worcester, continuing on the road as it becomes the R62 toward Robertson and Montagu. Follow this road past Barrydale to Calitzdorp. Turn right in the town, towards the wineries and follow the cement track until you see a sign to turn right for the Gamkaberg Nature Reserve. Continue on dirt roads to the reserve gate and reception. Go to capenature.co.za to download online map for directions.

Please note that the directions given on Google Maps are incorrect. The main entrance to Gamkaberg Nature Reserve is at the northern entrance at GPS co-ordinates: 33 40 17.51 S, 21 53 18.37 E.

Accommodation and camping

Accommodation facilities in the Gamkaberg reserve are comfortable and beautifully mantained, yet all about rustic charm. Carefully constructed along a network of pathways, eco-lodges consist of safaristyle tents, a braai lapa and a plunge pool for cooling off. For a more rustic option, there are converted stables and also an adjoining campsite. For more info, to book and a map of how to get there see: http://www.capenature.co.za/reserves/gamkaberg-nature-reserve/.

When to go

Although winter can get very chilly in the evenings and early mornings, climbing in the middle of the day can be very pleasant, as most of the crags on the left side of the kloof (looking up) get afternoon sun. In summer, plenty of shady crags can be found in the kloof giving lovely cool conditions.

Water

Depending on recent rainfall, there may be very little water in the kloof, but there is usually drinking water around the weir. But best to take all drinking requirements from the camp site into the kloof with you.

The climbing

Gamkaberg offers good quality, single and two-pitch, trad climbing with easy approaches and descents in beautiful, pristine surroundings. The climbing is on hard quartzitic sandstone similar to Montagu but with many beautiful, vertical finger cracks and corners.

Bolting

Absolutely no bolting at any time.

Conditions for climbing in Tierkloof – VERY IMPORTANT!

- · Rock climbing in Gamkaberg will only be permitted to people who are staying overnight in the reserve. This is to control the number of climbers in the kloof, due to the sensitivity of the area.
- · All climbers must check in at the reserve office on arrival, where they will be thoroughly briefed by the duty officer on the rock climbing conditions.
- · All climbers must be in posession of a current guidebook, or otherwise will have to purchase one at reception.
- · Rock climbing is only permitted within approved areas as laid out in this guidebook. It is the responsibility of each person to ensure that they only climb within these stipulated areas.
- · Climbing must be practised according to the LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPAL.
- · Unless staying at Tierkloof Eco Lodge, climbers are not permitted to park at the start of Tierkloof. This is reserved soley for guests at the Eco Lodge. Please park at the campsite (if you are camping), or at one of the lodges where you are staying.
- · All climbers are subject to the rules of conduct pertaining to all visitors to Gamkaberg as set out in the conditions of entry, which include no damaging or disturbance of the natural environment, no littering, no fires, and no overnight camping within Tierkloof.
- · Climbers must take utmost care to minimise damage to any plants, both on the approach to and at the base of climbs (trampling), as well as plants growing on the cliffs.
- All human excrement (including toilet paper) must be wrapped in newspaper (available at reception), then deposited into a carrier bag of sorts and carried out, for disposal in a dedicated facility at the main centre. The reason for this is that due to the narrowness of the kloof and its proximity to the water course, which is utilised as a drinking water source for the Gamkaberg tourists and staff, human waste cannot be left or buried in the kloof as it poses a risk of water contamination.
- Absolutely no bolting permitted.
- · Fixed points, in the form of slings or rope for abseiling from the top of crags, can be installed, but should be kept to a minimum and set up to be out of view.
- Noise levels must be kept to a minimum. Climbers must at all times show respect for the wilderness character of the reserve and to other users wishing to experience the same.
- · No climbing, picnicking or storage of equipment is permitted in close proximity to any rock art or archaeological site.
- Certain crags or parts of crags may be temporarily closed for nesting birds, as is done in other climbing locations such as Silvermine in Cape Town. Such closure dates will be available at the reserve office together with the current guidebook of approved climbing areas.
- Climbers are permitted to stow their gear in the kloof overnight if returning to the crags the following day.
- · All climbers must return to camp before dark each day in order to sign a register with the duty official. This is for the safety of the climbers as well as to control access.
- · Failure to comply with any of the conditions set out above will be in breach of the MOU and could lead to climbing being disallowed in future.



