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| **The Citadel Climbing Guide** | By Lee Skidmore, November 1999  Last updated 24 March, 2000 |
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| **INTRODUCTION**  A newly "discovered" area which saw some development in August 1998. Adventure awaits those with drive and enthusiasm. The Citadel is located within the boundary of Lumholtz National Park. It is a massive National Park (over 110 000 hectares) and this cliff is a long way from nowhere, but it is probably best not to arouse suspicions of climbing in the area. The National Park Authorities might not like it, but due to the remoteness from established walking trails and such, I assume it's probably okay. However, better to be safe than sorry, so keep it quiet. There are no facilities, so take everything you need. Also, avoid littering. |  |
| **Above:** The Citadel as seen from the main highway. Click for a very large version. |

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| The above picture doesn't even show the whole cliff. There is about 25m of rock below the treeline! This cliff is huge! Over 100m high from top to bottom with 60m+ sections of uninterrupted volcanic rock.    **HISTORY**  Follow this link for a  [detailed history of climbing at The Citadel](http://docs.google.com/reports/citadel_history.html). |  |
| **Above:** The spectacular view from the top of the routes |

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| **ACCESS**  The area is located between Ingham and Cardwell. It is 29 km S of Cardwell and 21km N of Ingham. This makes it 140 km (1.5 hours) N of Townsville. Not that far to drive, and still very day-tripable. When travelling N, you are starting to get close when you drive up the range and there is the lookout over Hinchinbrook on your R. Keep driving - it's less than 10 minutes from here. Keep an eye on the L side of the road for the rocky outcrop (as pictured). Make sure you have the correct outcrop (not the one to the S which looks like twin pillars). Don't worry, the large walls are impossible to miss. Slow down just after "Waterfall Creek" and find the small track leading L off the highway. If you hit "Fishers Creek" you have gone too far. Drive in 10m to hide the car a bit and park before the railway tracks. Now it's a 30 minute bushwalk directly up to the crag. |  |
| **Above:** Lee flashing the first ascent of The Dark Crystal, the crag classic |

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| **THE CLIMBING**  The rock quality and climbing style is somewhat reminiscent of the Glasshouse Mountains. Just like on Tibro and Beerwah, there are big, naturally protected routes. These can be loose in places, but are quite exposed and have sweeping views of Hinchinbrook. Like Ngungun, there are shorter, higher-quality routes, protected by a mixture of bolts and natural gear. In addition, many large boulders scatter the area and there are some good problems to be done.    **CAMPING**  Camping is permitted at The Citadel because it lies within the National Park, so if you can find a flat spot, go for it. However, do not light fires - use stoves instead. Lighting fires in the National Park would be a good way to get the crag shut down quickly, so please don't do it. |  |
| **Above:** Steve Baskerville top roping up the area's hardest - Hidden Facets |

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| **ETHICS**  Ethics vary from area to area, and The Citadel is no exception. Keep in mind The Citadel is an adventure crag, not a consumer-friendly sport crag. Be mindful of the vegetation - no chopping trees and such. Leave vegetation on the cliff unless it directly interferes with a route, in which case remove it entirely. Do not mark routes with paint. It goes without saying to not chip holds or retrobolt. Do not put up bolt ladder sport routes - this is not the place for it. Let new routes follow natural lines and only use bolts where natural protection is unavailable. If bolts are used, use only stainless expansion bolts or glue-in carrots and paint hangers to blend in with the rock. Do not leave any loose rock or other mobile objects on new routes. |  |
| **Above:** A good profile of a fine buttress. Steve is on Hidden Facets. The Dark Crystal is on the R |

**ROUTE GUIDE**

*If you walk up to the crag the obvious way (heading for the middle of the cliff), you will probably arrive at what feels like the middle, but is actually around the middle-left of the crag. This area is marked by a huge, black corner (Carborundum Central) and makes a good base camp.*

*Now that you're at the cliff, the routes will be described from L to R*

*On the far L of the cliff there is a large boulder with a few potential routes on it including a 2m roof split by a finger-width crack. One route on this boulder has been top-roped.*

**Unclimbed overhang ar�te route 7m 20?**

Fantastic photo op. On the L of the seaward side of the boulder and a couple of metres L of Twin Paranoia. About 2 bolts required up the short scooped face and overhanging blunt ar�te.

