

The Pit

Miniguide

The information for this miniguide was collected some time ago from Walt Wehner with the help of Luke Laeser, Rick Smith, Rick Bradshaw, Jon Butler, Josh Smith, Gary Clark, Cameron Burns, Jason Schweid, Max Minnerop, Chris Hamston, Shems Baker-Jud, Lee Brinckerhof, Theo Takeda, Shibli Fazal, and Nathaniel Walker. Although the book they planned to publish never made it to completion, Walt passed all the info to me hoping to make it more accessible for all the climbers that like to, or already enjoy the crags and cliffs of the Los Alamos & White Rock area. Additionally Ben Hatcher provided info for this miniguide. I added some pictures and edited the contents. If you have suggestions for changes or additions to this downloadable guide, please send the information to Guido Bender: guido@lanl.gov.

Caution

Outdoor recreation activities are by their very nature potentially hazardous. There are inherent dangers and other risks involved that include the risk of personal injuries, including paralysis and death. All participants in such activities must assume the responsibility for their own actions and safety. The information contained in this guidebook cannot replace sound judgement and good decision-making skills, which help reduce risk exposure, nor does the scope of this guide allow for disclosure of all the potential hazards and risks involved in such activities.

Learn as much as possible about the outdoor recreation activities in which you participate, prepare for the unexpected, and be cautious. The reward will be a safer and more enjoyable experience.

General

The Pit is a nice and typically shady little area enclosed by a wall on the west side and big boulders on the east side. It is amazing just to visit the place, and even more fun to climb in it. On the west wall is a Thunderbird, painted by an unknown artist, that predates the first climbing in the Pit. During the monsoon, cool desert toads can be seen in some of the pockets of the painting. The Pit offers sport and traditional routes with ratings from 5.7 to 5.10. Toproping of the 20 - 40 feet long routes is possible.

The initial bolts (for top roping) with homemade hangers were installed circa 1990-1993 by John Butler, Carlo Torres, and Luke Laeser, who were just learning to climb at the time (ancient history!). According to Luke, they picked the spot (all were in high school at the time) in order to avoid demonstrating their self-assessed incompetence at any of the more popular crags. In any case, they top roped all the lines in the Pit, and then moved on to bigger and better things. You find numerous updates about Luke, Carlo, and John's exploits on <http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Trails/9507/new.htm>, the LA Update page.

Many years passed with infrequent visitors to the not well-known crag. During the summer of 2000, Day Frostenson, Alisa Green, and Theo Takeda took it upon themselves, with assistance from Walt Wehner and the Diablo Canyon Bosch, to bolt a few of the better lines in order to make climbing in the Pit more convenient.

Directions

To get to "The Pit," park near 719 Meadow Lane in White Rock, being careful not to block mailboxes or driveways (several residents have complained in the recent past). Take the public access trail between 719 and 721 Meadow Lane. Go to Gallow's Edge, then head North for about 100 m. Watch out for anchors on the left side on top of some rocks, closed in by some big boulders. Pass anchors for 10 m, climb into a hole in the big boulders and work your way to the left, being careful of the loose rocks. Note you will have to climb down a few feet and then work your way up through a narrow opening to enter The Pit. Total approach time should be no more than 15 minutes. It's worth every single second!



Figure 1: Directions to The Pit.

