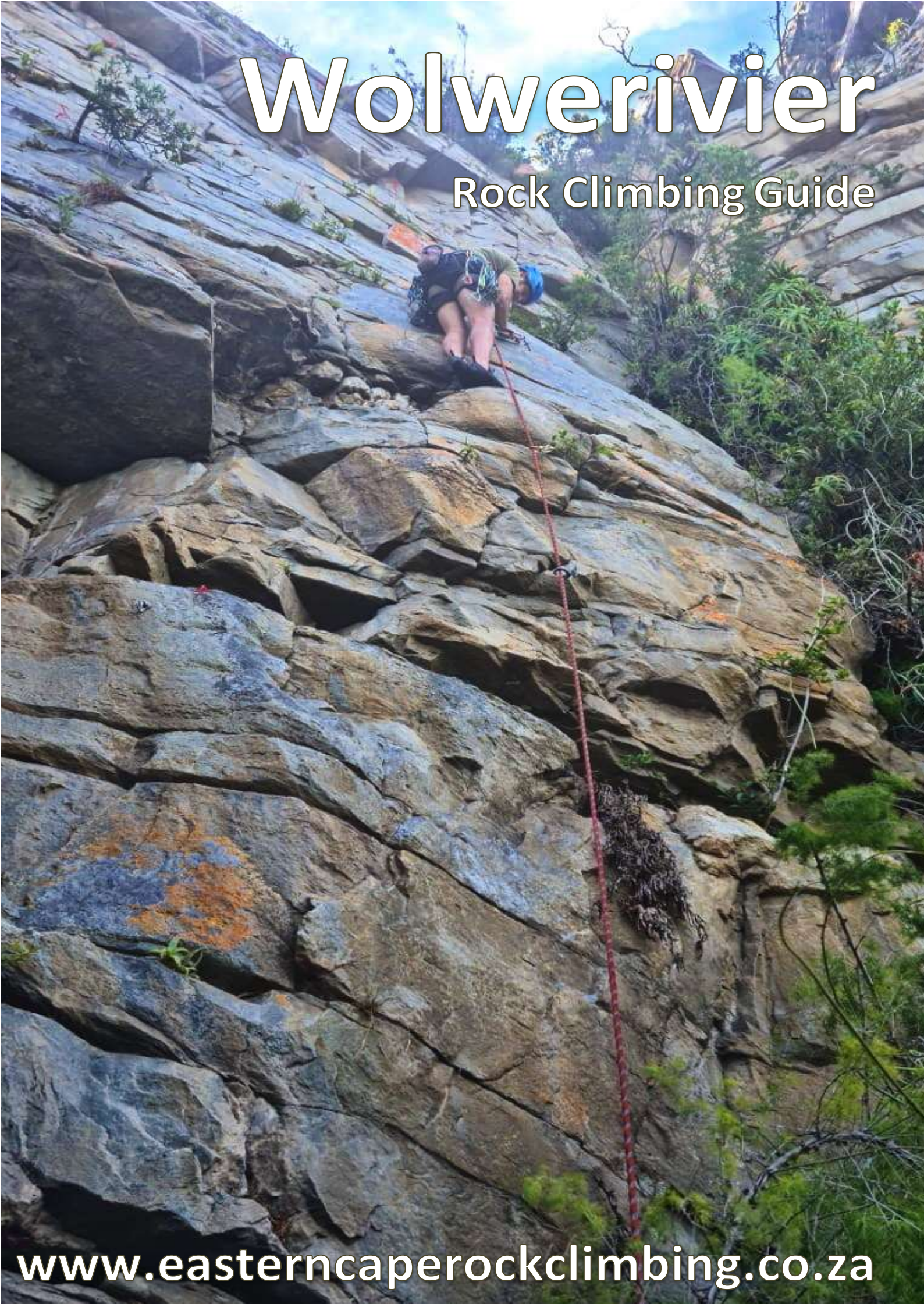


Wolwerivier

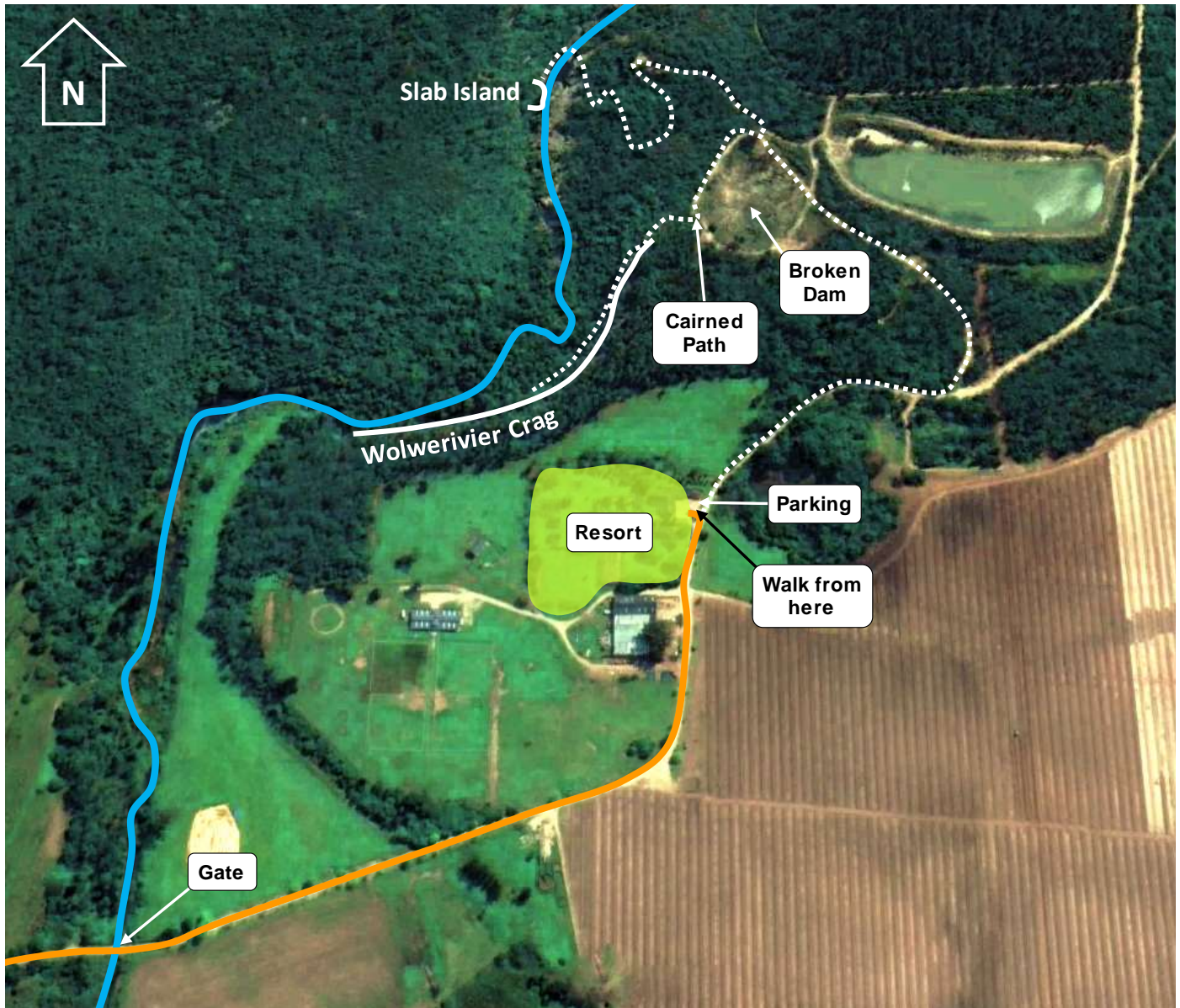
Rock Climbing Guide



Legal Note: All climbing is very dangerous & always at your own risk. Nobody is forcing you to climb. You choose to climb, so choose to go home before the risks become too high. Remember even small injuries can take 6 weeks to heal. No responsibility for inaccurate or incomplete information will be accepted by the scribe. The landowner accepts no liability at all. Climbers take full responsibility for themselves at all times. Fixed protection will become unreliable, loose rock is common, solid rock becomes loose & RD writers make up most of the information, with a beer, at the computer. This RD is only a guide & is no substitute for experience, training, common sense & a touch of caution. So, you are on your own...take care!

