

Best Climbs

Joshua Tree National Park

The Best Sport and Trad Routes in the Park

BOB GAINES

www.falcon.com
FALCON GUIDES

GUILFORD, CONNECTICUT
HELENA, MONTANA

AN IMPRINT OF GLOBE PEQUOT PRESS

1.

Quail Springs

Trashcan Rock at the Quail Springs Picnic Area is one of Joshua Tree's quintessential "roadside crags." A short hike leads to Hound Rocks and two classic 5.10 crack climbs. Farther down the trail, sitting high on a hillside, is the White Cliffs of Dover, featuring Yosemite-like dihedrals and cracks plus a couple of excellent face climbs, all on very smooth, high-quality granite.

Getting there: Drive 5.7 miles from the West Entrance and turn right at Quail Springs Picnic Area. From the Intersection Rock Junction, drive north 2.8 miles and turn left. Here you'll find Trashcan Rock. There is ample parking on the south and west sides of the rock, as well as picnic tables and an outhouse. The trail to Hound Rocks and the White Cliffs of Dover begins at the south end of the parking lot (GPS: N34° 02.388' / W116° 11.835').

TRASHCAN ROCK

Often crowded, especially on weekends, Trashcan Rock is one of Joshua Tree's most popular crags. The routes aren't classics, but the crag is. The west face has a great assortment of climbs for beginners, and the east face has several excellent harder routes. The east face receives morning sun and afternoon shade, and the west face receives early morning shade, then sun all day. **Note:** There are no fixed anchors or rappel anchors on top—all the climbs require gear anchors. Crag GPS: N34° 02.429' / W116° 11.797'

Descent: The easiest approach to and descent from the top is a 4th-class scramble up the northwest side (the far left side of the west face).

Trashcan Rock—East Face



Trashcan Rock—East Face

1. Filch (5.6) Begin off a boulder. Climb the wide crack to thinner jamming.

2. Ripper (5.11a) Crank the overhang to a lieback/jam. Often done as a boulder problem (V2), downclimbing *Filch*.

3. Wallaby Crack (5.9) Jam an awkward flare to the top.

4. Hermanutic (5.10c R) Climb the face and thin crack to a tricky crux with poor pro.

5. Butterfly Crack (5.11c) Jam the classic fingertip crack, with a very hard start.

6. Left Sawdust Crack (5.10c PG/R) Climb the left crack, avoiding the one on the right. Using both cracks at the top makes the route significantly easier.

7. Right Sawdust Crack (5.9) Solid hand jams lead to the top.

Trashcan Rock—West Face



Trashcan Rock—West Face

1. Karpwitz (5.6) Face climb up to a well-protected thin crack crux.

2. B3 (5.3) Smear and jam up the groove.

3. Profundity (5.10b) Friction climb and mantle past two bolts. Reachy.

4. B2 (5.3) Smear and jam up the groove. It's 5.9 if you climb the slab just left of the crack.


5. Tiptoe (5.7) This little gem has you edging and smearing up a thin dike past three bolts. The easiest way to

get to the first bolt is by starting up B2, then stepping right to the first bolt. Some large camming devices (#4 camalots) are handy to set up a toprope.

6. B1 (5.1) Ascend a groove that leads to a nice combination of face climbing and jamming.

7. Walkway (5.5 R) Make delicate friction moves to an easy jam crack. A 5.6 lieback start can be done just to the right.

8. Baby Point Five (5.10a R) No pro, but a good toprope. A thin move on polished holds leads to easier friction.



Terri Condon leading
Karpwitz (5.6) on
Trashcan Rock.

9. Tulip (5.6 R) Jam a short groove and finger crack, then smear your way up the slab. One bolt provides rather inadequate protection.

