

Spain : Costa Blanca

Chris Craggs

Alan James

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This page: Only two points of contact for Fero Kocis on *Sogun* (8a) - [page 54](#) - at Sector Ferrari, Mula. Photo: Chris Craggs
Cover: Alan James on an evening ascent of the superb arete of *Tai Chi* (6b+) - [page 336](#) - at Olta above Calp. Photo: Mark Glaister



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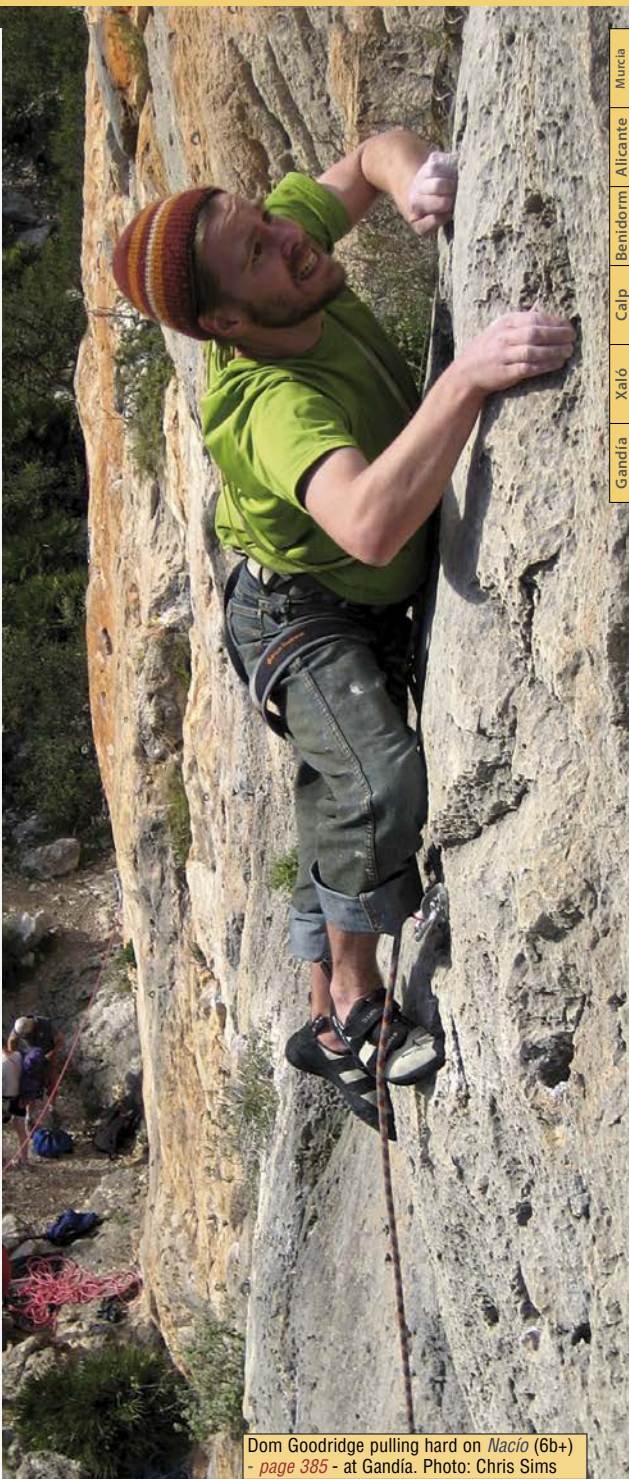
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Dom Goodridge pulling hard on *Nacio* (6b+) - page 385 - at Gandía. Photo: Chris Sims

Murcia
Alicante
Benidorm
Calp
Xaló
Gandía

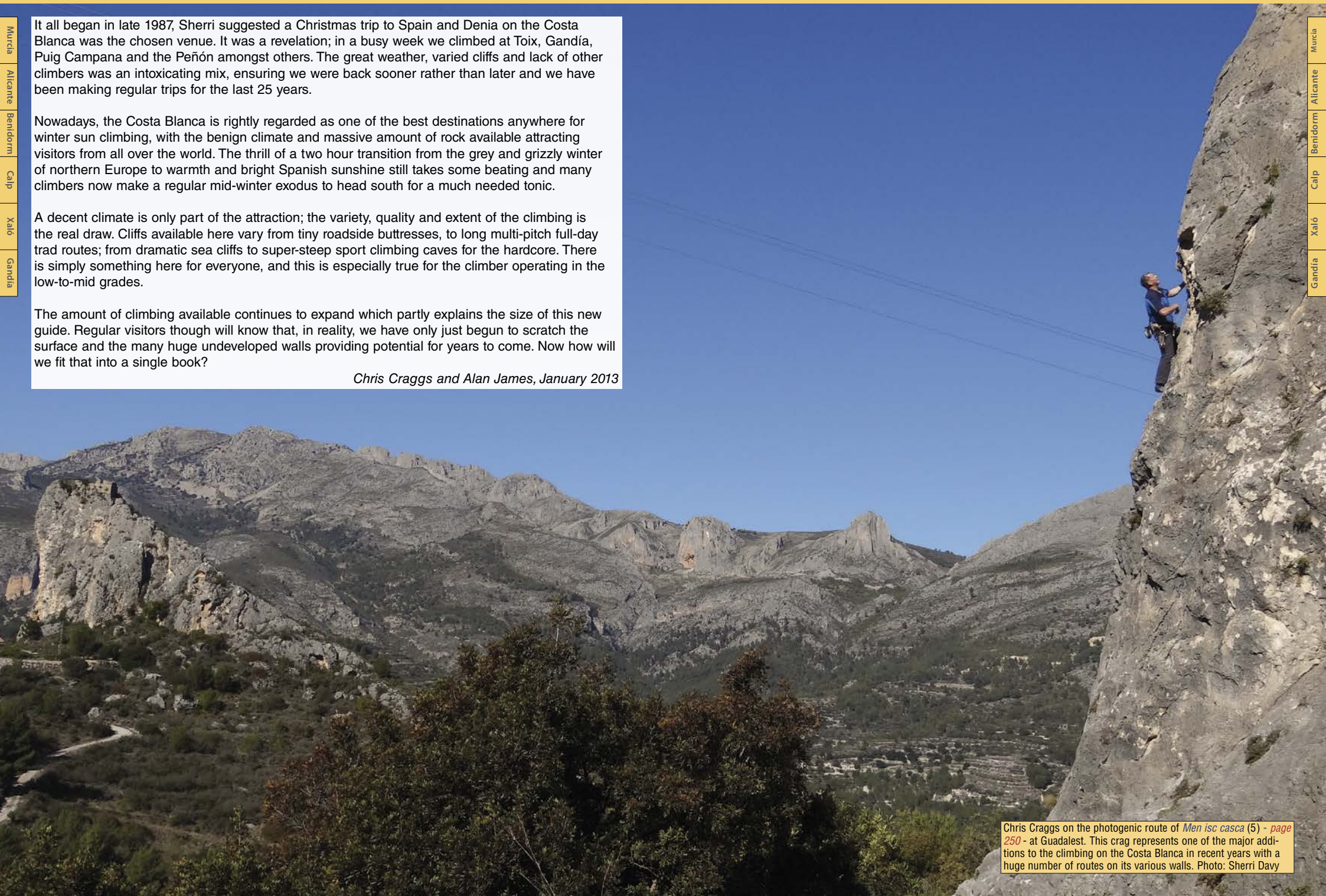
It all began in late 1987, Sherri suggested a Christmas trip to Spain and Denia on the Costa Blanca was the chosen venue. It was a revelation; in a busy week we climbed at Toix, Gandía, Puig Campana and the Peñón amongst others. The great weather, varied cliffs and lack of other climbers was an intoxicating mix, ensuring we were back sooner rather than later and we have been making regular trips for the last 25 years.

Nowadays, the Costa Blanca is rightly regarded as one of the best destinations anywhere for winter sun climbing, with the benign climate and massive amount of rock available attracting visitors from all over the world. The thrill of a two hour transition from the grey and grizzly winter of northern Europe to warmth and bright Spanish sunshine still takes some beating and many climbers now make a regular mid-winter exodus to head south for a much needed tonic.

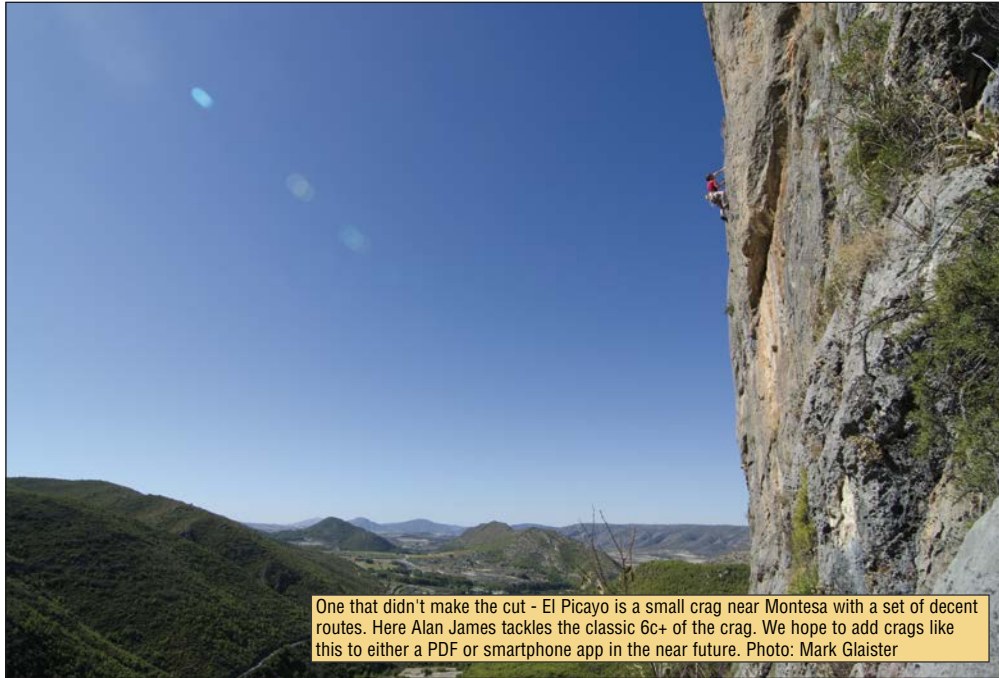
A decent climate is only part of the attraction; the variety, quality and extent of the climbing is the real draw. Cliffs available here vary from tiny roadside buttresses, to long multi-pitch full-day trad routes; from dramatic sea cliffs to super-steep sport climbing caves for the hardcore. There is simply something here for everyone, and this is especially true for the climber operating in the low-to-mid grades.

The amount of climbing available continues to expand which partly explains the size of this new guide. Regular visitors though will know that, in reality, we have only just begun to scratch the surface and the many huge undeveloped walls providing potential for years to come. Now how will we fit that into a single book?