Note from the Scribe: It took consistent effort, time, work & organization to get this guide ready for your pleasure...for free & just for fun! Thus, please respect that all the information & photographs are strictly Copy Righted. You are more than welcome to print out, e-mail or link to a web page this guide in its unchanged format, with logos & all information intact.

As this is a web-based guide it can be considered a continual work in progress. It is easy to change. So please send missing details, corrections, additions & adjustments to info@easterncaperockclimbing.co.za. All information will be greatly appreciated.



Access: Please get current details from <https://www.swartvleiee.co.za/>; click on the climbing tab, there is a contact number & direct WhatsApp. You can also contact via Facebook Swartvlei Equestrian Estate. Climbing is most welcome, but there is a day fee of R150 and indemnities must be signed before climbing. The manageress is super WhatsApp efficient & bookings are a breeze.

Directions: Please use Google damn it! Take the Rondevlei turn-off the N2, 5Km West of Sedgefield, continue on gravel for roughly 3Km, turn left at T-Junction as you reach Rondevlei. Follow this road till you reach the Wolwerivier "village". Turn R onto

Wolwerivier road. Continue along this road till you reach the electronic gates of the Swartvlei Equestrian Estate. Ring for someone to open (this must be pre-arranged). Park at the resort parking unless directed otherwise.

Walk-in: From the parking, follow the track through a gate. Up the hill to a broken dam. Around the dam to find a cairn that marks the start of the path. 5-15 minutes easy walk.

History: Kaptein Cave in the *Main Crag* was seasonally occupied by a Bushman group under the leadership of Kaptein Gu. Gu roughly translates to hyena or jackal. There is a faded painting, a bit of a shell midden with freshwater mussels, cockles, bones & pot shards. Remember it is a criminal offence to scratch on the floor of a cave. There is no certainty when the last of Gu's band stopped using the cave, but it was probably late 1700s or early 1800s.

Wolwerivier was used by Veld & Vlei for abseiling, but we are not sure if they ever climbed or when they started abseiling here. The candidates would row across the Swartvlei from Willow Point to get to the Wolwerivier crag.

At some stage in the early 80's Keith James, who had moved to the Southern Cape from Johannesburg realized the climbing potential & started to open routes. Keith opened many of the routes & in those days it was all on natural gear. In 2004 a few new, harder lines were bolted and opened by M de Waal & Ken Thrash, additionally they retro-bolted most of the routes during this period. The scene then went quiet at Wolwerivier. For more than a decade, access to the Wolwerivier crags was a sensitive issue! At times it was possible, but difficultly, to arrange. At other times it was a definite no-go. The result was that climbers would sneak in illegally, creating even more tension between the landowners & climbing community! This must be avoided today.

In 2019 Alex Munro & Danor Groenewald bolted some harder sport routes & developed a new granite crag across the river. There are a number of open projects. With some more development & a strengthening relationship with the property managers, Wolwerivier is set to become the highlight of Southern Cape climbing.

All the recorded info on the old trad routes is recorded here. Hopefully someone who remembers where these routes go, will clarify & help us to record this correctly.

Thanks & Appreciation:

1. Massive thanks to the **Managers at Swartvlei Equestrian Estate** for their welcoming attitude toward climbers.
2. **Keith James**, the patriarch of Eastern Cape climbing, who saw the potential & opened many of the original lines on trad gear. Keith as secretary of the SA Climbers Club from 1983 – 1985 wrote the first records of routes at Wolwerivier in the May 1984 SACC newsletter.
3. **Andrew Forsyth**, for this handwritten personal journal that records some names & lots of details.
4. **Tony Lourens**, for *Western Cape Rock Guide*, for the sport route details.