**Twin Paranoia 7m 16-19**

Again, great photo op. On the seaward side of the boulder, climb the L-leaning twin cracks (R-one wide, L-one thin) L of the overhang to the top. Natural pro and tree belay.

FTRA: Steve Baskerville & Jason Shaw 1/8/98.

**Unclimbed ar�te route ~13m**

About 7m R of Double Exposure. Up pitted ar�te (2 bolts needed) to below 2m roof. A variety of options now exist. Step easily R to escape up slabby wall (easy) or step L beneath roof and attempt finger crack through roof (stoopidly hard).

**Unclimbed easy route 10-13m 4?**

Easy peasy. About 3m R of the ar�te route. Easily up twin, wide, slabby cracks, then runout up slab to top and probable tree belay.

*Beneath this boulder on the seaward side (but facing Ingham), is a 10-15m high, very easy-angled scooped slab. The angle makes it scary to solo up, but this could be good for honing your slab skills on top rope.*

*Now way back down R. About 30m L of Carborundum Central (the big black corner) is a very large boulder about 20m off the ground that forms a 3m roof with an obvious offwidth running through the roof. This is unclimbed (any takers?), but makes a good landmark.*

**Corner-crack project 8m 15?**

Starts a few metres L of the boulder-roof at the large, recessed, slabby corner-crack. Steve has led this to about 5m and Lee has soloed up to around the same point. The crux is getting up to the tree. Finish at tree.

Project: Steve Baskerville 1/8/98.

*Now 30m R to the big black corner.*

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| **Carborundum Central 40m 16**  The first route at The Citadel and initially climbed purely as an access route.  1) 17m 15. Not technically hard, but psychologically demanding. A fall on the middle of this pitch could have serious consequences. Up to scabby, vine-covered start ledge. Climb corner past small tree. Now it begins: up the slabby, black corner with dodgy micro-wires to the thank-god hand crack and good gear. Now up until level with vegetated ledge on L. The obvious line continues straight up, but the rock is poor and the climbing hard. Instead, escape off L onto ledge and up into large orange cave to belay (cave not visible from ground level).  2) 23m 16. This pitch gets better as you climb. L out of cave and up ledge through grass and trees to get established in obvious chimney/corner with chockstones up high (almost better to belay this next bit from here if possible). Up this with good gear and cruxy moves around the chockstones to a tree and natural pro belay. Rap off tree with double ropes, or do more pitches, as there is like 60+ metres of rock from here to the summit.  Lee Skidmore, Philippa Newton 1/8/98. |  |
| **Above:** Lee playing RP games during the onsight first ascent of the scary first pitch of Carborundum Central |

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| *The R side of the Carborundum Central corner forms the L side of a fairly narrow (10m) slabby buttress which is boarded on its R side by a vegetated gully starting 5m off the ground. This next route starts on the sloping ledge at the top of this buttress, about 15-20m off the ground. How you get there to start is your business, although Danny Peters top roped up to the belay from the ground (his belayer rapped in). In addition to Verdant Vendetta starting on this ledge, some beautiful sickle cracks run left up the faces above and are currently unclimbed.* |  |
| **Above:** The unclimbed sickle cracks above Carborundum Central |

**Verdant Vendetta 30m 19 A1**

Just like Carborundum Central, this route was only climbed as an access route to bolt The Dark Crystal, and is not really recommended.

 1) 15m 19 A1. A dangerous pitch. Start at tree belay on top of sloping ledge 15-20m up. Your aim is to get into the vegetated corner-crack and through the roof any way you can. Ooze R-wards around ar�te and onto face. Micro-wires here, and move up and R to incut on small sloping ledge a few metres L of vegetated corner. Grab hold on face above and fearfully mantle sloping ledge. Sidle delicately R into the vegetated corner-crack and bomber big cams. Now through roof (freeable, but aided by first ascentionist) and then up wide corner-crack above to sloping ledge.

2) 15m 1. For the grade, this pitch is great. A walk with monster exposure! Traverse R and then around the corner on the 1m wide sloping ledge. There is good protection at your feet. The pitch finishes with a 2.5m high layback crack which is about grade 10, but I always wanted to grade something grade 1. Tree belay, and then double rope rap off tree down The Dark Crystal buttress to ground.

