

Jon Simms and I spent three and half days over two weekends in August, working on an adventurous new route that ascends the 600 meter East face of Snowpatch Spire in the Bugaboos, in 14 pitches. Tricky route finding (hence the name Labyrinth) and a bit of crack gardening kept us busy on the lower half the first weekend, with the roof halfway up being the highpoint. The following weekend we returned equipped with bivi gear and a self drive kit. On day one we climbed the first seven pitches again. Our previous cleaning efforts had made the pitches sendable and even more enjoyable. On pitch 7, we hand-drilled three bolts and fixed three knifeblades to protect the boldery moves through the roof. Once this was done, we sent the pitch and made two rappels to a good bivi ledge. The next day, we continued up, eventually joining the 1977 Parker/ Brayshaw route for the last 5 pitches. All said and done, we climbed the face in 14 pitches plus a couple rope-lengths of 4th class along the summit ridge to the north summit. Two pitches check in at 5.12-, four at 5.11, and the rest are 5.10 making Labyrinth a good moderate adventure by east face standards, and totally suitable for a day trip from Applebee. That being said, expect a full day!

Labyrinth: 5.12-, 14 pitches; East face of Snowpatch Spire, FA: Jon Simms and Jon Walsh August 2009

Excellent varied climbing. Highly recommended.

Rack: Double set of cams from green C3 to #3 camelot, 1 #4 camelot and 1 purple C3; stoppers: one set from #3 to #12

Pitch 1: 5.10 55m – On the right side off the biggest black streak, climb fingerlocks up a right facing corner to the ear shaped flake. Through a small roof and move right into a left facing corner. Continue up corner to a ledge. Then another 15 meters of left facing corner to another ledge and belay.

Pitch 2: 5.11 30m – climb steeply up face cracks on the the right wall. Move right through a 5.11 slot to flakes and lower angle terrain. Step left past a small roof into another low angle dihedral. After about 10 meters, step left to a stance with an old sling around a horn and belay off small gear in a good crack.

Pitch 3: 5.12- 35 m – Continue up easy hand sized corner until it steepens. Follow green Camelot sized overhanging face crack in the right wall, until possible to stab your left foot onto the left wall, and continue up into steep blocky terrain. Traverse about 7 meters left and belay.

Pitch 4: 5.11- 60m – Head easily up and left through more blocky terrain to a big ledge. From left side of ledge move up and left in a small corner, delicately across slab, and up to thin right facing corner to the right side of large pointy flake with chockstones behind and belay. Optional bivi ledges on left side of flake.

Pitch 5: 5.10 45m – Move up and right into a white left facing corner that gradually increases in size to # 4 camelot. Thin gear possible after 8 meters of offwidth 5.9 laybacking (second #4 camelot optional). Belay at a small alcove after the wide section.

Pitch 6: 5.10 25m - Continue up corner system on handjams, until it arcs left. Traverse / undercling until possible to move up and right. Belay on top of flake with #3 and #4 camelots.

Pitch 7: 5.12- 25m –Climb face above with good small gear options. Climb right side of flake, then move left past 2 bolts and pitons, and boldery moves left through the roof. Once through the roof, clip a third bolt, and move 3 meters left. A slabby dyno move reaches a horizontal flake crack. Then move back right and make a semi hanging belay below the next roof.

Pitch 8: 5.10 40m – Traverse right under roof along horizontal flake crack. Continue more horizontally than vertically to a good stance for the belay. It might be possible to continue another 20 meters to a very nice belay ledge.

Pitch 9: 5.10 55m –Continue up and right to a big ledge. Traverse to the right for ten meters to excellent left facing corner with handcrack. At the top of corner, move right past pinnacle to grassy ledge belay.

Pitch 10: 5.10- 45m – The route now follows the 1977 Parker / Brayshaw route. Step left from belay and up low angle corner and easier terrain and many options for climbing and belaying on left side of major gully.

Pitch 11: 5.9 50m – Continue up flakes and cracks on left side of gully, aiming to belay below obvious steep / clean 100m corner, just left of main chimney.

Pitch 12: 5.11 40m – Climb splitter corner easily for 15 meters to a stance. Continue up thin corner with increasing difficulty to a stance and belay.

Pitch 13: 5.11 45m - Climb excellent sustained finger jams and belay at base of offwidth

Pitch 14: 5.10+20m – layback offwidth crack to summit ridge.

A 60 meter horizontal fourth class traverse to the left, staying on the east side, leads to the top anchor of Sendero Norte. Rappel Sendero...