Star Ratings

- ★★★ Classic route in this province
- ★★ Good route in the area
- ★ Good route at this crag
- No star Reasonable to bollocks

Abbreviations & Symbols

- 7₁₉ (T) Trad route (natural gear) & grade
- 9₂₁ Sport route (bolted) & grade
- 4₂₆ Open Project / In-progress & ± grade
- 4₂₆ Closed Project & ± grade
- 7₁₉ (S) FA was solo & grade
- P Potential
- ⤵ Abseil point
- (11B&C) Number of bolts & top chains
- P / RB Piton / Removable bolt
- Afternoon Shade
- Morning Shade
- Shade all day
- Sun all day
- Dappled shade all day
- Can be climbed in wet weather

5. **Alex Munro**, for seeing the potential & bolting the latest routes, all the harder lines & projects. Alex arranged the current access & wrote the first version of this guide. All the cool stuff is his ...there rest is that monster Derek Marshall!



Time & Weather: Wolwerivier comes into sun around midday and can get quite hot in summer. *Slab Island*, the new granite developed across the river has deep afternoon shade & is a lovely place to hang out, climb and swim.

Rock Type: There is a mix of sandstone, quartzite & granite. 19 sport routes, 3 are open projects & 20 traditional routes that are recorded in some form.

Hazards: Area is very safe.

1. Don't piss off the **owner** or the locals.
2. **Wasps** are aggressive in the heat.
3. Be careful of Baboons & Snakes.



From the track at the western edge of the broken dam, find a cairned path descending to the base of the cliffs.

- 1. Nostra-dumb-ass - 16**
20m Derek & Caroline Marshall 20/11/2021 (T)
Start as for *Simply Devine*. Move out L & into a bit of an open book. Up moving R onto an easy railed head wall. At top move R to chains of *Simply Devine*.
- **2. Simply Devine – 16 ★★**
20m M. de Waal & Ken Thrash 2004 (10B&C)
- 3. Illiteraci - 16**
20m Derek & Caroline Marshall 20/11/2021 (T)
Start just R of *Simply Devine*. Up into a crack caused by a large block. Directly up a steep break. Up moving to a tree abseil.
- 4. Freedumb - 16**
24m Derek & Caroline Marshall 20/11/2021 (T)
Start up over a loose looking block into a break. Up trending R on some nice rails.
- 5. Magic Jesus – 17**
24m Derek & Caroline Marshall 05/02/2022 (T)
Up the prominent easy looking R facing open book. Not so easy.
- 6. Mayonnaise Militia – 16**
24m Derek & Caroline Marshall 20/11/2021 (T)
Up onto a ledge, up a prominent break in the slab.
- 7. Karen-izim – 16**
24m Derek & Caroline Marshall 20/11/2021 (T)
Up onto a ledge, up a wide messy L facing open book, moving L to a abseil aloe.
- 8. No Lives Matter – 17 ★★**
Up onto a ledge, up a wide messy L facing open book, a few meters up move R onto a railed face to L of *Coot Blaster*. Up directly staying 2m L of *Coot Blaster*. At top move R to chains of *Coot Blaster*.
- **9. Coot Blaster - 17 ★★ ★**
Keith James 1983 (8B&C)
Retro-bolted by M. de Waal & Ken Thrash.
- **10. Sting – 19 ★★ ★**
Keith James 1983 (10B&C)
Retro-bolted by M. de Waal & Ken Thrash.
- **11. Lazy Sunday – 20 ★★**
Keith James 1983 (8B&C)
Retro-bolted by M. de Waal & Ken Thrash.



● **12. Just Another Manic Monday - 21 ★★**

Keith James 1983 (10B&C)

Rebolted by M. de Waal & Ken Thrash.

13. Diddly Dick – 17

Andrew Forsyth, Clee Roy, Pixie Fuller (?) or Nel & John Moorcroft 11/05/1985 (T)

L of *Boomslang*. Up between *Sting* & chimney to the L of *Boomslang*. A prominent looking loose block (that is actually quite solid) in the overhang is the feature to look out for. Climb up to the overhang with the block in it, pull through the overhang & climb diagonally R to the top.

14. Hanoi - 17

25m Derek & Caroline Marshall 21/11/2021 (T)

Prominent chimney. Where chimney ends move R & bamba to the top.