Chris Craggs and Alan James, January 2013



Chris Craggs on the photogenic route of *Men isc casca* (5) - page 250 - at Guadalest. This crag represents one of the major additions to the climbing on the Costa Blanca in recent years with a huge number of routes on its various walls. Photo: Sherri Davy



One that didn't make the cut - El Picayo is a small crag near Montesa with a set of decent routes. Here Alan James tackles the classic 6c+ of the crag. We hope to add crags like this to either a PDF or smartphone app in the near future. Photo: Mark Glaister

The Book

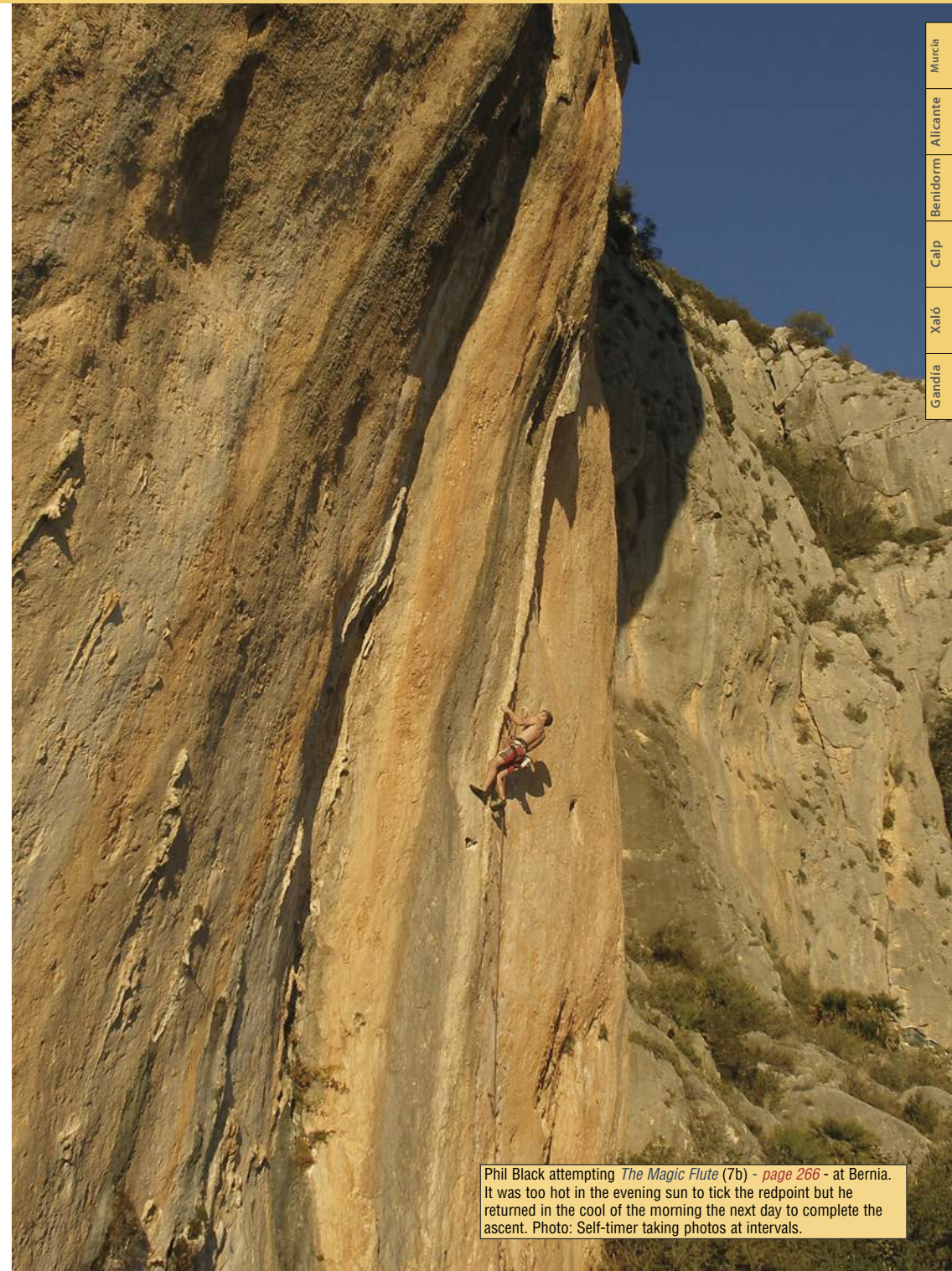
This book builds on the well-received, full-colour and highly-detailed format that we have developed and refined over many years. Since the last Rockfax to the Costa Blanca in 2005, we have revisited every crag and taken a new set of crag photos to create the most detailed and biggest photo-topos ever. These are supplemented with detailed route descriptions wherever appropriate. Approaches to all the crags have been checked, updated and have new, highly-detailed and accurate, maps. A few crags have been dropped since the last edition of the guide - Sierra de Magdalena, Ibi, Alcoi, Segaria and Baranc de l'Avern. These were minor venues that were outlying and unpopular. We will be publishing information for these crags either in an online PDF and/or an app in the near future. To replace these crags we have added some great new venues like Mula, Castellet, Bolulla, Abdet, Guadalest and Castellet de Calp. In addition to the new crags there are many new buttresses and new routes on the existing crags. Overall the book has swollen to a massive 456 pages making it the biggest Rockfax ever.

First Ascents

The increased coverage and much larger photo-topos has meant that something has had to give and we have dropped the first ascent information listed with the route descriptions in this edition. Apologies to any first ascensionist who was anxiously waiting for their name in lights. We have retained all this information in our online database as part of a gradual move from print to online that we are making for our main record of rock climbing information. You can find the first ascensionist of many of the routes by checking the Rockfax route database.

Feedback

The information is as up-to-date as possible but new routes will be climbed, new crags developed and new roads will continue to be built. If you find anything that is incorrect, out of date or confusing then please get in touch and let us know via the Rockfax website - www.rockfax.com



Phil Black attempting *The Magic Flute* (7b) - page 266 - at Bernia. It was too hot in the evening sun to tick the redpoint but he returned in the cool of the morning the next day to complete the ascent. Photo: Self-timer taking photos at intervals.

Website - www.rockfax.com

The Rockfax website is a mine of useful information about climbing all over Europe. It contains the Rockfax Route Database (see below) plus many PDF MiniGuides and updates both complementing the printed books produced by Rockfax and also covering new areas. These downloadable guides are stored in the universal PDF format. For some MiniGuides there is a small charge to download but many are free.

Rockfax Route Database - www.rockfax.com/databases/

This database contains a listing of every route in this book, and most other Rockfax guidebooks. When you go to the database, you can vote on grades and star ratings and leave general comments about the routes. This information is vital to help us ensure complete and up-to-date coverage for all the routes. To make this system work we need the help of everyone who climbs in the Costa Blanca. We can only reflect opinions if we have them so, if you have found a major sandbag, or discovered a hidden gem that we have only given a single star, please let us know! We also want to hear your general comments on all other aspects of this book, if you have anything to say, don't just say it to your mates, say it to Rockfax by using the forms at www.rockfax.com/general/feedback/

Rockfax App

Work is well underway on the Rockfax app which we hope to launch in 2013. Keep an eye on the Rockfax website for more information on this exciting development. Until then, if you think this book is too big to carry up a long multi-pitch route, take a photo of the key pages on your mobile phone or camera since you will most likely be carrying one of those with you.



Paul Cox bridging out of the cave on *Ojo de Odra* (6c) - page 174 - at Sella. A popular route which is quite polished but in this case it doesn't matter too much since the holds are all huge, except for a couple!
Photo: Alan James

Local Guidebooks

Below is a selection of local guidebooks currently (Jan 2013) available.

Escalada en Sierra Espuña (2005) - 200 pages, €20
 by *Angel Ortiz Martinez and José Matas Sanchez*
 Covers Leyva and Mula plus 9 other crags/areas in the Sierra Espuña area - west of Murcia, with hand-drawn/ painted topos.

Escalada en el Municipio de Murcia (2004) - 81 pages, €12
 by *Angel Ortiz Martinez and José Matas Sanchez*
 Covers La Panocha above Murcia with nice hand-drawn/painted topos.

Las mejores escaladas de Redovan, Callosa y Vega Baja (2005) - 149 pages, €15
 by *Manola Pomares*
 Covers the Pared Nega, Callosa and La Pancha plus several other crags and longer routes, in a rather old fashioned format.

Cabeço d'Or, Guia de Escalada (2009) - 200 pages, €15.50
 by *Manuel Bernabéu*
 Covers five zones including Peñas de Alicante and Alcoyanos

Escaladas en Alicante (2007) - 200 pages, €23
 by *Manuel Amat, José Francisco Hernández y Juan Pedro Verdú*
 Covers a large set of cliffs from Alicante up to Xativa including several not in this guide.

Senderos de la Roca (2010) - 314 pages, €24
 A large format selective book (supported by a good website) with excellent topos of many of the longer routes in the area.

Ponotx (Ponoch/Ponoig) (2012) - 176 pages, €18
 by *Manuel Bernabéu*
 Covers the big routes on the various huge walls of the Ponoch, behind Benidorm.

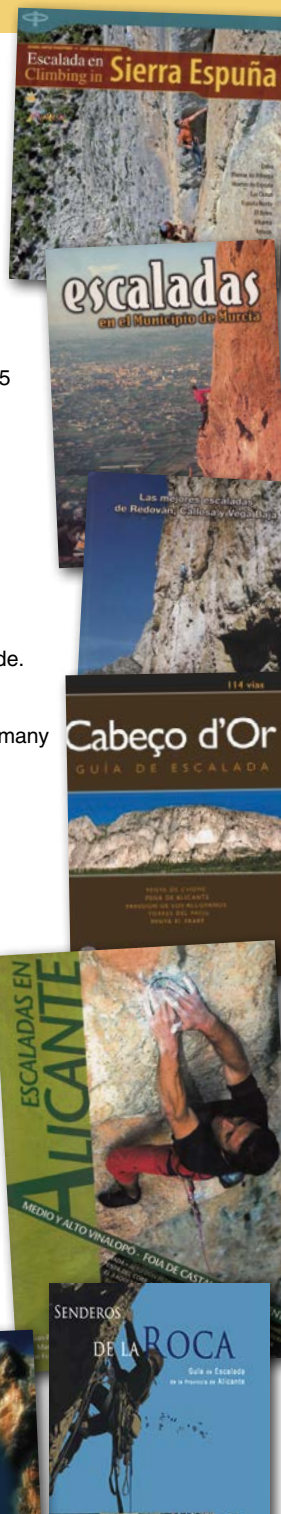
Peñón de Ifach (2001) - 120 pages
 by *Roy de Valera*
 All the routes on the Peñón, written by a local expert. Includes several routes not in the Rockfax but is getting quite old.

Deportiva próxima a Valencia (2005) - 163 pages, €14
 by *Carlos Tudela*
 Covers the cliffs to the south west of Valencia including Gandia, Bovedon, Aventura and Montesa, plus Jerica and several crags not in this book.

Currently the local Spanish guidebook to the Puig Campana appears to be out of print, though local climbing/book shops may well have old stock.

Other Websites

An excellent Costa Blanca information site
www.freewebs.com/costablancarock/



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The production of this guide is the culmination of many dozens of visits over a 25 year period; it remains one of my favourite foreign destinations. We have climbed here with many friends over the years, but this time round only Dave Gregory (the last of the stalwarts) accompanied us. Of course it was Sherri's idea that we went to Spain 25 years ago - a visit that changed the direction our lives.

There have been many other people who helped with photographs, feedback on the routes and general comments. These include (apologies for any omissions) Alan Blair, Simon Caldwell, Peter Eccles, Hagen Goetzke, Alan Leary, Rich Mayfield, David Mora García, Chris Moor and Brian Rynne. The Rockfax/UKC team have been the usual tower of support, both out on the Blanca, checking routes and approaches, climbing plenty of routes and doing the donkey work back in the UK, in front of the computer, producing another great guidebook.

Chris Craggs, January 2013

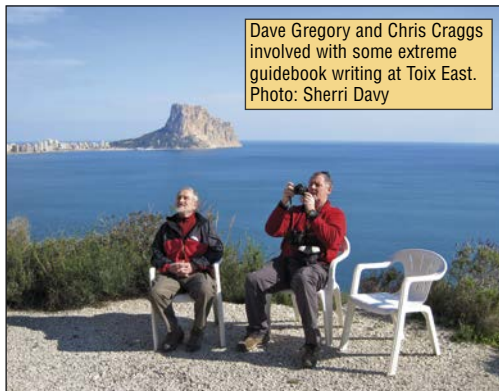
The most important people who need thanking are the climbers who have equipped and climbed the routes in this book, without them we would have nothing to climb. Many thanks for all your efforts!

This is the fifth book Rockfax have published to the Costa Blanca and, as ever, we rely heavily on feedback sent in. The list of all contributors is now too long to reproduce but we are very grateful to everyone who takes the time and trouble to send us their opinions and comments - please keep them coming.

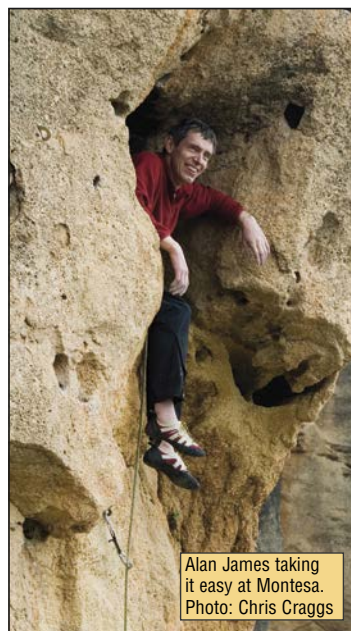
Several people have given some detailed help with certain sections, these are: Richard Davies, Neil Foster, Gaz Parry, Phil Black, Alison Martindale, Stuart Stronach, Sebastian Schwertner, Roy de Valera, Paul Thorburn, Sonia Tierraseca García, Bill Hannah and Michael Ho. Photographic contributions have come from Mark Glaister, Jack Geldard, Mick Ryan, Chris Sims, Mike Hutton, Dan Lane, Pete Sterling, Hannes Bonitz, Rich Kirby, Bryan Rynne, Charlie Mackie and Chris Newton-Goverd. Many thanks to all of the above.