Johann Lanz on the opening ascent of Written in Stone (22). Stone Wall, Photo SEBASTIAN LANZ

Approaches

A detailed map of the day and overnight trails is provided at reception. The leopard spoor trail marker indicates the Tierkloof Trail and the Klipspringer Trail marker indicates where routes to the climbing bases branch out.

From the camp site and reserve reception, follow directions for the Pied Barbet Trail, which runs up the wide kloof. Start up the road, take the first hiking trail right, then at the first fork take a left to avoid going up the side of valley. Pass a bench on the right, then take the next right to stick to the bottom of the valley. A less than 2 km stroll takes you to the start of the narrow part of Tierkloof. From here follow the trail up the kloof towards Oukraal and the Overhang. After a few minutes up the kloof you will reach the bench (GPS: S33.68577 E21.89821) and the start of the climbing areas (although you will have already just passed Fin of Fun crag on the right). If you are staying at the Tierkloof Eco-lodge it is only a 5-minute walk to the bench. From here follow the main path up the kloof and you will see numbered boulders (see map opposite) showing constructed climbers' paths to the various crags. Crags on the path won't be numbered.

Descents

Descents from the crags are a mixture of walk-offs and abseiling. If abseiling, pick a tree and rapp off - there are suitable trees on ledges everywhere on the crags. Some established routes have tat where there is a lack of a suitable tree. Otherwise walk offs are mostly fairly logical to follow. Remember to check the abseil tat and always back-up.

About this guidebook

This quidebook is very straight forward. The crags are categorised from the entry to Tierkloof as you progress up the kloof. Crags on the right and left of the river will be described as you are looking up the kloof and all crags that are not situated on the main path will have constructed climbers' paths leading up to them, with a numbered boulder on the main path corresponding to the numbering on the map on the opposite page. These paths will be marked with klipspringer hoof prints.

Routes on the crags will be described from left to right and are rated between 1 and 5 stars. This is of course subjective and pertain to the climbing in Tierkloof.

Approved climbing areas

Rock climbing in Gamkaberg Nature Reserve is only permitted within approved areas, as set out within this guidebook. The locations of which are indicated on the map opposite and by way of photographs and accompanying route descriptions of each area. This guidebook of approved climbing areas may be amended and updated from time to time as necessary. The latest version, which will be available on line for free, or at the Gamkaberg reserve office is always the one in force. It is the responsibility of each person climbing to ensure that they are using the latest version.

New routes

New routes can only be established on the approved crags and within the designated boundaries of those crags, as set out in this book.

Please forward all information about new routes, or any comments, corrections, opinions on grade and star ratings to Tony Lourens at tony@samountain.co.za or Johann Lanz at lanz.johann@gmail.com