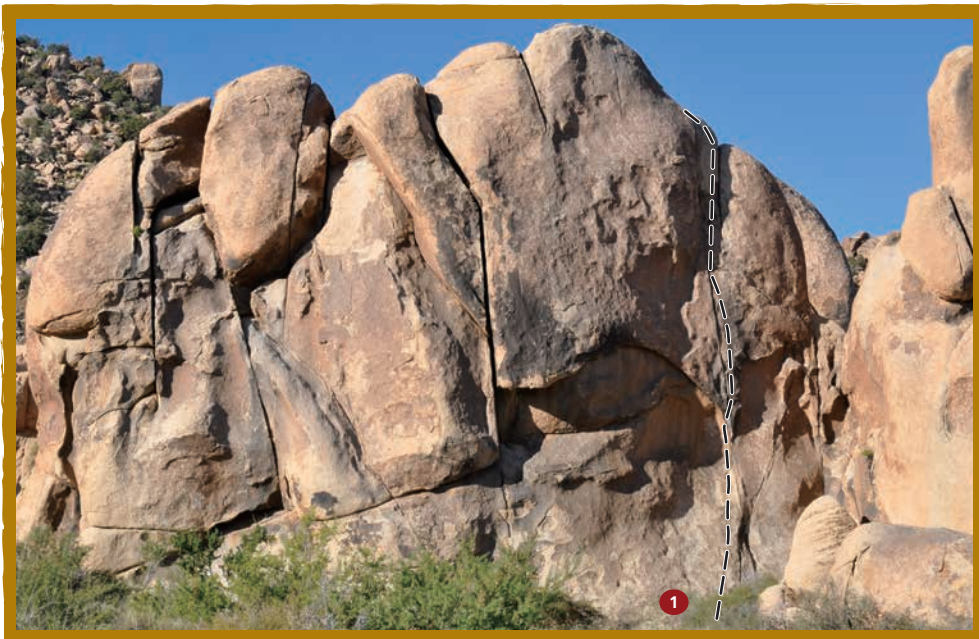
10. Bimbo (5.10a R) Lieback a flake to a seam, then make some very delicate friction moves (crux) to easier smearing.

11. Eschar (5.6) Mantle up to the big ledge, then face climb up to the left-slanting jam crack.

12. Cranny (5.8) Mantle up to the big ledge, then climb a steep wall with two vertical cracks. Nice stemming on the upper section.

13. Bloodymir (5.9) From the big ledge, climb the face on the right past a bolt, then jam the left-slanting crack.

Hound Rocks



HOUND ROCKS

Hound Rocks consist of two rock formations split by a narrow canyon once used as a miner's camp.

Finding the crags: The trail begins at the south end of the Quail Springs parking lot. Walk west for a few hundred yards to where the trail climbs gently over a sand dune, then drops down and slightly left, crossing a broad, sandy wash. After another few hundred yards, the trail leads directly to the Hound Rocks. The *Right Baskerville Crack* is on the first cliff you come to. *Tossed Green* is on the

next formation to the west, accessed by walking around the left side of the first cliff. Both of these climbs face east and receive morning sun and afternoon shade. Crag GPS: N34° 02.028' / W116° 12.089'

1. Right Baskerville Crack (5.10b) Start up a delicate slab, then jam and lieback the steep, thin crack. Route GPS: N34° 02.028' / W116° 12.089'.
Descent: Downclimb (4th class) off the opposite (west) side of the formation. **Pro:** Some large cams are useful for the anchor.

Hound Rocks



2. Tossed Green (5.10a) Climb the steep finger crack to a 2-bolt belay/ rappel anchor. Route GPS: N34° 02.011' / W116° 12.104'. **Descent:**

Rappel from the bolt anchor. **Pro:** Take a good selection of cams from .5 to 2.5 inches.



Beavertail cactus bloom in the late spring.

White Cliffs of Dover Overview



WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER

These cliffs feature Yosemite-like cracks and corners, along with some stellar face climbs, all on very smooth, fine-grained granite. The east-facing cliffs receive early morning sun, then shade for the rest of the day. In the winter this cliff gets very little sun.