Chris and Sherri have once again put in a tremendous amount of work at the crags, in front of the computer and managing the advertising. I am grateful to both of them for their efforts. Thanks also to Fatboy for all his work and thanks to my family for tolerating the long hours in front of the computer.

Alan James, January 2013



Dave Gregory and Chris Craggs involved with some extreme guidebook writing at Toix East. Photo: Sherri Davy



Alan James taking it easy at Montesa. Photo: Chris Craggs

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Black Diamond (outside back cover)
www.blackdiamondequipment.com

Mammut (page 31)
www.mammut.ch

V12 (back cover flap)
www.v12outdoor.com

Rock On (page 33)
www.rockonclimbing.co.uk

Local Gear Shops

El Refugio Mountain Shop (page 27)
www.elrefugiodeportes.com

Escalada y más (page 27)
www.escaladaymas.com

Guides and Courses

(some also offer accommodation)

David Mora García (page 21)
www.nuevoalpinismo.com

Rock & Sun (inside front cover)
Accommodation available.
www.rockandsun.com

Compass West (page 163)
Accommodation available in Finestrat.
www.compasswest.co.uk

Rockbusters (page 21)
Accommodation available.
www.rockbusters.net

Orange House - (page 2)
Accommodation available in Finestrat.
www.theorangehouse.co.uk

Aitana Aventures (page 163)
Accommodation available.
www.aitanaaventures.com

Accommodation - See map on page 24

Elche

Elche Villa (page 19)
www.rural-vacation.com

Guadalest

Abdet (page 241)
www.abdet.com

Guadalest Refuge (page 248)

Benidorm/Finestrat/Sella

Casa Roc - (inside back cover)
www.casaroc.com

Finepark (page 11)
www.finepark.com

Hotel La Plantación (page 23)
www.laplantacion.com

Villa Maria (page 35)
www.coblanca.com

Calp

Bouganvilla (page 15)
www.holidaylettings.co.uk/rentals/Calp/117051

Refugio Marnes (page 15)
www.refugiomarnes.com

Unitursa (page 37)
www.unitursa.com

Xalo/Jalon

Asmoladora (page 25 and 343)
www.finca-la-asmoladora.com

Casa Mariposa (page 13)
www.ownersdirect.co.uk/spain/s2616.htm

The Parcent House (page 343)
www.ownersdirect.co.uk/spain/s16053.htm

Gandía

Villa Florencia (page 19)
www.gandiacasaural.com

Refugio Monduver (page 11)
www.refugiomonduver.com

Steve and Michelle Mee stopping to admire the view on the descent from *Espolón Central* (4+) - page 205 - on the Puig Campana. Photo: Mark Glaister

Bouganvilla Calpe

Situated in a quiet residential area, 1 km from Calpe and its beaches, the apartment is ideal for couples/families wishing to access the great climbing in the area but escape the busy town centre. The apartment is situated below the owners main residence and has its own private entrance, own garden, pool and parking space.

e-mail bouganvilla@hotmail.co.uk
www.holidaylettings.co.uk/117051
Tel 0034 965 837 662

The apartment sleeps 4 in 2 bedrooms. Facilities include Internet Access, DVD player and outdoor pool



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Costa Blanca Logistics



Alan James, with Stephen Horne belaying, nearing the top of the amazing *Parle* (6a+) - *page 313* - on the sea cliffs at Sierra de Toix. This stunning find tackles one of the most dramatic sea caves on the Toix headland at a bizarrely amenable grade. Be warned though, the 6a+ grade may sound okay for some but the whole experience, including the abseil approach, is more akin to a Gogarth or Pembroke classic than the friendly sport routes a short distance up the hill. Photo: Mark Glaister

Murcia
Alicante
Benidorm
Calp
Xàlís
Gandia

The Costa Blanca has long been associated with Winter Sun climbing when virtually everywhere else is too cold or wet. The optimum time to visit is November through to April and many have spent a happy Christmas here in perfect temperatures, under clear blue skies and with cheap flights and accommodation as an added bonus. Having said that the winter months can also have periods of cold and unsettled weather (the autumnal Gota Fria is the best known of these) with occasional periods of very heavy rain that fill the usually-dry rivers and can even deposit snow on the summits. More usually it will be sunny and settled with cool nights and fresh days with climbing in the sun a complete pleasure.

| Average Temp °C | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Alicante (maximum) | 17 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 23 | 27 | 30 | 31 | 29 | 25 | 20 | 18 |
| Alicante (minimum) | 7 | 8 | 9 | 11 | 13 | 18 | 20 | 21 | 19 | 15 | 11 | 8 |

The spring and autumn months of May and October can be hot and you will probably have to confine your climbing activities to the morning and evening, or seek shady crags. You may be lucky to get periods of cooler weather, but that might also bring rain with it. Overall though these months are still well worth considering.

| Hours sun / day | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Alicante (average) | 6 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 10 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 6 |

From June to September the chances are it will be in the 30s or higher and dawn starts and seeking shade will be the only real options. It is also busy and expensive so is best avoided.

| Rain days / month | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Alicante (average) | 8 | 6 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 8 |



When not to go. Calp beach in September (32 degrees). Photo: Chris Craggs

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Villa Florencia Casa Rural Marchuquera, Gandia



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Why the Blanca is so popular - brilliant low-grade bolted climbing in a stunning setting. Here Chantal Blake tackles the slab of *La vergüenza II (3)* - page 175 - at Sella. Photo: Alan James

Before you get on the rock you will need to get to the area, collect a hire car (unless you are on a real budget trip) and have sorted out somewhere to stay; the following section should give you some pointers.

Flights

Alicante has an international airport with regular flights from all over Europe. The whole area is a massively popular holiday destination and the cost of flights can reflect this. The key to getting the bargains is to be flexible, avoid school holidays and book early. If Alicante is expensive it is worth considering Murcia or Valencia.

Car Hire

Although the Costa Blanca is a good area to go if you are on a limited budget and don't want to hire a car, having your own transport is definitely preferable. Car hire is best arranged from the UK and the cost for the standard 'Group A' car can start as low as £40 per week. You will need to add insurance (which can be pricey) and a full tank of petrol (around €70) on top of this. There are hire car companies at the airports and in the resorts but their prices can be higher than the pre-booked option. The comparison site www.carrentals.co.uk lets you input your precise requirements and offers up the companies that fit your needs.

Without a Car

If you are car-less there are options. Sella is the obvious choice, with loads of climbing and other climbers for lifts. Calp is an option with the Peñón, Toix and Olta within bus/walking distance. There is a regular train service up and down the coast from Alicante to Valencia and there are local bus services. Consult the local Tourist Information to get timetables and prices - see page 26.

DAVID MORA GARCÍA



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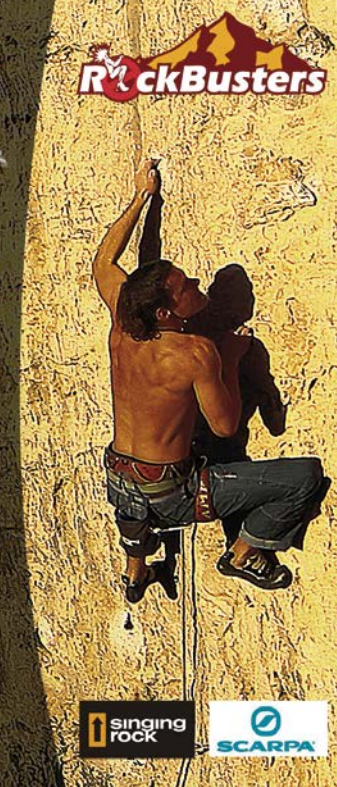
6 days climbing - Transport - Basic accommodation - Climbing equipment (travel insurance, flight tickets and food is not included)

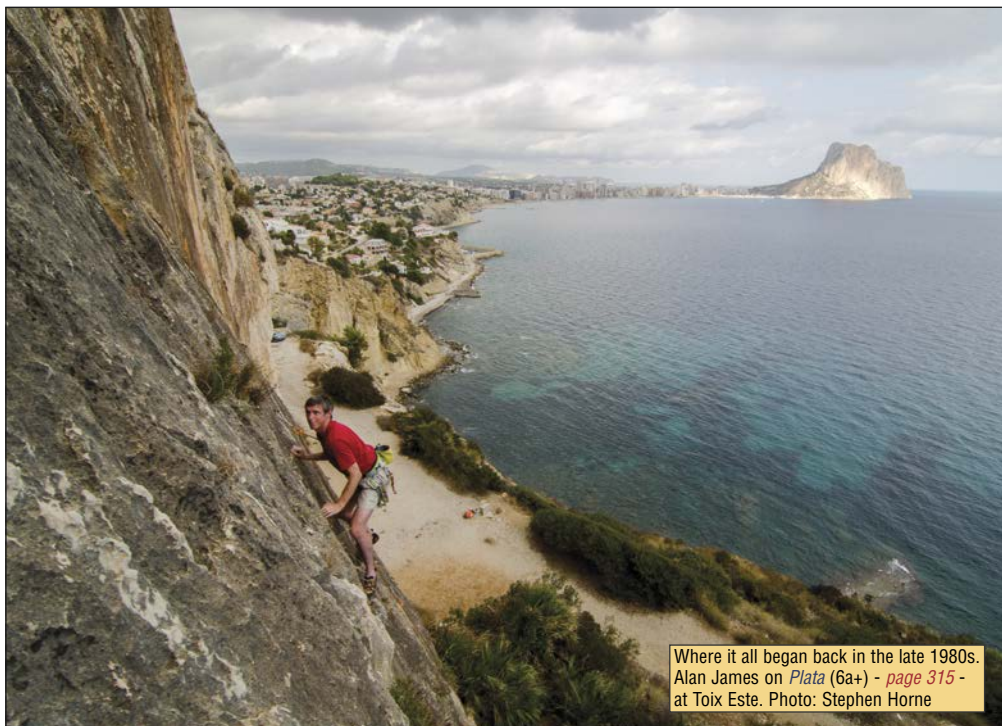
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Where it all began back in the late 1980s. Alan James on *Plata* (6a+) - page 315 - at Toix Este. Photo: Stephen Horne

Getting Around

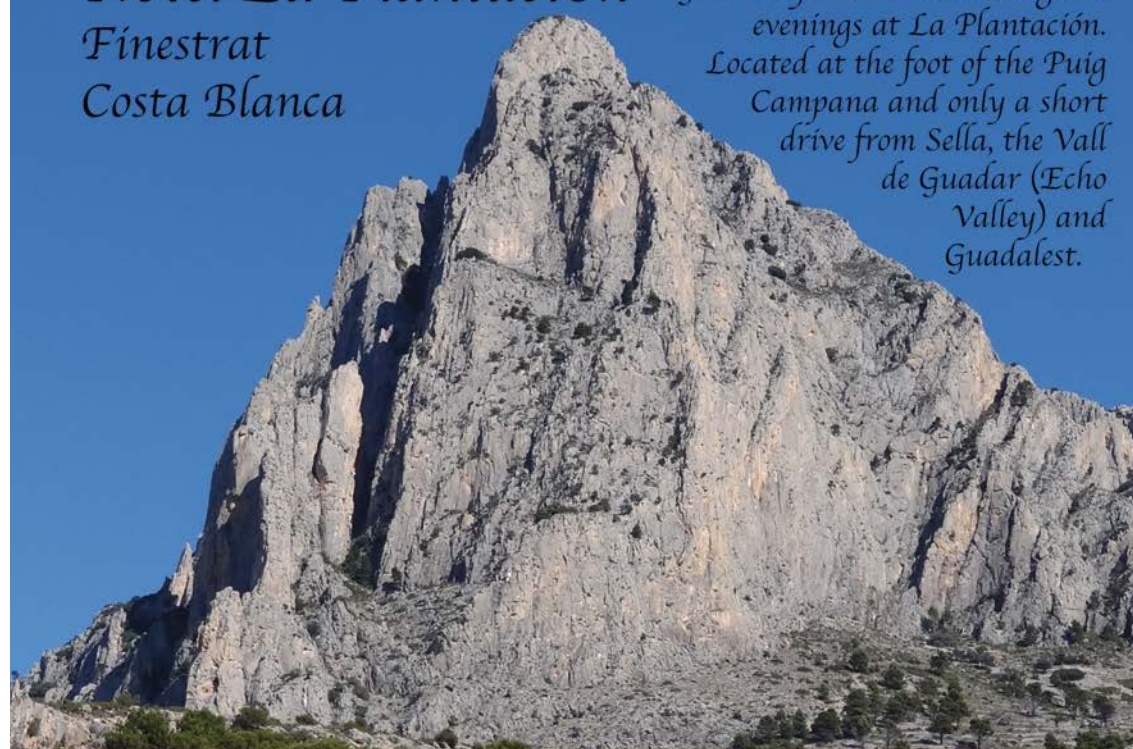
Over the years there has been a big expansion of the road network in the area. The maps in this guide are believed to be up-to-date BUT, there may be changes - let us know if you find anything new. As a general rule it is worth avoiding towns where possible since they can be horribly slow and busy. The final sections on some crag approaches are on dirt tracks of variable quality. These can become particularly exciting after rain - be aware of any excess on your car-hire contract if you head off-road!