Symbols



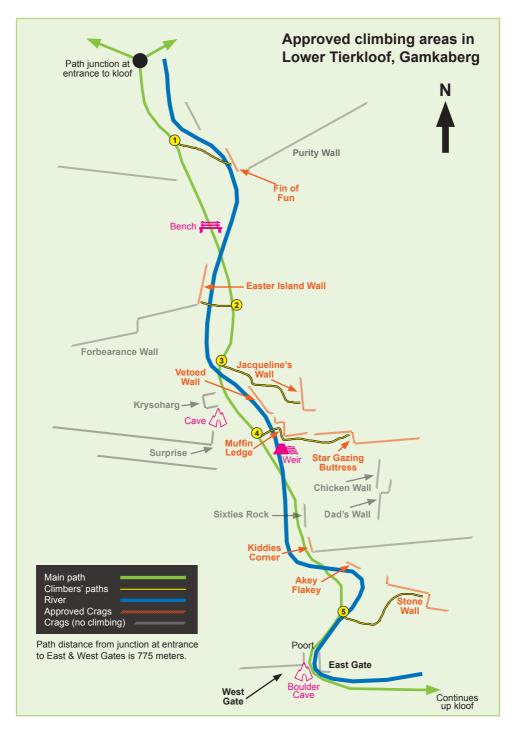
Morning shade



Afternoon shade



Shade all day



Fin of Fun area 🍈



This is the first craq you come to on the left and is very near the mouth of the kloof, a little way before the bench. Take path number 1 to reach this crag.

1. Twist Your Hip, Crack Your Back (16) ** 25m

FA: Hagen Liebberger, Chris Morgan-Wilson

Climbs the easy-angled fin left of the Fin of Fun and continues up the corner crack behind it.

2. Fin of Fun (14) *** 25m

FA: Johann Lanz, Michael van der Marel, April 2013

Shares start with Twist Your Hip, then where it is easy to do so, step across right onto the main fin and climbs to the top.

3. Nappy Rash (16) ** 20m

FA: Paul Lochner, Johann Lanz, April 2003

On the square pillar about 20 metres right of Fin of Fun and at the base of the scree running up to the Purity Wall. Climb more or less on the right hand arête of the pillar.



Purity Wall (closed) 🌘

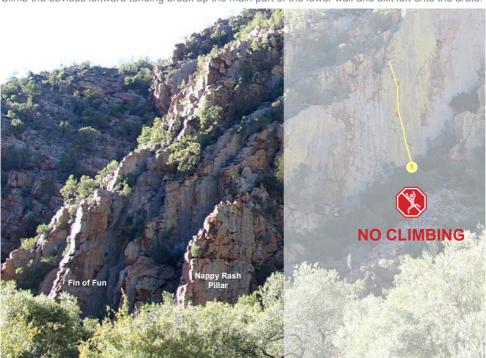


This beautiful wall is situated up the slope behind and to the right of Fin of Fun area, but is one of the CLOSED crags. Climbing is not permitted on this wall until further notice.

1. Purity (21) **** 25m

FA: Johann Lanz, Paul Lochner, April 2011

Climb the obvious leftward tending break up the main part of the lower wall and exit left onto the arête.





Easter Island Wall





This long crag, situated on the right of the kloof has two great routes, with plenty of potential for more. Climbing is allowed from the two distinct cliff plants near the right hand end of the wall to the approximately 90 degree corner on its left where it meets the Forebearance Wall. Take path number 2 to reach this crag.



1. Finger Food (16) *** 38m

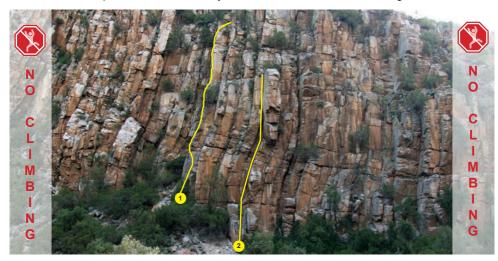
FA: Johann Lanz, Paul Lochner, April 2003

Climb up to the beautiful green edged crack, then up this to the top. A second pitch (15) can be climbed to the top of the buttress, where you can scramble back down on the right.

2. Easter Island (19) **** 25m

FA: Johann Lanz, April 2015

Straight up, through the roof capped chimney and up the corner/finger crack above. A second pitch can be climbed to the top of the buttress, where you can scramble back down on the right.





Another beautiful wall, situated to the left and above Easter Island Wall. This wall is also CLOSED at present. Climbing is not permitted on this wall until further notice.

Approach

Scramble up from the stream bed and left along sloping ground below the first tier of the wall. Start towards the left side of the wall.