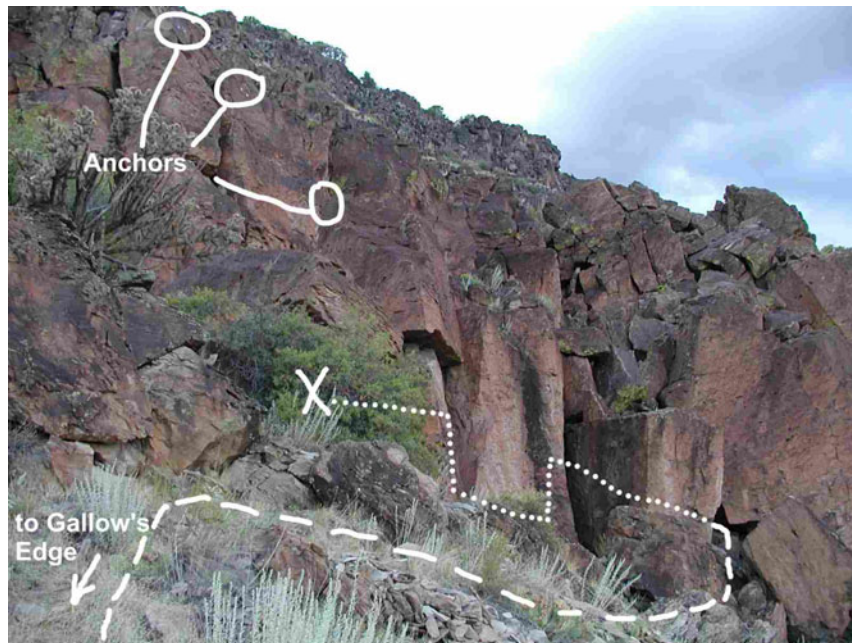


Figure 2: The Entrance to The Pit

Routes

Please note that the top of the cliff is loose and dangerous. DO NOT attempt to set up topropes here when there are other climbers below. The bolted routes were named by Walt Wehner in reference to those who developed the crag.

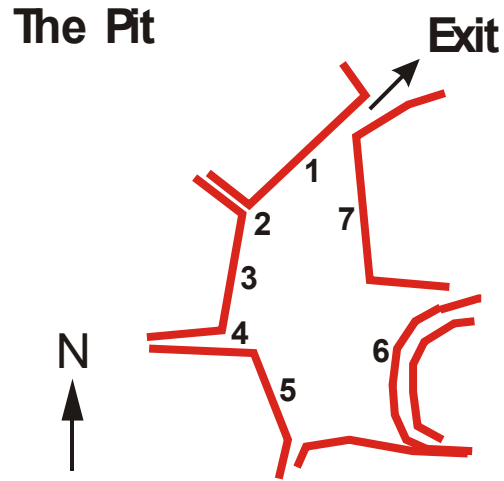


Figure 3: Schematic of The Pit (Exit = Entrance)



Figure 4: The Pit

1. Thunder the Bird

5.10a *, no bolts, no anchor. The face has a gaudy thunderbird painted on it. Head directly over the thunderbird, then onward to easier ground. This face has been top roped, but everyone decided bolting it would be inappropriate because of the toads that live in the pockets. Please avoid this one and climb one of the better lines around it.

2. Unknown

5.9 **, no bolts, no anchors. The fingercrack widens as it goes up. Just left of the thunderbird. FA: Not known, but probably by Jon Butler or Luke Laeser.

3. Gralisa Leen

5.10c *** 4 bolts, 2 homemade anchors. The best route at the crag. Fairly sustained and long. Bolted anchor can be reached via a cautious downclimb. Climb straight up the first face left of the thunderbird between #2 and #4. FA: Dave Frostenson and Theo Takeda.

4. Unknown

5.8 no bolts, no anchors. The wide crack just left of *Gralisa Leen*. Full of scary loose rock, especially up high. Low quality. It's been top roped, but better to avoid it.

5. The-Odor Takeda

5.8 *, 4bolts, 2 anchors. The leftmost west side face (to the left of the wide crack). Fairly long (40 feet). FA: Alisa Green.

6. Fay Drostenson

5.10b **, 3 bolts, 2 anchors. A short but fine route. The 25-foot, steep face route in the south east corner, with a small ledge halfway up. People with large reproductive organs used to do it as a boulder problem. Toprope easily possible.

7. Unknown

5.7 *, no bolts, no anchors. A 20-foot face route on the left side of the east wall. Very short. Often soloed.