Satellite Navigation

GPS 38.75828 A SatNav can make it much easier to get to the crag but the best policy is to use it in conjunction with the maps in this book. All the parking spots are indicated with a precise GPS location in the form of two decimal numbers (blue box - left). Different GPS devices accept these numbers in alternative formats; some devices are happy with two comma-separated numbers, others require a **North** and **East** value to be entered separately (Note: a negative value for the lower number means it is west of the Prime (Greenwich) Meridian which pretty much goes straight down the Mascarat Gorge. This means that we have both **East** and **West** values in the book. Some devices require **West** to be entered as a positive number, others will interpret the negative sign as meaning 'west'). There are many cheap, and free, SatNav apps now available for smart phones but many require a constant Internet connection although NavFree (www.navfree.com) offers offline mapping for most of Europe for free. Some offline apps don't have an offline input for the long/lat GPS co-ordinates we give, so you either need to pre-program your destinations when online before you set off, or just aim for the nearest town and then use the on-paper instructions from there.

Hotel La Plantación Finestrat Costa Blanca

Great days on the rock and great evenings at La Plantación. Located at the foot of the Puig Campana and only a short drive from Sella, the Vall de Guadar (Echo Valley) and Guadalest.



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Apartments, Villas and Casitas

There is masses of accommodation available along the Costa Blanca; cheap and cheerful beach-front self-catering apartments, all-in package deals in high-rises in Benidorm, huge villas with pools and delightful inland casitas - the choice is massive.

For villas, a premium is paid for stopping down by the coast, up in the hills things are considerably less expensive. Most will offer a degree of luxury seldom experienced on a UK climbing trip and, for large groups visiting out of season, hiring a villa may well still be the cheapest option wherever it is situated. The inland casitas are a good option for those who wish to get away from the hustle and bustle of the coast. Many are beautifully located, close to the climbing, and provide a good opportunity to see a different side of Spain.

If you arrive with nothing pre-booked, either try the local Tourist Offices (page 26) or find a tower block with a 'to rent' (alquilar) sign displayed, or phone one of the contacts listed in this book - see map below. For the really low-cost option, the Benidorm 'flight plus accommodation' packages can prove to be good value, especially for small groups, but you will be in the middle of Benidorm.



Refuge

There is a refuge at Guadalest which has accommodation, meals, guiding and advice (see page 248). The old refuge at Sella has now closed.

Camping

There are numerous campsites to be found along the coastal strip, although these are usually closed in the winter and crowded in the summer. Also, they tend to be expensive; it is usually cheaper to rent an apartment. There is a campsite by the parking spot below Olta (page 332) with limited facilities, and it tends to get crowded at weekends from Easter onwards. There is a useful campsite with cabins at El Berro near Leyva which is good if you want to spend a day or two down there - see page 45. There is also camping available at the Orange House (see page 2).

Make your climbing base
La Asmoladora
"Paradise between mountains"

Situated near Parcent in the peaceful Xalo/Jalon Valley, finca La Asmoladora is at the centre of the climbing areas of the Costa Blanca. It is surrounded on three sides by spectacular mountains. The nearest crags are five minutes away and all are within easy reach of the finca.



The finca is an excellent base for climbers wanting to avoid the overcrowded tourist areas of the coast.

It has a range of superb modestly priced self-catering accommodation, for groups from 2 to 20 people. The owners have known the area intimately for years and are happy to share their extensive knowledge with guests.



For relaxing before or after climbing, La Asmoladora has acres of almond, orange and olive terraces, its own wilderness area plus a tennis court and a huge barbeque and pool.

When food preparation is too much trouble there are ten restaurants, all of them good and reasonably priced, within about 1km.



The photographs show the finca's three Casitas each for two or four people, the interior of one of them and the pool/barbeque terrace.

Contact Pam and Derek Cornthwaite

E-mail dcornth@attglobal.net

Phone/fax Spain 0034 96 640 5429 or UK (mid June to early Oct) 01433 639 536

www.finca-la-asmoladora.com



Relaxing after a great day's climbing at Guadalest. Photo: Mark Glaister

Shops

There are big supermarkets in, or on the outskirts, of all the main towns (often shut Sundays). Villages often have a small shop and a bakery which may be closed in the afternoons.

Climbing Shops

There are a couple of good climbing shops in the centre of Alicante, worth a visit on a rest day, or if you find you have forgotten/worn out any of your gear:

El Refugio - see advert opposite

Escalada y Mas - see advert opposite

There is a small sport shop on the main shopping street in Calp (Ifac Sports) with a few climbing basics and a lot of cycling stuff.

Tourist Info - www.costablanca.org

Most decent sized towns in the area have a Tourist Office with friendly, helpful staff who speak good English. These should be your first port of call if you need accommodation, details about local transport, market days, things worth seeing and ideas for a rest day.

Alicante - *c/Portugal 17, (near bus station) Alicante.*

Tel: (+34) 96 592 98 02 Email: alicantecentro@touristinfo.net

Benidorm - *Avda. Martinez, Alejos 6, Benidorm.*

Tel: (+34) 90 210 05 81 Email: benidorm@touristinfo.net

Finestrat - *Avgda. de la Marina Baixa 14, La Cala de Finestrat, Finestrat.*

Tel: (+34) 96 680 12 08 Email: touristinfo@finestrat.org

Calp - *Avda. Ejércitos Espanoles, 44, near the Peñón.*

Tel: (+34) 96 583 69 20 Email: Calp@touristinfo.net

Dénia - *Plaza Oculista Buigues 9, Dénia.*

Tel: (+34) 96 642 23 67 Email: denia@touristinfo.net

Travel Insurance

UK citizens have reciprocal health care rights in Spain under the EHIC. Despite this, it is strongly recommended that personal travel insurance is taken out to cover rescue, medical and repatriation in the event of an accident. **BMC Travel Insurance** - www.thebmc.co.uk

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climbing shop

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Costa Blanca Climbing



Poca Lizard (7b) - page 341 - at Pinos, a short but intense crag in the hills above Calp. Pinos is only fifteen minutes drive from the coast but you can feel like you are climbing in complete isolation. Photo: Phil Black

Many of the areas covered in this guide are in delicate natural environments. There have already been problems at some of the cliffs created by thoughtless actions of a few. It is up to all of us to show due respect, help to maintain access to the areas, observe any posted restrictions, park sensibly and keep the places tidy so that these fine areas remain available to climbers for many years to come.



Two of the crags covered, Agujas Rojas and Salinas, have a climbing restriction due to nesting birds from 1 January to 31 June but these sometimes appear on other crags as well. Keep and eye out for any signs at the crags.

Remember, the inclusion of a crag in this book doesn't mean you have a right to climb there. Land ownership and access permission can change so please respect any signs and check the Rockfax website for access news

www.rockfax.com > Access Blog

Climbers' Code

Park considerably - don't block access, and be prepared to climb elsewhere if there's nowhere to park.

Stick to the approach paths - avoid short-cuts, especially across someone's private land. If there are signs, read them and follow any instructions.

Keep the noise down at the crag - crags are often in areas popular with walkers who are keen to get away from all that. This is a significant issue at the Wildside, Sella.

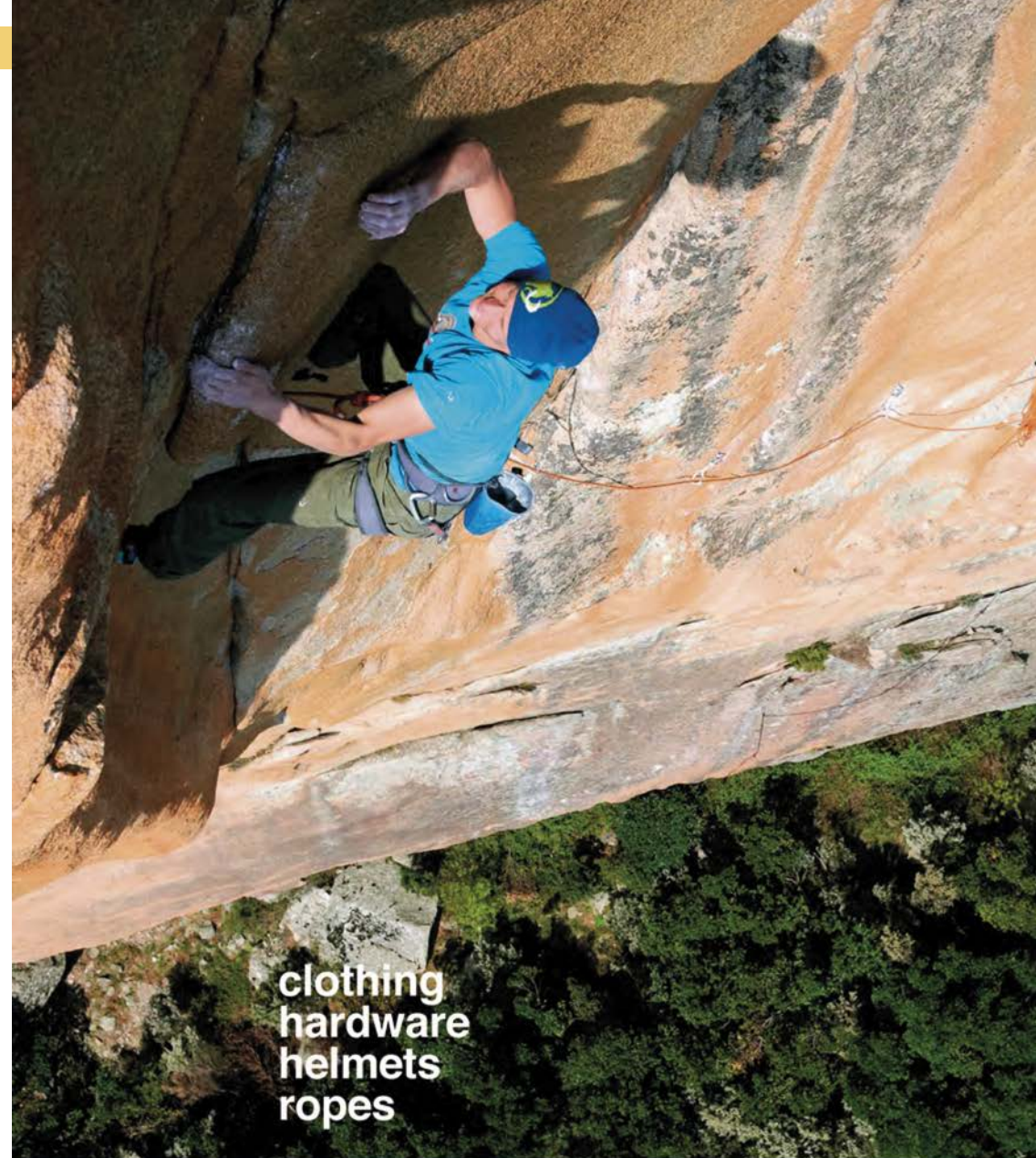
Take your rubbish home with you - better still, make space for less considerate souls' rubbish, and remember that anything left at the crag is 'rubbish'. As an example orange peel takes around two years to decompose, and looks a mess while it does so!