1. Forbearance (21) ****

FA: Johann Lanz, Paul Lochner, April 2011

- 1. 20m (17): Climb the clean, thin, rightward tending corner crack to the top. The next pitch starts across the ledge to the right.
- 2. 25m (21): Climb the leftward tending crack/break starting in the middle of the wall. After about 15 metres, move slightly right into the slightly rightward tending, splitter finger crack and climb it to the ledge.
- 3. 20m (19): Climb straight up into the vertical finger crack running up the middle of the face and climb it to the top.

Note: Pitches 2 and 3 can easily be combined.



Jacqueline's Wall

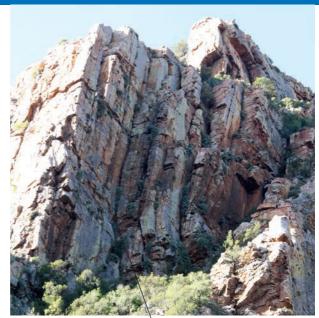


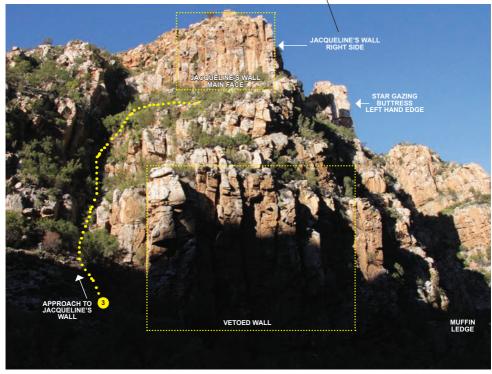
A stunning crag situated high above Vetoed Wall and the main path, with great views looking out over the kloof.

Some great single routes and a two pitch routes can be climbed here The wall around the corner to the right of the main frontal wall still awaits some routes.

Approach

Take path number 3 up to the left of Vetoed Wall, until able to exit up right onto the ledge beneath the crag.





1. Gone B4ur21 (18) ***1/2 25m

FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson, Greg Devine March, 2012

Climb the finger crack and move right under the roof to share the end with Night Walker.

2. Night Walker (17) *** 25m

FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson, Greg Devine, March 2012

Climb the crack to the roof, then move out to the right and up to a ledge stance.

3. Pink Poison (20) ***1/2 25m

FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson, Michael van der Marel, April 2013

Climb the clean finger crack just to the right of Night Walker.

4. Track Marks (17) *** 30m

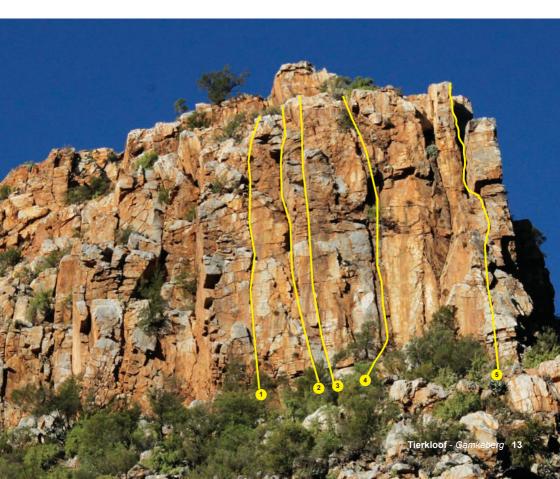
FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson rope-solo, March 2012

Climb the twin cracks.

5. Dv8 (17) ****

FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson, Greg Devine, March 2012

- 1. 20m (16): Climb the front of the pillar to stance on a ledge.
- 2. 15m (17): Climb through the gap to place gear, then up the gap onto top of thepillar. Step onto the main wall, then move left and up into the open book and continue to the top.





A good crag with good routes, situated on the left, very near the main path.

1. Lovely Little Climb (13) *** 25m

FA: Greg & Cheryl Devine, January 2012

Climb the obvious break on the left side of the crag, then at the roof, move left to gain a small ledge and continue straight to the top.

2. Crystal Cove (18) ** 25m

FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson rope-solo, March 2012

Climb the face and find the crystal alcove. The sting is in the tail.