Finding the crag: The trail begins at the south end of the Quail Springs parking lot. Walk west for a few hundred yards to where the trail climbs gently over a sand dune, then

drops down and slightly left, crossing a broad, sandy wash. After another few hundred yards, the trail leads directly to the Hound Rocks. Head left and follow the trail as it parallels the base of the hillside to your right for several hundred yards, until it merges into the base of a steeper hillside. From here the trail climbs directly up the hillside to the base of the routes. Approach time is about twenty-five minutes. Crag GPS: N34° 01.820' / W116° 11.950'

1. Scientific Americans (5.8 PG/R)

Begin at the base of *Popular Mechanics* and climb up to a pillar left of a chimney. Clip a bolt, make an extended reach out left, then face climb up to a horizontal crack. Climb past another bolt on the arête/face of the pillar, then follow a crack system and flakes up to the 2-bolt anchor shared with *Ace of Spades*. **Descent:** Rappel 100 feet from the bolt anchor shared with *Ace of Spades*. **Pro:** thin to 2 inches.

2. Ace of Spades (5.9)

Climb through the crux of *Popular Mechanics*, then climb double cracks on the steep left wall up to a bolt anchor. **Descent:** Rappel 100 feet from the bolt anchor.

3. Popular Mechanics

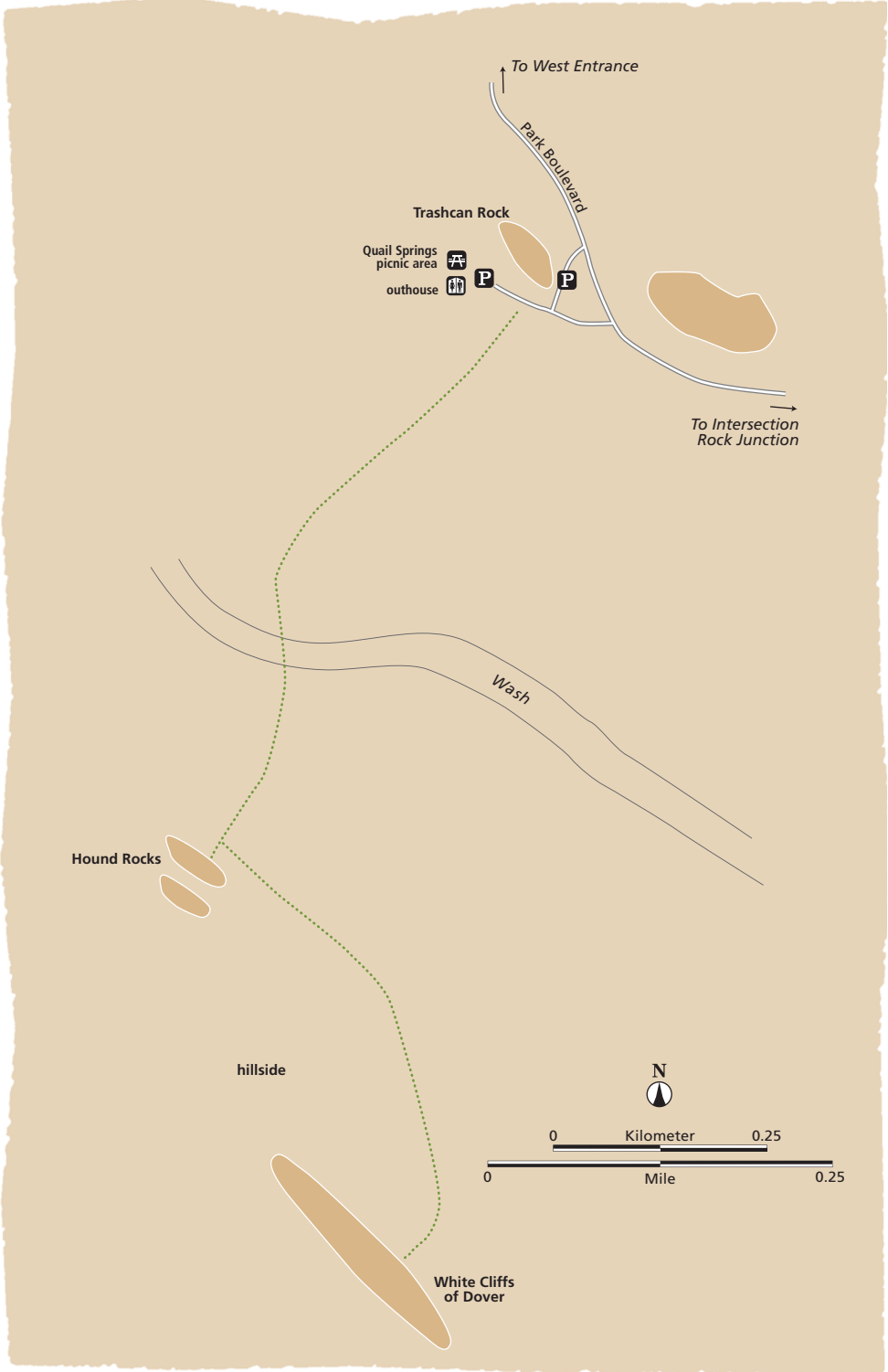
(5.9) Jam, stem, and lieback up the spectacular corner. The crux is about 15 feet up. **Descent:** Rappel 85 feet from the bolt anchor. **Pro:** medium nuts, cams to 3 inches; bolt anchor.