Access restricted - a sign at Sella. Interestingly the building up the track is now owned by the Orange House so access will change, although it is unlikely you will be able to drive your car up here. Photo: Chris Craggs

Guidebook Footnote

The inclusion of a climbing area in this guidebook does not mean that you have a right of access or the right to climb upon it. The descriptions of routes, bolts and other forms of fixed gear within this guide are recorded for historical reasons only and no reliance should be placed on the accuracy of the descriptions of the nature and position of bolts and other fixed gear. The grades set in this guide are a fair assessment of the difficulty of the climbs. Climbers who attempt a route of a particular standard should use their own judgment as to whether they are proficient enough to tackle that route. This book is not a substitute for experience and proper judgment. The authors, publisher and distributors of this book do not recognise any liability for injury or damage caused to, or by, climbers, third parties, or property arising from such persons seeking reliance on this guidebook as an assurance for their own safety.



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Ropes

The most crucial item of gear is your rope. At the very least you need a 60m rope but, if you're buying a new rope for a trip, we strongly recommend getting a 70m rope or longer. Single ropes are now available in thicknesses previously associated with half-ropes. Thin ropes are easier to climb with and lighter, which is good for the hike to the crag and your luggage allowance on the plane. Thicker ropes last longer and are better for working projects. For multi-pitch routes requiring an abseil descent, you may find that using a pair of half-ropes is preferable or a triple-rated rope which can be used both single and double.


Belay Device - Make sure your belay device is suitable for your rope: too grabbing and you'll be cursing it each time you pay out rope, too slick and you may struggle to hold your partner. A belay device that you are happy to abseil on is also a good idea if you are considering longer routes.

Route Lengths and Lowering Off

The photo-topos have approximate heights, indicated next to some lower-offs. **These are guideline heights only.** It is important to remember that crag bases often slope, and people stand in different places when belaying. Also, manufacturer figures for rope lengths vary and some ropes have had worn sections chopped off the ends in the past. Do you really know exactly how long your rope is?

The golden rule is always tie a knot in the end of the rope to prevent dropping a climber when lowering off.

Other Gear

Trad Gear - Amongst the sporty stuff are some routes with less fixed gear, though often with decent belays, and some kind of gear near the hard moves. The symbol  is used to identify these, usually along with a UK trad grade (with a corresponding grade colour-code - see next page).

Here are some suggested racks of gear for your trip in addition to your rope:

Sport routes only - 12 to 14 quickdraws and a helmet.

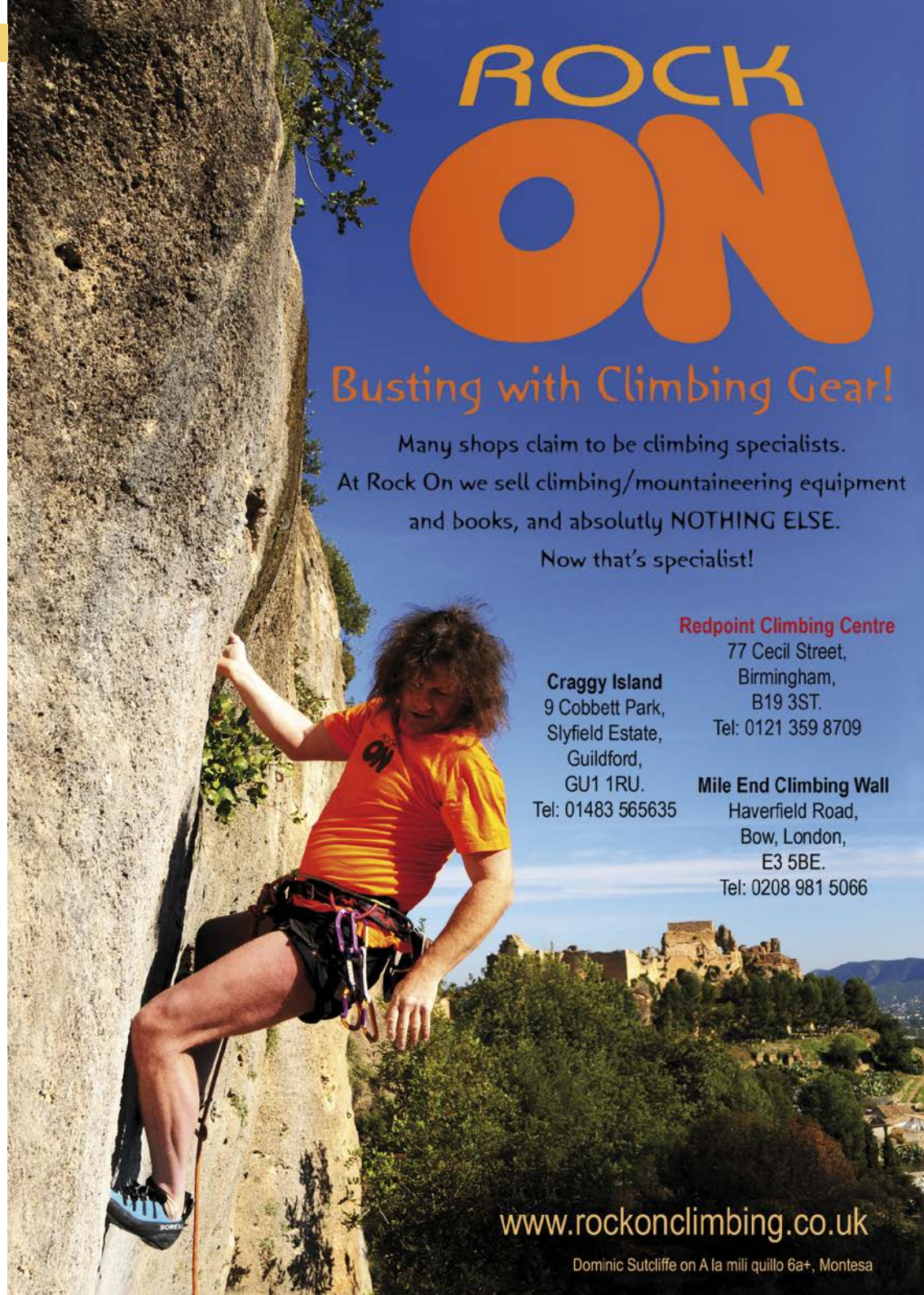
Sport routes and a few longer mixed routes - 12 to 14 quickdraws, a set of wires, a couple of medium cams, a helmet and 3 or 4 slings. Competent climbers will be able to climb many of these routes with just a rack of quickdraws and a single 60m rope although this is not advised if you are inexperienced in long run-outs and descending by short abseils between insubstantial anchors.



Alan James fully geared up for the long mixed route *Espolón Central* (HS/4+) - page 205 - on Puig Campana. Photo: Mick Ryan

Multi-pitch trad routes with abseil descents - 12 quickdraws, twin 50m ropes, a full normal trad rack including wires, cams and a helmet.

Beyond these essentials, you may find tape useful for bandaging your fingers if the prickly rock starts to take its toll. For multi-pitch routes, a small sack with a water bladder, a long-sleeve shirt and a sun hat are good ideas. A good pair of approach shoes is also worth packing, as some of the crags are a bit of a walk from the parking spots.



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Guildford,
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Tel: 01483 565635

Mile End Climbing Wall

Haverfield Road,
Bow, London,
E3 5BE.

Tel: 0208 981 5066

www.rockonclimbing.co.uk

Dominic Sutcliffe on A la mili quillo 6a+, Montesa

In general the grades in the Costa Blanca are pretty friendly and consistently applied in common with most other popular Spanish areas, although there are undoubtedly some anomalies. If you find a grade that is way out then go to the Rockfax website and vote on what you think it should be.

Trad Routes

There are a number of routes in the book which require gear to be carried to supplement the fixed (pegs and bolts) protection. These routes have been given a normal sport grade and an overall UK trad grade in their description. The trad grade gives the correct impression of how serious the route is and the colour code has been adjusted to reflect this. For example, Route 7 on page 232 is given a grade of 6a+, but also E4 and a black spot. This is because it is a relatively easy move but there is no protection making it dangerous. Such a route should be attempted by Black Spot E4 climbers and not Orange Spot 6a+ leaders!

To help identify routes of the correct difficulty level they have been allocated colour-codes corresponding to a grade band.

Green Spots

Grade 4+ and under (*Trad routes - Sev and under*). Good for beginners and those wanting an easy life.

Orange Spots

Grade 5 to 6a+ (*Trad - HS to HVS*). General ticking routes for those with more experience.

Red Spots

Grade 6b to 7a (*Trad - E1 to E3*). Routes for the experienced and keen climber.

Black Spots

Grade 7a+ and above (*Trad - E4 and above*). The hard stuff!

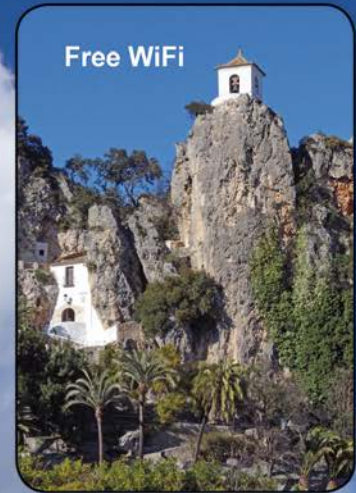
All unknown lines are also given black spots although they might not be that hard.

| Sport | British Trad Grade (for well-protected routes only) | UIAA | USA |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| 1 | Mod Moderate | I | 5.1 |
| 2 | Diff Difficult | II | 5.2 |
| 2+ | VDiff Very Difficult | III | 5.3 |
| 3 | HVD Hard Very Difficult | III+ | 5.4 |
| 3+ | Sev Severe | IV | 5.5 |
| 4 | HS Hard Severe | IV+ | 5.6 |
| 4+ | 4a VS Very Severe 4c | V | 5.7 |
| 5 | 4c HVS Hard Very Severe 5b | V+ | 5.8 |
| 5+ | 5a E1 5c | VI- | 5.9 |
| 6a | 5b E2 6a | VI | 5.10a |
| 6a+ | 5c E3 6a | VI+ | 5.10b |
| 6b | 6a E4 6b | VII- | 5.10c |
| 6b+ | 6a E5 6c | VII | 5.10d |
| 6c | 6b E6 6c | VII+ | 5.11a |
| 6c+ | 6c E7 7a | VIII- | 5.11b |
| 7a | 6c E8 7a | VIII | 5.11c |
| 7a+ | 6c E9 7a | VIII+ | 5.11d |
| 7b | 6c E10 7a | IX- | 5.12a |
| 7b+ | 6c E11 7a | IX | 5.12b |
| 7c | 6c E12 7a | IX+ | 5.12c |
| 7c+ | 6c E13 7a | X- | 5.12d |
| 8a | 6c E14 7a | X | 5.13a |
| 8a+ | 6c E15 7a | X+ | 5.13b |
| 8b | 6c E16 7a | X- | 5.13c |
| 8b+ | 6c E17 7a | X+ | 5.13d |
| 8c | 6c E18 7a | XI- | 5.14a |
| 8c+ | 6c E19 7a | XI | 5.14b |
| 9a | 6c E20 7a | XI+ | 5.14c |
| 9a+ | 6c E21 7a | XI+ | 5.14d |
| | | | 5.15a |

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This list contains the most coveted routes in the guidebook. There are many other great routes that could have been added and the list is biased towards longer routes but these tend to be the climbs that remain in the memory the longest. On the Rockfax website - www.rockfax.com - you can vote on the quality of the routes you have climbed. These votes will be used in future as the basis for this list. **Bold routes are multi-pitch.**