15. Pornification – 20 ★★★

26m Derek & Caroline Marshall

21/11/2021 (T)

Start 1m R of the prominent chimney. Directly up following a tricky seam. Stay at least 2m L of *Boomslang*. At top move R onto chains of *Boomslang*.

16. Boomslang – 16 ★★★

26m Keith James 1983 (12B&C)

Retro-bolted by M. de Waal & Ken Thrash.

17. Space Farce - 17 ★

26m Derek & Caroline Marshall 21/11/2021 (T)

Start 2m R of *Boomslang*. Up past two loose looking slab blocks. Directly up staying at least 2m R of *Boomslang*. At top trend L to chains of *Boomslang*.

18. Dangerous Nostalgia – 17 ★

28m Derek & Caroline Marshall 05/02/2022 (T)

Up rails & thin moves about 4m R of R of *Boomslang*. Stay as R as possible till you top out.

19. Space Shuffle – 22 ★★★

Keith James 1983 (10B&C)

Retro-bolted by M. de Waal & Ken Thrash.

20. Monsters Ball – 24 ★★

Keith James 1984 (11B&C)

Retro-bolted by M. de Waal & Ken Thrash.

21. Stairway to Obsession – 27 ★★★

Alex Munro 2019 (16B&C)

22. Open Project - ~ 29 ★★

Danor Groenewald 2019

23. Atomic Aloe – 21 ★★

Andrew Forsyth & Keith James 1983 (T)

Girdle traverse of crag above the cave.

P1 – 20 – 25m Start 3m R of RH bolted project (20). up to roof, traverse L under roves, diagonally with step-ups. This runs the full span over the Bushman cave. Around the corner onto Space Capitan.

P2 – 21 – 25m Finishes up *Space Shuttle*. Scary & exciting route.

24. Understanding Socialism - 20

25m Derek & Caroline Marshall 21/11/2021 (T)

About 5m downstream of the Bushman cave is a R facing open book. 1.5m R of this is a layaway flake. Up the layaway flake into a R facing open book under a roof. Break out of the roof to the L. Bamba to the top.

The following routes are about 100m along the path under the crag, in a downstream direction.



Wolwerivier



- **25. Vacillation - 17 ★**
Keith James 1983 (7B&C)
Retro-bolted by M. de Waal & Ken Thrash.
- **26. Subvertor – 19 ★**
Keith James 1983 (7B&C)
Retro-bolted by M. de Waal & Ken Thrash.
- **27. Mind Blaster – 19 ★★★**
Keith James 1983 (8B&C)
Retro-bolted by M. de Waal & Ken Thrash.
- **28. Cornflake – 22 ★**
Keith James 1984 (8B&C)
Retro-bolted by M. de Waal & Ken Thrash.
- **29. Open Project - ~ 27**
Bolted by Alex Munro 2019 (6B&C)
- **30. Defribulator – 22 ★★★**
Alex Munro 2019 (6B&C)

Slab Island



To access this crag, from the parking take the road down to the river from the NW corner of the dam. At the river, continue upstream for roughly 300m till you reach some old cement steps. Cross the river into a wooded gully for roughly 50m. Turn L onto a faint contour path till you reach the fixed lines descending to this island of granite.



- **1. Dig or Dive – 24 ★★★** Alex Munro 2019 (11B&C)
- **2. Scraping Bye – 25 ★★★** Alex Munro 2019 (11B&C)
- **3. Open Project ~ 28** Bolted by Alex Munro 2019 (12B&C)

The following routes are still to be located:

- Heatstroke – 17 ★★★** Keith James & Viv Connell 1984
2 pitch classic that meanders between the big roofs.
- Cactus Missile**
- Airy Fairy – 17 ★★★** Paul Schlotfeldt & Keith James before May 1984
2 pitch classic. Takes a diagonal line through the roofs to the R of Cactus Missile.
- Maxwell's Edge – 19** Jason Lang (?) 11/05/1985 (T)
- Lucy Layabout – 16**
- Poop Stringer – 20 ★★★** Paul Schlotfeldt & Keith James before May 1984
21 roof above a 19 wall.