FA: Lee Skidmore (aid on pitch 1), Danny Peters (seconded free) 1/8/98.

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| *About 20m R of Carborundum Central is an excellent 20m wide buttress with two obvious, sterling lines that finish at chains. A single 55m rope is sufficient on both routes but double ropes would be better. As a quick note, both routes (esp. the first) would benefit with a good scrubbing if someone has the time.* |  |

\*\* **Hidden Facets 28m 21**

The first of a brilliant duo. Mostly around 17 with a short, well protected crux. One FH and extensive natural gear. Starts at vague slabby corner 3m R of small detached pillar. Up slab passing poor wires to good crack at 8m. Up crack 'till it blanks out, pull 1m R, and up to pockets beneath bulging 1m roof. Traverse 2m L along small ledge to pockets below black FH. Past this through the crux undercling and up to rest at base of superb corner. Great moves up this, pull lip and up slab for 6m to chains.

Lee Skidmore, Steve Baskerville 8/8/98.

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| **Above:** Sequence of Lee flashing the first ascent of Hidden Facets. Top left and middle are of the same move (crux section) | | |

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| **\*\*\* The Dark Crystal 28m 19**  Could this be the best middle grade route in North Queensland? It's worth driving here just to do this route. 4 black FH's and natural protection. Up vaguely R-tending slabby corner 3m R of Hidden Facets to thin crack at 5m. Mantle up and clip FH on smooth slab. Up to big pocket, then up pocketed overhanging wall. Up steep rock past wide flake then more to bomber wire slot. More steepness to FH, then trend up and R through overhang on jugs to clip FH on skyline (crux), pull through to massive fishbowl on slab, then up and L on pocketed slab to chains passing fourth FH en route.  Lee Skidmore, Pip Newton, Jason Shaw, Steve Baskerville 8/8/98. |  |
| **Above:** Lee flashing the first ascent of The Dark Crystal |

*About 50m R of The Dark Crystal is the obvious, rectangular orange scar about 30m up on the wall (level with the treeline in*  [*the picture*](http://docs.google.com/cit_big.jpg)*) which is capped by a 3m roof. This is described below:*

**Unclimbed orange scar route 50-65m**

Lee was gunning for the first ascent of this great line, but had to leave Townsville before he got the chance. It's now up for grabs. The route will blast a line up the face and through the L side of the orange scar and up the headwall in two pitches. Start on the ground, level with R side of orange roof. Tricky start (1 bolt needed) to slabby crackline. Up this for 20m to below roof, then follow the crack to L side of roof and then through this. From here, bolts required for the next 25m to a sloping ledge on the R - alternately there is 15m more above ledge to the big grassy tree-covered ledge.

*10m R of orange scar below crackline.*

**Unclimbed crack to steep ar�te route 25-30m**

This route will be pretty hard, but straightforward and well-protected. It remains to be seen whether the top ar�te will even be climbable, but it will certainly need bolts. Up steep crackline through sloping ledges to ar�te then up this.

*Further R of this route, the base starts to get very scrappy with broken, small walls and much vegetation. There is still rock - just have to get to it.*

*The big grassy ledge mentioned above forms the top of the Wall Of The Afternoon Sun (*[*see the picture*](http://docs.google.com/cit_big.jpg)*). It is probably possible to walk off the cliff to the R from this ledge. The Wall Of The Afternoon Sun is about 30-40m high and about 50m long. It has a bushy ledge at it's base, but this cannot be easily accessed from ground level. Climbing, or rapping in to this ledge will be required. From this bushy ledge looking out at the sea, look L and you'll see a small, steep wall, about 15-20m high which will warrant attention.*

*Now to the big grassy ledge on top of the Wall Of The Afternoon Sun*

**Unclimbed upper-wall white-streaked route 20m**

Starts in the middle of the big grassy ledge at the top of Wall Of The Afternoon Sun and is plainly visible in  [the photo](http://docs.google.com/cit_big.jpg).

For this area in particular, it is asked that you please email any news of repeats, new routes or queries to me, so that this page can be kept up to date.