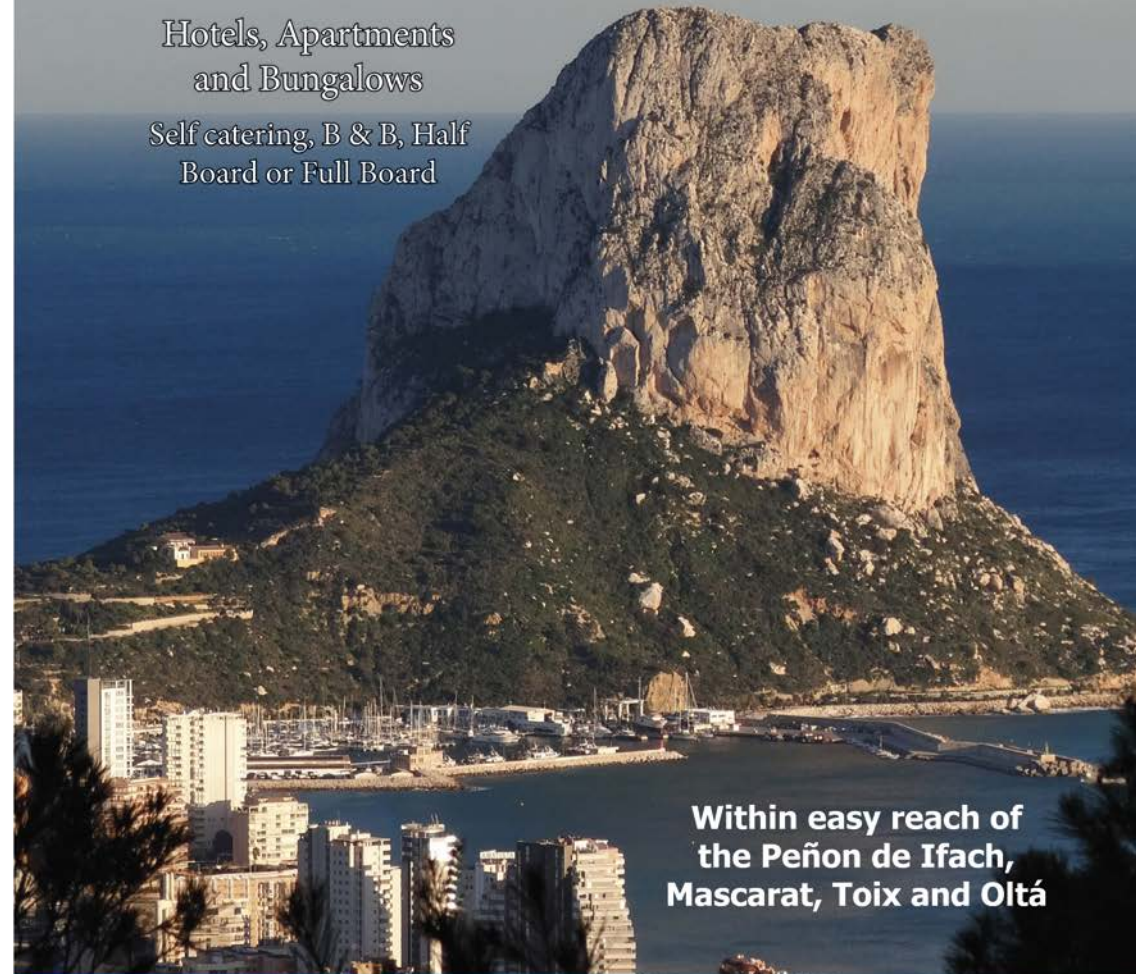
| Route | Grade | Photos | Page |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> El Camino de les Flores <i>L'Ocaire</i> | .8c | 361 | 365 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dosis <i>Sella - Wild Side</i> | .8b+ | | 189 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Septiembre <i>Sella - Wild Side</i> | .8b+ | | 190 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> El último mono <i>Sella - Wild Side</i> | .8b | | 189 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Radicales libres <i>Foradà</i> | .8a+ | | 131 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ergometría <i>Sella - Wild Side</i> | .8a | | 189 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Celia <i>Sella - Wild Side</i> | .7c+ | | 191 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ya somos olímpicos <i>Sella - Wild Side</i> | .7c | | 188 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Batman <i>Foradà</i> | .7b+ | | 131 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thor <i>Foradà</i> | .7b+ | | 131 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nueva Dimensión <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Peñón de Ifach</i> | .7b | | 330 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Magic Flute <i>Bernia</i> | .7b | 7,264 | 266 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A la babilla <i>Gandía</i> | .7a+ | | 391 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mata-Hari <i>Salinas</i> | .7a+ | | 100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elios <i>Foradà</i> | .7a+ | 135 | 131 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> La Babao <i>Agujas Rojas</i> | .7a+ | 149 | 150 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> L'os <i>Gandía</i> | .7a | | 391 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sonrisa Vertical <i>Sella</i> | .7a | | 177 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spiderman <i>Foradà</i> | .7a | | 131 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Starman <i>Foradà</i> | .7a | | 131 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> El navegante <i>Peñón de Ifach</i> | .7a | | 328 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gorilas en la roca <i>Gonoch</i> | .6c+ | 211 | 212 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quimera <i>Pego</i> | .6c+ | 371 | 373 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Costa Blanca <i>Peñón de Ifach</i> | .6c+ | | 326 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kashba <i>Sella</i> | .6c+ | | 169 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ningún Drama <i>Montesa</i> | .6c | | 440 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monkey Wall <i>Sierra de Toix</i> | .6c | 291 | 303 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vía Missing Link <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Sierra de Toix</i> | .E3/6b+ | | 309 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tanit <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Sella</i> | .6b+ | | 176 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tai chi <i>Olta</i> | .6b+ | Cover, 333 | 336 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> El sol <i>Gandía</i> | .6b+ | | 385 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sopa de marsopa <i>Sella</i> | .6b+ | 185 | 173 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lliberpool. <i>Peña Roja</i> | .6b+ | 346 | 350 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ruda <i>Reconco</i> | .6b+ | | 144 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tufa-Groove <i>Olta</i> | .6b+ | | 336 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> El Diamante <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Puig Campana</i> | .E2/6a+ | | 203 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usoara. <i>Cabezon de Oro</i> | .6b+ | | 159 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diedros Mágicos <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Puig Campana</i> | .E1/6a | | 208 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pepestroika <i>Gandía</i> | .6b | | 387 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pere flac <i>Bellús</i> | .6b | | 425 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calfamusculus <i>Sella</i> | .6b | | 177 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parle <i>Sierra de Toix</i> | .6a+ | 17,311 | 313 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Todos los Santos <i>Orihuela</i> | .6a+ | | 79 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magical Mystery Tour <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Sierra de Toix</i> | .HVS/5+ | | 310 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diedro UBSA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Peñón de Ifach</i> | .HVS/5+ | | 146 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> El Dorado <i>Sierra de Toix</i> | .6a+ | | 309 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amor Brujo <i>Sax</i> | .6a+ | | 108 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> El albaran volador <i>Bellús</i> | .6a | | 421 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gallego - Carlos <i>La Panocha</i> | .6a | | 65 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carillo-Cantabella <i>Leyva</i> | .5+ | 44 | 46 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marión <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Sella</i> | .5 | 171 | 171 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Espolón Central <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Puig Campana</i> | .HS/4+ | 32 | 205 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Derecha del Espolón. <i>Orihuela</i> | .5 | | 76 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Espolón Limaban <i>Sierra de Toix</i> | .5 | | 292 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> El Realet Ridge <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Castellets</i> | .4+ | 199 | 199 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Bernia Ridge <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Bernia</i> | .4+ | 268 | 268 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prats <i>Marín</i> | .4+ | | 95 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jhony <i>Marín</i> | .4 | | 95 |

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| | | Routes | up to 4+ | 5 to 6a+ | 6b to 7a | 7a+ and up | Approach | Sun | Multi-pitch | When wet | When hot | When cold | Summary | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------|----------------|----------|--------------|----------|------------|----------|-------------|-------------|------------|----------|-----------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Murcia | Murcia | Leyva | 64 | 1 | 17 | 25 | 21 | 40 - 50 min | | | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | A major crag in the far south of the region; superb longer routes and some single pitch stuff too. If it were in the heart of the Blanca, it would be hugely popular. | 45 | | |
| | | Mula | 98 | 14 | 32 | 29 | 23 | 5 min | | | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | This is a varied pair of cliffs with easy access. The wall by the dam is generally slabby, Sector Ferrari is much steeper, with some great stamina pitches. | 53 | | |
| | | La Panocha | 93 | 9 | 55 | 22 | 7 | 5 - 10 min | | | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | An interesting crag, overlooking Murcia, with a good variety of routes. Popular and quite polished in places. Sun and shade is always available. | 60 | | |
| | | Orihuela | 89 | 10 | 49 | 22 | 8 | 8 - 15 min | | | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | A varied set of cliffs mostly in arid and sunny settings. Single and multi-pitch routes on offer. The popular Pared Negra is closed until early 2014 - check the signs. | 72 | | |
| Alicante | Alicante | Marín | 85 | 9 | 50 | 24 | 2 | 10 min | | | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | A nicely situated and popular crag with a great spread of lower grade routes plus some decent stuff in the mid-grades. Hot and exposed, worth a look in winter. | 88 | | |
| | | Salinas | 68 | 1 | 20 | 26 | 21 | 10 - 15 min | | | ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | A good set of face climbs on a series of steep walls. The rock tends to be hard on the fingers. There is usually a spring-time restriction due to bird nesting. | 98 | | |
| | | Sax | 34 | 2 | 18 | 11 | 3 | 10 min | | | ✗ | ✓ | ✗ | Multi-pitch climbs on a fine set of towers, many at a reasonable grade. Less popular than you might expect. | 106 | | |
| | | Peña del Corb | 15 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 20 min | | | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | Another crag that isn't very popular despite a neat set of routes, a mini-summit and a sunny setting. | 112 | | |
| | | Peña Rubia | 90 | 1 | 26 | 27 | 36 | 4 - 10 min | | | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | One of the older crags in the area. The hard routes tend to be tough and battered. The easy stuff is often better. A good airport day crag. | 116 | | |
| | | Foradà | 139 | 6 | 44 | 46 | 43 | 10 - 15 min | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | Brilliant and beautifully situated fin of rock with a sunny (mid-grade) and a shady (hard) side. High and exposed so it can be 10 degrees colder here than on the coast. | 126 | | |
| | | Reconco | 46 | 5 | 17 | 22 | 2 | 20 - 25 min | | | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | A fine slabby crag with some excellent, finery and sustained routes. A sunny setting, so often hot. | 140 | | |
| | | Agujas Rojas | 47 | 1 | 14 | 11 | 21 | 1 - 3 min | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✗ | Interesting towers on a wooded hillside with a varied set of climbs. The better routes are in the higher grades, but there is enough for a day for most teams. | 148 | | |
| | | Cabezon de Oro | 25 | - | 2 | 4 | 21 | 20 - 30 min | | | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | A major mountain with some fine long semi-trad routes and a huge spectacular sport crag which is one of the best venues on the Blanca for the hard stuff. | 154 | | |
| | | Benidorm | Benidorm | Sella | 289 | 11 | 58 | 98 | 122 | 1 - 40 min | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | The most popular venue on the Costa Blanca, with loads of routes across the grades, and plenty for most weather conditions. Some of the classics are becoming worn. | 162 |
| | | | | Castelletts | 37 | 2 | 15 | 18 | 2 | 10 min | | | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | A small wall on an impressive ridge in a sunny setting. Good in cold weather, the cliff even has some trad routes and the ridge itself is superb. | 194 |
| | | | | Puig Campana | 30 | 1 | 4 | 18 | 7 | 1 hour | | | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | The most popular of the Blanca's mountain crags, with a great set of routes. Most climbs require the carrying of a small rack, plus double ropes. | 200 |
| Ponoch | 7 | | | - | 1 | 5 | 1 | 20 min | | | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | Some huge walls with only a small selection of routes covered here. Stay away if the weather is unsettled. | 210 | | |
| Vall de Guadar (Echo Valley) | 171 | | | 19 | 52 | 56 | 44 | 2 - 10 min | | | ✓ | ✗ | ✓ | A huge amount of rock, and a popular set of crags with both sport and trad as well as single and multi-pitch on offer. Development continues here. | 214 | | |
| Bolulla | 14 | | | 1 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 15 min | | | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | A small crag in a beautiful setting. Currently there is only a small set of routes but there is plenty of rock in this valley. | 238 | | |
| Abdet | 45 | | | 5 | 28 | 12 | - | 6 min | | | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | Close to the village of the same name are a series of short walls in a sunny setting. The rock is still sharp, and a bit loose in places, but the place is worth a visit. | 240 | | |
| Guadalest | 157 | | | 13 | 92 | 43 | 10 | 0 - 3 min | | | ✗ | ✗ | ✓ | A major venue with 150+ easily accessible routes, both single and multi-pitch, on some great rock formations. The tourist-trap of a town is worth a visit too. | 246 | | |