3. Vetoed (18) ** 25m

FA. Chris Morgan-Wilson, Greg Devine, March 2012

Climb the crack to the roof, then move out left of the roof and climb to the top.

4. Foregoer (18) ** 1/2 25m

FA: Johann Lanz, April 2015

Start up the face and then follow the corner.

5. Insert (19) *** 25m

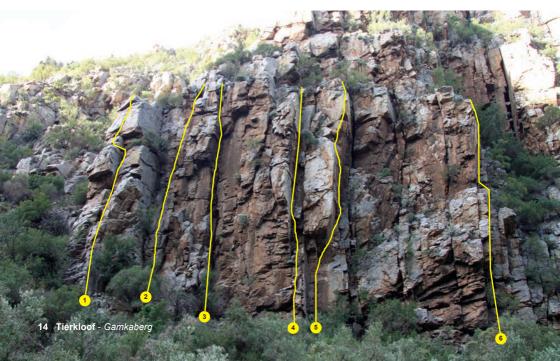
FA: Johann Lanz, April 2013

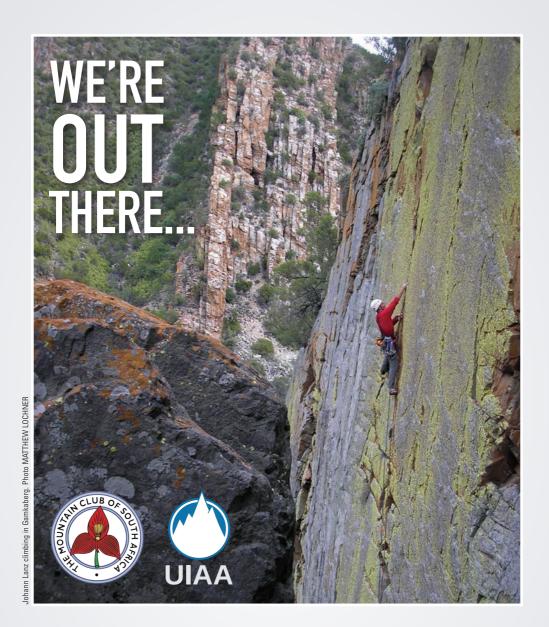
Aims for the good looking finger crack on the steep, pock-marked wall. Start up the corner, under the roof, then move into the finger crack and continue above the ledge directly up the arête (easier if you go up the face on the left).

6. Lineage (18) *** 25m

FA: Johann and Sebastian Lanz, April 2015

Aims for the rightward tending crack on the upper part of the wall. Start up the obvious corner crack directly below, then climb the crack to the top.





Working together with CapeNature to ensure access for climbers

Contact the MCSA for more info: **021 465 3412** or **011 807 1310** www.mcsa.org.za info@mcsa.org.za







An obvious recessed alcove on the right side of the kloof and close to the main path. This craq is also CLOSED at present. Climbing is not permitted on this crag until further notice.

1. Krysoharg (?) ** 25m

FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson, Hargen

Climb the main crack line at the back of the alcove.

Muffin Ledge



Situated near the main path and on the left of the kloof, Muffin Ledge has some worthwile routes. Access routes 2 and 3 from the right of Muffin Ledge. Vitzenstats starts slightly below and to the left of Muffin Ledge. Use path number 4.

1. Vitzenstats (13) * 35m

FA. Chris Morgan-Wilson, Greg Devine, March 2012

Just to the left of Muffin Ledge, climb the stepped arête to the base of the pillar on Jacqueline's wall.

2. George Pinnacle (14) *** 25m

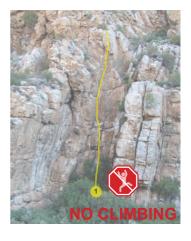
FA: Greg and Cheryl Devine January 2012

The short flat-topped pinnacle that stands slightly away from the main wall and is about 25 metres high. Climb the right hand corner/chimney/gap affair to the top of the pinnacle. From the top, step onto the main wall and climb up to a recess.