4. Good Housekeeping (5.11b)

Begin 20 feet right of *Popular Mechanics*. Crank steep face moves past a bolt (5.10d) up to a crack (2-inch pro here), traverse left across a thin seam, then climb thin slab moves (5.11b) past a second bolt. At the third bolt move left to the arête, then smear and slap your way up the rounded arête past two more bolts (5.11b) up to a sloping ledge. Gear anchor (1.5 to 3 inches). **Descent:** Belay down to the rappel bolts on *Popular Mechanics* and rappel 85 feet.

White Cliffs of Dover

Quail Springs



Contents

Acknowledgments **xii**

Introduction **xiii**

How to Get to Joshua Tree **xiv**

Camping **xv**

Supplies and Showers **xv**

How to Use This Book **xvi**

Climbing Seasons **xvii**

Leave No Trace **xvii**

Park Regulations **xviii**

Standard Joshua Tree Rack **xix**

Climbing Safely

at Joshua Tree **xx**

Emergencies **xxi**

Climb Finder **xxi**

Map Legend **xxv**

1. Quail Springs 1

Trashcan Rock 1

Hound Rocks 5

White Cliffs of Dover 7

2. Mongolia 9

Eastern Siberia Cliff 11

3. Lost Horse Road 17

Freeway Wall 17

Rock Garden Valley 20

Lost Horse Wall 21

4. Hemingway Buttress Area 23

Ken Black Memorial Dome 23

Hemingway Buttress—

Main Wall 26

IRS Wall 27

Dairy Queen Wall—

Right Side 29

Dairy Queen Wall—

Left Side 30

Dihedral Rock 31

5. Hidden Valley Campground 35

Intersection Rock 36

Old Woman 41

The Blob 44

Rock Hudson 47

Watanabe Wall 48

Hot Tub Formation 50

Sidewinder Cliff 51

Grain Surgery Cliff 52

Chimney Rock 53

Cyclops 54

Peewee Rock 56

6. Real Hidden Valley 57

Tumbling Rainbow

Formation 58

The Sentinel 60

Locomotion Rock 64

Sports Challenge Rock 65

Hidden Tower 67

Houser Buttress 69

7. Echo Rock Area 71

Echo Cove Rock—

Southwest Face 71

Echo Cove—West End 73

- Rusty Wall **76**
- Echo Cove—East End **78**
- Echo Rock—Main Slab **82**
- Echo Rock—EBGBs Block **85**
- Touch and Go Formation **86**
- Echo Rock—South Face **87**
- Snickers **90**
- Little Hunk—South Face **92**
- Anasazi Wall **94**
- Little Hunk—
 - Northeast Face **95**
- 8. Wonderland of Rocks 97**
 - Astro Domes **98**
 - Lenticular Dome **107**
- 9. Cap Rock 109**
- 10. Ryan Campground 113**
 - Headstone Rock **115**
- 11. Hall of Horrors 117**
 - South Rock **118**
 - Middle Formation **120**
 - North Rock **122**
- 12. Saddle Rock 125**
- 13. Jumbo Rocks 133**
 - Conan's Corridor **134**
- 14. Split Rocks 135**
 - Rubicon Formation **136**
 - Isles in the Sky **137**
 - Future Games Wall **139**
- 15. Indian Cove 141**
 - Pixie Rock **142**
 - Campfire Crag **144**
 - King Otto's Castle **146**
 - Moosedog Tower **148**
 - Feudal Wall **150**
 - Short Wall **154**
- Index **157**
- About the Author **163**

How to Use This Book

To select a few hundred “best” routes from 8,000 is no easy task because of what you have to leave out: thousands of good ones and hundreds of great ones.

The routes in this book were selected based on rock quality; purity of line (natural lines of weakness up the cliff); fun, interesting, unique, or noteworthy climbing; existing climber access trails; and approaches and descents that do not cause degradation to the fragile desert plant life.

Directions (right or left) are given as if you are facing the route from the base of the route. Directions for climbing, downclimbing, descending, rappelling, etc., are given for the same orientation (as if you were facing the route from the start of the route).

Climbing Instruction

Vertical Adventures Rock Climbing School offers rock climbing classes and guided climbs in the park. Visit www.verticaladventures.com or call (800) 514-8785.

GPS Coordinates

GPS coordinates are given for parking areas, trailheads, key trail turnoffs, and most rock formations. GPS coordinates for rock formations are in most instances taken not at the very base of the cliff, but at key vantage points where you can best survey the routes on the cliff.