| | Routes | up to 4+ | 5 to 6a+ | 6b to 7a | 7a+ and up | Approach | Sun | Multi-pitch | When wet | When hot | When cold | Summary | |
|----------------|--------------------------|----------|----------|----------|------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|----------|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Calp Area | Bernia | 22 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 3 - 30 min | | | | | The vast southern flank of the Bernia Ridge has a small number of quality routes, mostly in the upper grades. The ridge itself is a classic. | 264 |
| | Altea | 37 | - | 11 | 19 | 7 | 10 min | | | | | A couple of crags in different settings - one sheltered and slabby, the other more exposed and much steeper. Not especially popular despite easy access. | 270 |
| | Mascarat | 32 | 1 | 9 | 13 | 9 | 8 - 15 min | | | | | This spooky and windy gorge has a lot of climbing but has never been very popular. The hard wall has had its base washed away. | 276 |
| | Castellet de Calp | 36 | - | 2 | 13 | 21 | 5 - 10 min | | | | | A recently-developed crag in a shady setting with a decent set of face climbs. Should become a reasonably viable summer venue. | 284 |
| | Sierra de Toix | 198 | 44 | 91 | 42 | 22 | 2 - 20 min | | | | | Vies with Sella for popularity. Always busy, especially the easy routes on the Placa and Far West. The Sea Cliff adds another very different attraction. | 290 |
| | Peñón de Ifach | 29 | - | 4 | 21 | 4 | 20 min | | | | | Calp's own mountain has a great set of climbs, several of which are on the 'must do' circuit. Epics and benignments are quite common - you have been warned! | 320 |
| | Olta | 43 | 11 | 16 | 10 | 6 | 30 min | | | | | High above Calp, a decent crag in a great position with a couple of hyper-photogenic climbs. The walk up is a bit longer than you might be expecting. Afternoon shade. | 332 |
| Xaló Valley | Pinos | 40 | - | 1 | 17 | 22 | 2 - 4 min | | | | | A small steep roadside crag with a decent set of generally hard and powerful routes, that are sheltered from the wind and rain. The view out towards Calp is superb. | 338 |
| | Peña Roja | 35 | - | 9 | 14 | 12 | 3 min | | | | | A collection of excellent hardish wall climbs on good rock. The afternoon shade makes it popular at certain times but it is also a good morning sun-trap. | 346 |
| | Murla | 49 | 5 | 13 | 13 | 18 | 5 - 14 min | | | | | Super-steep climbs suitable for the power-hungry. There are (much) easier offerings out beyond the ridge. | 352 |
| | Alcalalí | 44 | 8 | 14 | 21 | 1 | 5 - 6 min | | | | | The most popular crag in the local area, with a great set of routes in a really sunny setting. The routes on the far right have been lost, but there is still loads to do here. | 356 |
| | L'Ocaive | 39 | 2 | 15 | 11 | 11 | 10 - 12 min | | | | | A crag that is better and cleaner than it looks with some fine face routes on the left and some much beefier stuff around the cave. In the shade for most of the day. | 360 |
| | Font d'Axia | 29 | 8 | 15 | 6 | - | 8 - 10 min | | | | | A minor crag which has proved to be surprisingly popular. Some loose rock around so care needed. | 366 |
| Gandía Area | Pego | 28 | 1 | 15 | 9 | 3 | 10 min | | | | | A pair of crags near Pego town, one small and insignificant and one with a great set of routes. Can be tricky to find, though hopefully less so than in the past! | 370 |
| | Gandía | 176 | 8 | 42 | 74 | 52 | 5 - 20 min | | | | | One of the original Blanca venues has been popular for years. It has a really great set of routes in a sunny setting. Bovedon adds upside-down fun into the mix. | 378 |
| | Salem | 142 | 20 | 48 | 49 | 25 | 10 min | | | | | An extensive set of cliffs in a secluded valley which has never been as popular as the quality of the climbing deserves. Sun and shade are always on offer. | 398 |
| | Bellús | 248 | 9 | 53 | 131 | 55 | 2 - 25 min | | | | | An interesting set of cliffs that offer hot and cold weather venues on some superb walls of quality rock. The setting is impressive and it deserves to be more popular. | 410 |
| | Aventador | 70 | 1 | 32 | 34 | 3 | 10 - 13 min | | | | | Great rock in a sunny setting, but the grid-bolting has rather spoil the effect. The easier routes on the right are quite popular, as is the via ferrata on the left. | 428 |
| Montesa | 98 | 6 | 42 | 42 | 8 | 3 - 5 min | | | | | Oddly this venue is more popular than you might expect despite the long drive. Grippy pocketed rock and a good set of middle and lower grade routes are the explanation. | 436 | |

Reconco is a fine crag with a good range of middle grade routes on lovely pocketed rock; it is a pity the place isn't bigger. It is beautifully situated on a hillside above a rural valley and is easy to find. The only slight drawback is its distance from the main accommodation spots but using the motorways will get you here surprisingly quickly. It

makes a good alternative to the popular areas at Toix and Sella with a similar grade range. Most of the routes are long single pitches, although there are a few two pitch routes as well. All the routes are clean and well-equipped but the rock has many small pockets and is a bit hard on the skin. Route finding shouldn't be a problem as the names and grades are stamped on tags on many of the first bolts and there are occasional names painted on the rock.

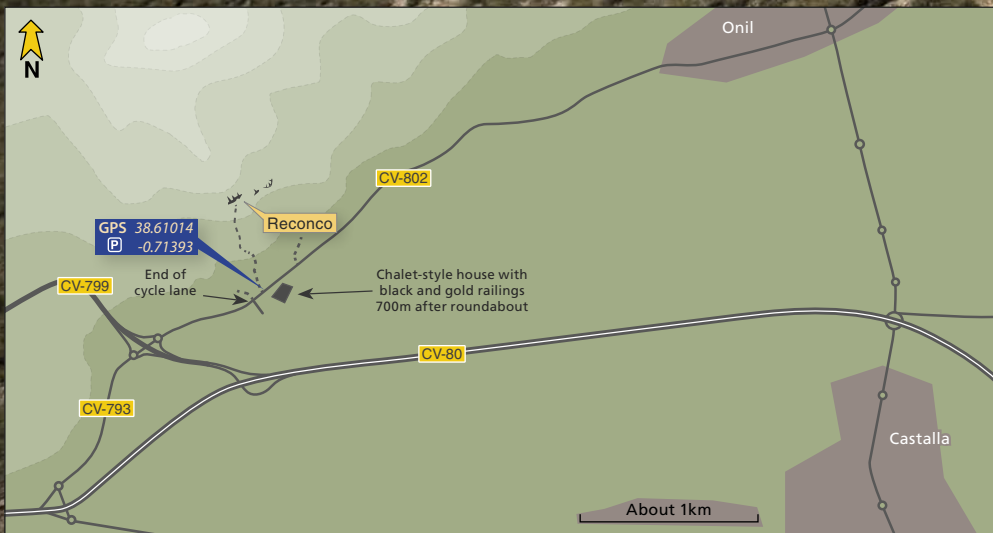
Approach

From the coast, leave the AP-7 which is initially signed to 'San Vicente' and then 'Alcoi' and take the CV-80 towards Castalla. After passing Castalla, head west on the CV-80 towards Sax and Villena and get off at Junction 13 (signed to Biar and Onil). Immediately turn right towards Onil and 0.7km after the roundabout is a chalet-style house on the right with black and gold railings. Park sensibly here, the cliff is clearly visible on the hillside directly above. Walk up the track right of the orchard, steeply up the wooded hillside and then up open slopes above.

Conditions

The crag faces just east of south and is exposed so it catches plenty of sun and any wind that is going. There is little shelter at the base of the wall apart from a single almond tree. Access isn't a problem at the moment but try to park with consideration to avoid antagonising the locals and don't block the access track.

| | | | | |
|------------|---|----|----|---|
| up to 4+ | 3 | 2 | - | - |
| 5+ to 6a+ | - | 5 | 10 | 2 |
| 6b to 7a | 2 | 10 | 4 | 6 |
| 7a+ and up | - | 2 | - | - |



Claire Aspinall climbing *Central* (5+) - page 144 - at Reconco. Photo: Mike Hutton

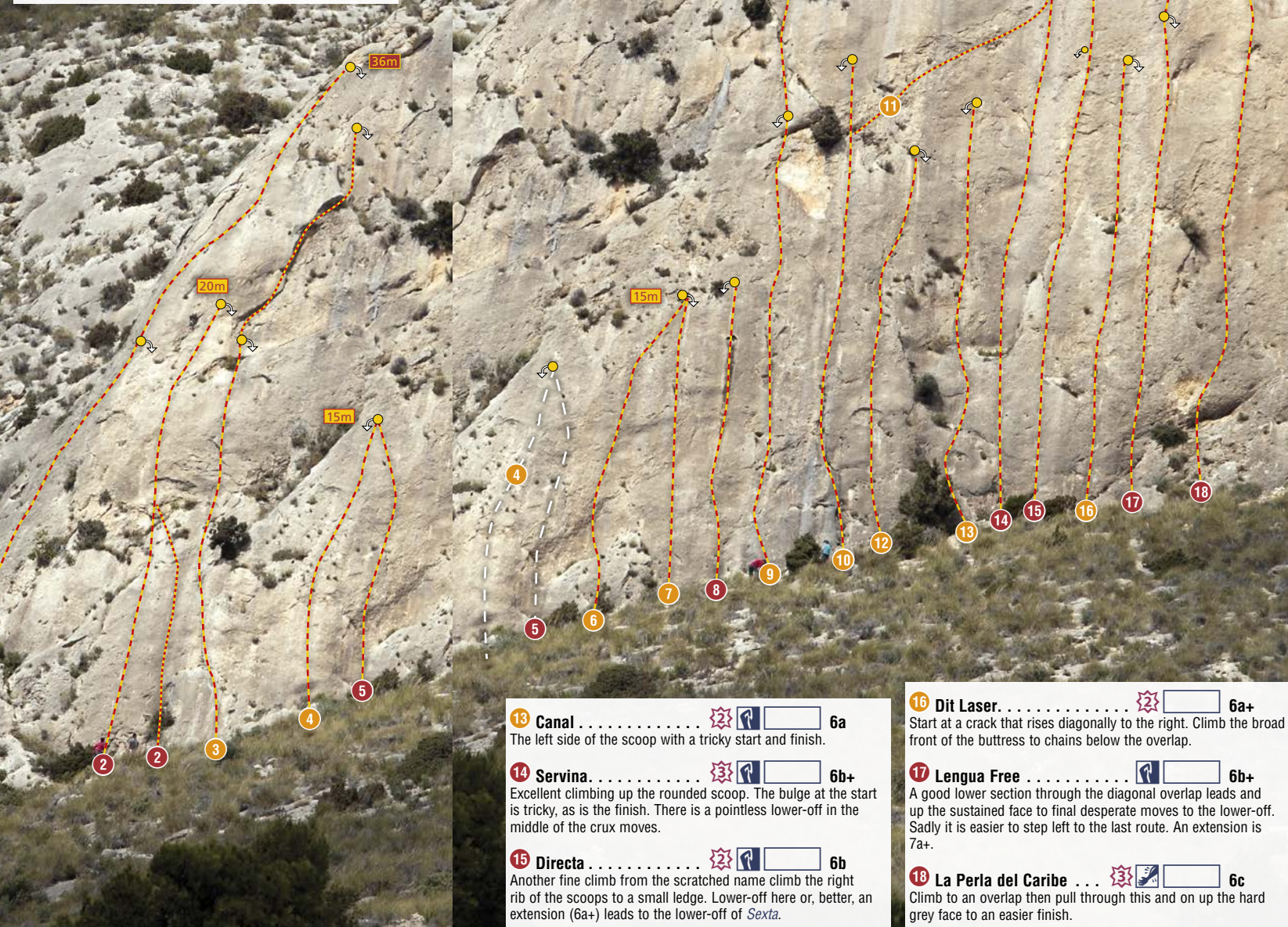


- 1 Espolón Aureli** 5
1) 4+, 20m. 2) 5, 20m. The left edge of the cliff.
- 2 Xino xano** 6b
Climb the lower slab then the bulges on better holds, left then right. The right-hand variation start is 6c and fingery.
- 3 Pata chula** 5+
Excellent, now called *Poc Treslat* in the local guide. Climb a grey tufa streak and thin layback crack then move left. Steeper rock and a slab lead to the belay. There is an extension at 6a+.
- 4 El rey del sisa** 6a+
Climb the rounded rib (hard) then go rightwards.
- 5 Corbella** 6b
Start in an orange scoop and climb up this on pockets and past shrubbery onto a steep bubbly wall.
- 6 Pa en cubitos** 6a+
Climb out of the right side of the scoop and trend slightly rightwards to a lower-off at the level of some ledges.
- 7 Gorbachov** 6a
Follow small sharp holds and then easier jug-pulling as things steepen to a lower-off at the change in angle.
- 8 Tachar** 6b+
Climb to and straight up the brown streak to the hole at its apex. Sharp, sustained and hard for the grade.
- 9 Desconeguda** 5
A good, long route on excellent rock, the easiest hereabouts. The start is polished, after which things are fine. Climb straight up pocketed rock past a bush. Loop right then left to reach a lower-off. The short extension up the groove is worth doing even though it is only a couple of bolts long.