3. Muffin Remnants (14) ***1/2 25m

FA: Tony Lourens, Willie Koen, Jan 2012

The corner on the right as you first access Muffin Ledge. Climb the corner crack to a ledge, then follow the crack above to the top.





Star Gazing Buttress



A stunning, towering buttress with some beautiful soaring corners. Great climbing. Note: Double 50 metre ropes just get you back to the ledge from the tree at the top of the crack.

Approach

Follow path number 4, past the right side of Muffin Ledge to the start of the first corner.

1. Kungfu Babe (19) *****

FA: Chris Morgan-Wilson, Michael van der Marel, April 2013

- 1. 20m (15): Climb the main corner crack to the big ledge.
- 2. 50m (19): Continue straight up the huge corner crack above

2. Focal Length (18) *****

FA: Johann Lanz, Michael van der Marel April 2013

- 1. 20m (15): Climb the main corner crack to the big ledge (shared with Kungfu Babe).
- 2. 50m (18): Climb the clean, red open book corner system about 10 metres right of the main corner. Go through the small roof and above it go left onto the arête, past a spike that sticks out of the wall. Climb straight up the hand-crack above, which is about 3 metres right of the main corner. Note: 50 m ropes get you to a good stance on big chock stones, about 4 metres below the top.

Kiddies Corner



A short craq right on and to the left of the main path.

1. Wail (13) ** 18m

FA: Sebastian Lanz (top-rope), April 2011 Climb the right hand arête and the face just left of it.

2. A-plus (15) **1/2 18m

FA: Matthew Lochner (top-rope), April 2011 Climb straight up the middle of the face, to the right of the Wail arête.

3. Lightning flash (9) * 15m

FA: Unknown

Climb the crack in the face to the right of the corner, right of A-plus, and continue up left past ledges.





Achey Flakey Wall



Just above the path, in the corner of the stream bed

1. Achey Flakey Fart (14) *** 25m

FA: Tony Lourens, Willie Koen, Jan 2012

Climb the corner/flake crack and continue through the overhang above.

The Stone Wall



Superb, steep and sustained climbing on an inspiring sweep of rock. The tower to the right also has some good, but easier routes. Note: the abseil from the tree at the top of the main wall is just over 30 metres.

Note: It is possible to scramble fairly easily up and down the chimney between The Stone Wall and the pillar of Stone Wallah.

Approach

Follow path number 5 to reach the base of the wall

1. Touchstone (23) ***** 28m

FA: Johann Lanz, Dec 2011

Climb up and left to the cubbyhole rail, then take the crack immediately left of Written in Stone, and follow it through to where it pinches into a seam (crux). Near the top where the wall steepens and the crack goes diagonally right, climb straight up on good holds and make a clean exit onto the ledge.

2. Written in Stone (22) ***** 28m

FA: Johann Lanz, Dec 2011

From the very right hand edge of the ledge and overhang, several metres above the ground, climb the crack onto and up the bottom half of the wall. Near the top, where the wall steepens and the crack goes diagonally right, cut slightly left and move up on good holds to make a clean exit onto the ledge (shared with Touchstone).

3. Stone Ease (20) ***** 28m

Start on Touchstone, then midway (see photo), cross over to the right and finish up Written in Stone. This combination misses out both cruxes of routes 1 and 2.

4. Double Stone (23) ***** 28m

Start on Written in Stone, then midway (see photo), cross over to the left and finish on Touchstone, thereby taking in both cruxes on routes 1 and 2, making for a splendidly sustained pitch.

5. Open project 28m

6. Stone Wallah (16) *** 25m

FA: Sebastian and Johann Lanz, December 2011

Climb the corner to a ledge, then pull through the overhang and continue up the column to the top.

7. Stone Edge (18) *** 25m

FA: Johann Lanz, December 2011

Climb the arête immediately to the right of Stone Wallah. Start up the tree and step onto the arête, then continue to the top.

Note: routes 5 and 6 get afternoon sun















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