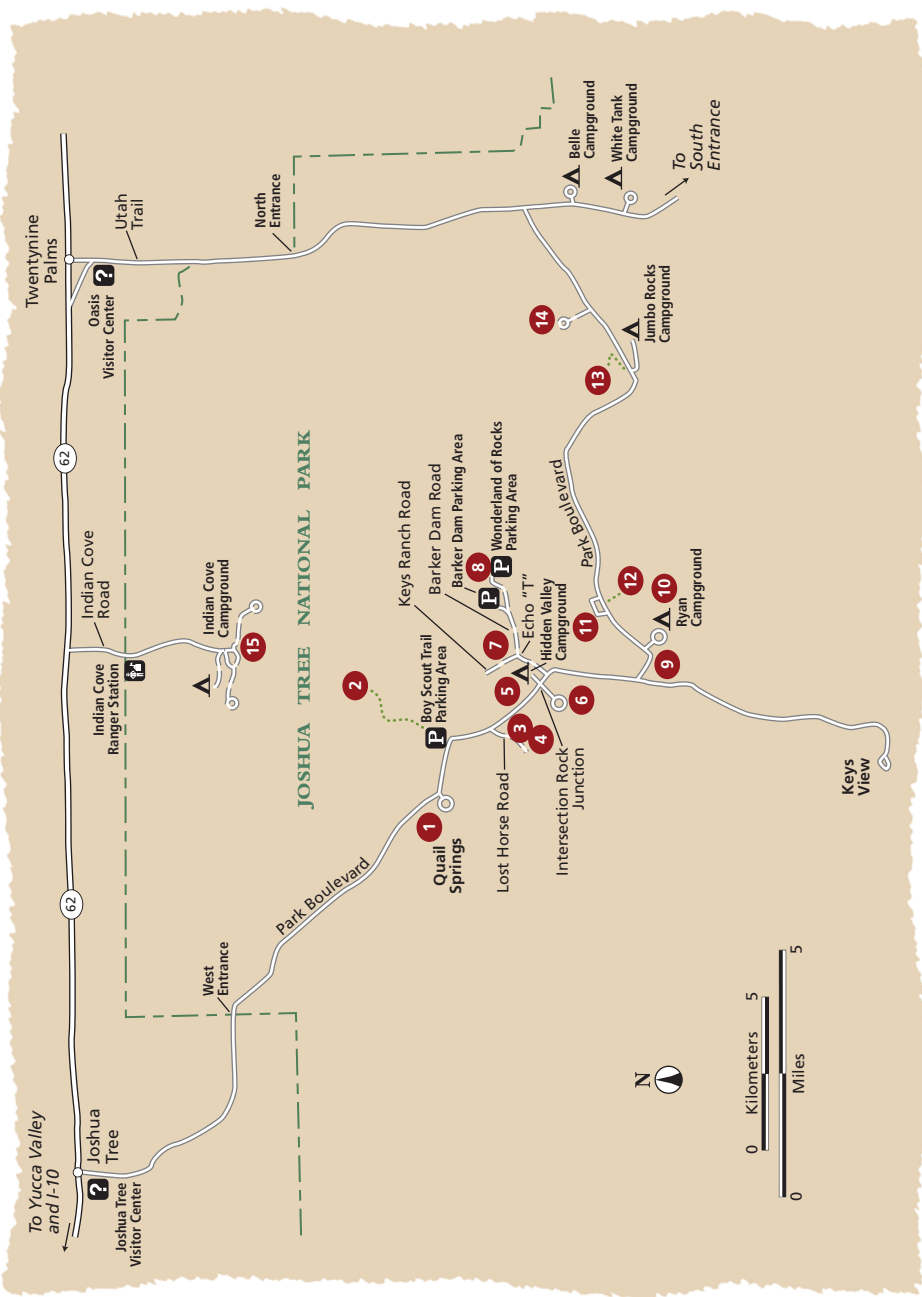
Mileages

For climbs in the northwest section of the park, mileages to the parking areas are given from the West Entrance (GPS: N34° 05.612' / W116° 15.900') and also from the intersection of the main park road (Park Boulevard) and the turnoff for the Intersection Rock parking area (referred to as the Intersection Rock Junction, GPS: N34° 00.894' / W116° 09.867'). For climbs in the southeast section, mileages are also given from the North Entrance to the park.























Rappels

Rappel descents are generally less than 30 meters (approximately 100 feet) and can be done with a standard 60-meter rope. Rappels of more than 100 feet require two ropes, or sometimes can be done with a single 70-meter rope where indicated (35 meters, or 113 feet). To prevent rappelling off one or both ends of your rope, or having an accident while lowering, always close your rope system by tying knots in the ends of your rope!





Overview



Map Legend

	Interstate		Wash
	US Highway		Mountain Peak
	State Highway		Parking
	County Road		Restroom
	Gravel or Dirt Road		Building
	Unimproved Road		Camping
	Trail		Gate
	Town		Trailhead
	City		Ranger Station
	Rock Formation		Picnic Area
	Cliff Edge		Visitor Center

Topo Legend

	Belay stance with gear anchor
	Fixed piton
	Single piece of fixed protection (bolt or piton)
	Fixed belay station

To buy books in quantity for corporate use
or incentives, call **(800) 962-0973**
or e-mail **premiums@GlobePequot.com**.

FALCONGUIDES®

Copyright © 2012 by Morris Book Publishing, LLC

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed to Globe Pequot Press, Attn: Rights and Permissions Department, P.O. Box 480, Guilford, CT 06437.

FalconGuides is an imprint of Globe Pequot Press.

Falcon, FalconGuides, and Outfit Your Mind are registered trademarks of Morris Book Publishing, LLC.

All interior photos by Bob Gaines unless otherwise noted

Maps and topos by Sue Murray © Morris Book Publishing, LLC

Project editor: David Legere

Text design: Sheryl P. Kober

Layout: Sue Murray

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data is on file.

ISBN 978-0-7627-7019-9

Printed in China

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1