- 10 Sexta** 6a
An excellent pitch. Climb flakes and cracks up a grey streak then past a white scar to a lower-off above a niche.
- 11 Sexta Extension** 6a+
Climb *Sexta*, then traverse a long way up and right to the roof. Pull over to finish. This is around 40m so take care if lowering off.
- 12 Paris Texas** 6a+
Start at the blue painted name and climb the white rib, passing a thread and then some ledges, to a lower-off in a bay.

Main Wall
The main wall is in a lovely sunny situation looking out over the orange and almond groves that surround Castalla. The rock is generally just less than vertical; the routes tend to be fingery and sustained.



- 13 Canal** 6a
The left side of the scoop with a tricky start and finish.
- 14 Servina** 6b+
Excellent climbing up the rounded scoop. The bulge at the start is tricky, as is the finish. There is a pointless lower-off in the middle of the crux moves.
- 15 Directa** 6b
Another fine climb from the scratched name climb the right rib of the scoops to a small ledge. Lower-off here or, better, an extension (6a+) leads to the lower-off of *Sexta*.

- 16 Dit Laser** 6a+
Start at a crack that rises diagonally to the right. Climb the broad front of the buttress to chains below the overlap.
- 17 Lengua Free** 6b+
A good lower section through the diagonal overlap leads and up the sustained face to final desperate moves to the lower-off. Sadly it is easier to step left to the last route. An extension is 7a+.
- 18 La Perla del Caribe** 6c
Climb to an overlap then pull through this and on up the hard grey face to an easier finish.

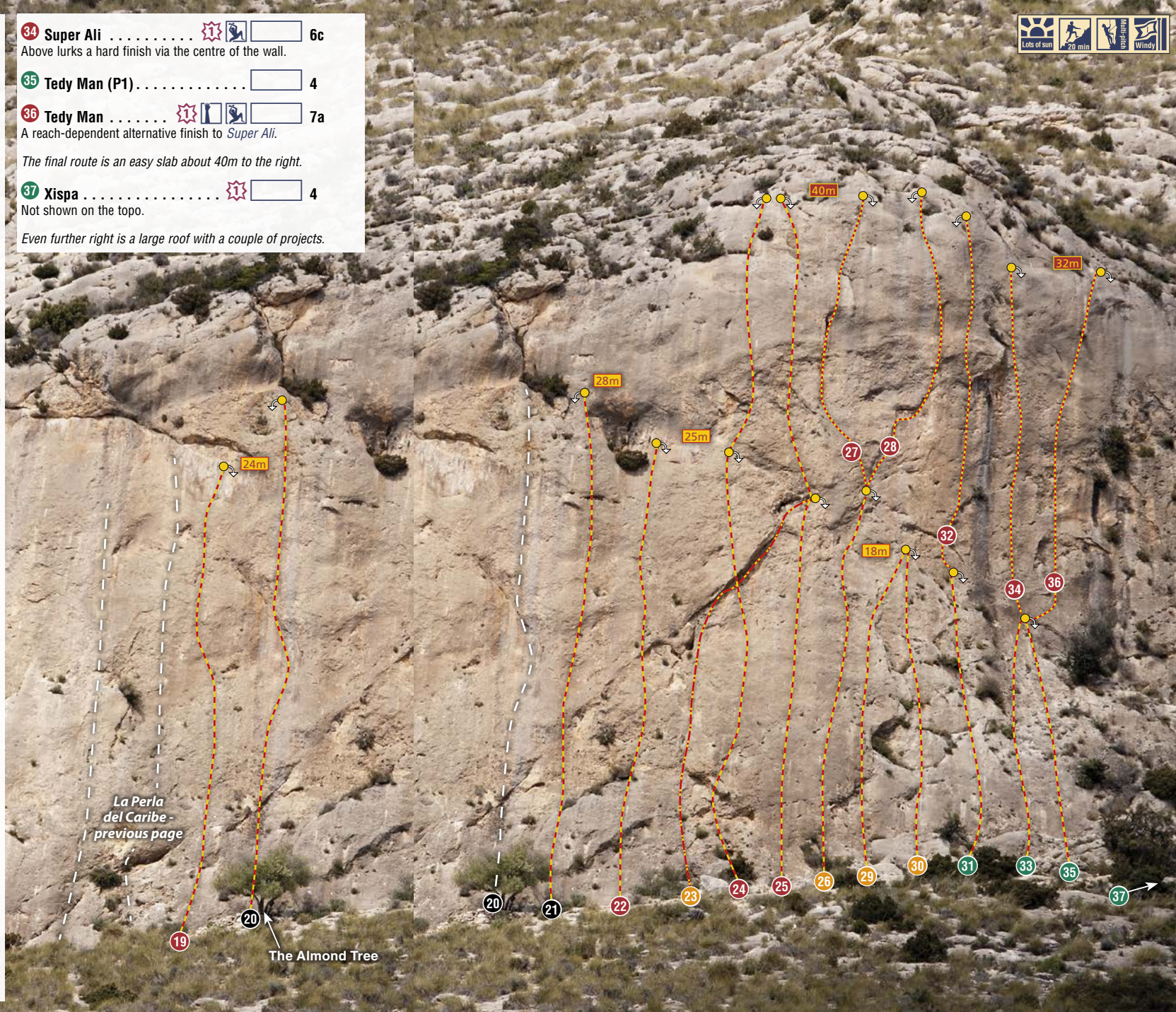
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- 19 Chunay-Free** 7a
Start left of the tree and climb steepening rock into a scoop. The leftward exit from this proves to be the crux.
- 20 En busca del Poset.** 7b
Behind the right edge of the tree, an easy start leads to sustained climbing trending leftwards up the tan-coloured wall.
- 21 No es tan guay** 7a+
Climb past the left edge of the prominent overlap then head up the steep sharp wall to a lower-off by a tree in a bay.
- 22 Gemma Boom** 7a
Start behind the tree and climb the left-hand side of the pale grey streak by a fiercely sharp and sustained pitch.
- 23 Central** 5+
This neat route follows the big flake and right-slanting overlap to a mid-height lower-off. The groove is mostly juggy, but there is one tricky section. *Photo on page 141.*
- 24 Chica de moda** 6b+
1) 6a+, 2) 6b+. Climb right of the flake crack, then pull through the centre of the overlap to a tiny stance. A fine long pitch up the wall and a delectable blank slab leads to easy ground.
- 25 Ruda** 6b+
1) 6b, 2) 6b+. The centre of the slab is sustained and crimpy with crucial moves at half height to a poor stance just below a bulge. Pass the bulge by moving out left (crux), then continue on finger holds through another bulge to easy ground.
- 26 La llágrima (P1)** 6a
A good and popular pitch. Steep moves lead to a hole, and leaving this is tricky and sustained to a stance. From here there are two extensions/finishes.
- 27 La llágrima** 6b
Pull left through the bulge and into the large hole of the teardrop. Exit from this (crux) and head for the top.
- 28 La llágrima derecha** 7a
A superb right-hand finish along the undercut flakes with some well-positioned moves into the scoop.
- 29 La Pelma** 5+
Tackle the left-hand line keeping left of the vegetated rock then move slightly right to the belay.
- 30 Sense por** 5
From the bay, follow a pleasant flake up leftwards.
- 31 Fama de fuga (P1)** 4
The easy slab to a stance.
- 32 Fama de fuga** 7a
Above the stance the sustained wall leads to the bulge and a pleasant finishing scoop.
- 33 Super Ali (P1)** 4
The unremarkable grassy slab.

- 34 Super Ali** 6c
Above lurks a hard finish via the centre of the wall.
- 35 Tedy Man (P1)** 4
- 36 Tedy Man** 7a
A reach-dependent alternative finish to *Super Ali*.
The final route is an easy slab about 40m to the right.
- 37 Xispa** 4
Not shown on the topo.
Even further right is a large roof with a couple of projects.



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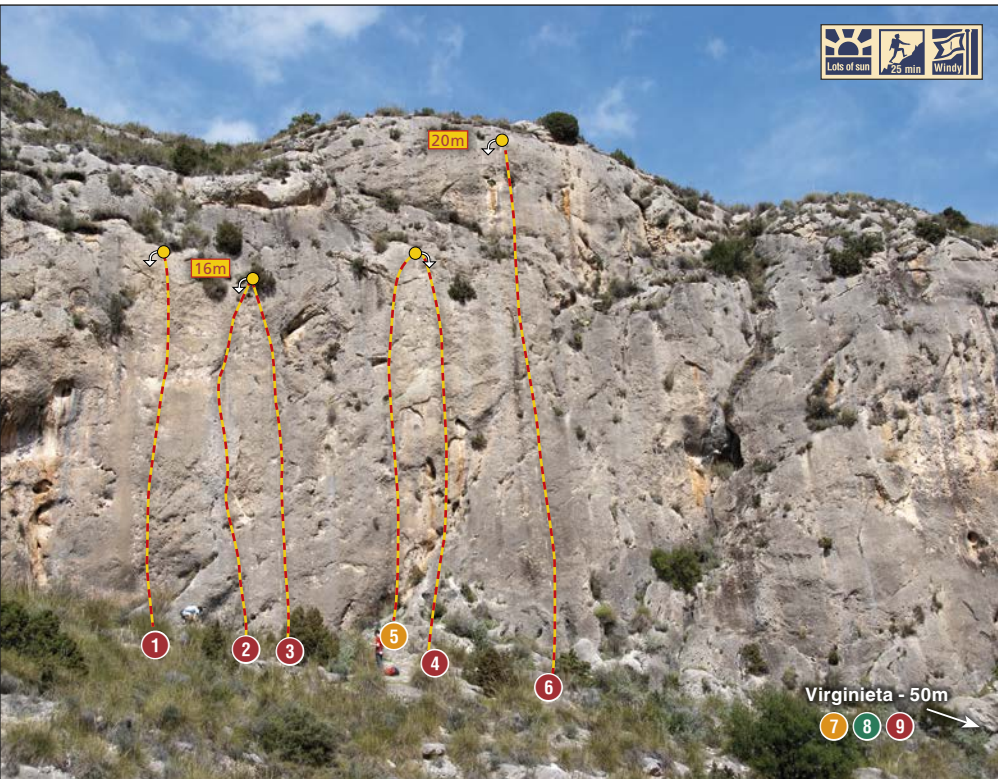
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Sector Raconet
There are several buttresses spread across the hillside around the ridge to the right of the main wall. These are worth seeking out for somewhere different.
Approach - The crag must be approached from the Main Cliff path and **not directly from the road**. Head right across rough slopes (occasional cairns, no real path) from the main path once it leaves the trees. Alternatively, head down and right, around the ridge from the base of the Main Cliff.

The first buttress reached has half a dozen decent routes.

- 1 **Los pepes** 7a
The left-hand line on the grey shield.
- 2 **Fan number one** 6b+
Photo opposite.
- 3 **Aureli** 6c
- 4 **Vincent** 6c
- 5 **La spardeña** 6a+
Start up the ramp, then head up the neat wall.
- 6 **Feliana** 6b
The longest route here starts up the grey slab on the right then continues up the headwall above.



Sector Virginietta
A bigger buttress away to the right has some worthwhile longer routes, which might be of interest to anyone looking for gentle multi-pitch outings. They are not marked on a topo. The crag is about 50m high and the best descent is by abseil.

- 7 **Albaanna** 6a+
1) 5+, 2) 6a+. A slabby pitch weaves between the shrubbery to a stance under the steeper upper wall. Finish up this.
- 8 **Virginietta** 4+
1) 4+, 2) 4+. Trend right up the ramp then climb more directly to a stance on the right by a cave. Trend left to access a ramp which is followed rightwards to the top.
- 9 **Massa Bonico** 6b
1) 6b, 2) 6a+. The pale slabs on the right are climbed to the highest ledge. Finish by weaving up the steep grey wall above.

Sector Barranquet
A similar distance right again is a short clean wall with another half a dozen decent looking routes from 6a+ to 7b. As ever the rock looks great, consult the local guide for more details.



Jack Geldard checking out somewhere a little different on *Fan number one* (6b+) -opposite- on the isolated Sector Raconet, a small wall with some decent routes. Photo: Alan James