El Chorro

by Mark Glaister

All crag photos by Mark Glaister
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www.rockfax.com

Cover: Clare Aspinall on the thin wall climb *No hoy trequa* (6a+) - *page 93* - at Escalera Arabe.
Photo: Mike Hutton

Ashley Lewis on the upper section of *Los malos tambien lloran* (7a+) - *page 57* - at Túron.
Photo: Chris Sims

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Paul Cox moving up the final arete of *Pacharan con endrinas* (6c) - *page 176* - at Sector La Bodega, El Torcal. Photo: Mark Glaister

Claire Aspinal on *Steady Away* (6b+) - *page 94* - at Escalera Arabe. Photo: Mike Hutton

The Gorge at El Chorro is a huge limestone defile that slices through the mountain range just 50km inland from the city of Málaga, in the province of Andalucia. This striking landmark is one of the World's most famous sport climbing destinations and was one of the first areas in Europe to be equipped during the development of this style of rock climbing during the 1980's. Since then development has spread to all the surrounding cliffs and walls resulting in a superb set of varied routes from long multi-pitch big wall climbs, to easily-accessed single-pitch sectors. Beyond the confines of The Gorge and its neighbouring cliffs the Andalucian landscape provides limestone aplenty and crags the equal of the best on offer around El Chorro. These fine near neighbours are covered in this Rockfax and are all easily accessed from an El Chorro base for daily visits.

The style of climbing in the area, and the grade range of the 1000 or so climbs described will satisfy all who are planning a visit; ranging from world class hard routes, through a vast selection of superb mid-grade pitches, to an ever-increasing number of sectors and whole crags that give those operating in the easier grades something to go at.

Complementing the climbing is the region itself; its coastal fringe is heavily developed for tourism but the inland mountains are a total contrast, dotted with classic Andalucian villages that cling to the sides, or perch on the summits, of the hills that rise up into the centre of the range. The small towns and villages themselves are excellent places to soak up some of the area's relaxed culture and eat at the seemingly limitless number of tapas bars, whereas the cities of Sevilla and Granada offer an opportunity to sample Spanish city life at its grandest. El Chorro's reputation for top notch sport climbing, stunning countryside and its near-perfect 'off season' climbing weather make it an ideal destination for a first-time winter-sun seeker, or long-term visitor returning looking for something new to do, and bask again in the undoubted charm of this lovely part of the world.

Neil Binns on the start of the powerful *Tinto con Limón* (7a+) - *page 176* - at Sector La Bodega, El Torcal. Photo: Chris Sims

The Guidebook History

Rockfax has been producing information for El Chorro since as long ago as 1993 when we published a set of yellow topo cards. After that it took third billing in three editions of the popular *Costa Blanca, Mallorca, El Chorro* guidebook which spanned 1996 to 2004. Since then we have published books to both the Costa Blanca and Mallorca, but El Chorro has had to be content with an online PDF of the 2001 edition of the triple-area guide.

This book brings together all the previous information and adds a lot more in the shape of some stunning full-page photographs for topos, plenty of inspiring action shots, plus a host of new routes and crags across the region. It could almost be said that, after 15 years, we have finally produced a guidebook worthy of this fantastic area!

Route Names

In all the previous Rockfax guidebooks to El Chorro there have been some routes that have never had names. In this edition we have taken the liberty of giving most of the routes names to aid in identification. This is especially useful for those who wish to use the online route databases to give us feedback.

In most cases the new names are simply descriptive and are hopefully inoffensive. If you know alternative names for these routes then please let us know using the route databases and we will up date future editions.

The Photography

The photography in this guide is mostly from images captured on compact or SLR digital cameras. The revolution in digital photography has made the compilation and selection of images far easier than in the past. It has also widened the availability of some superb action shots via either personal submissions, or searches on excellent web sites like **www.ukclimbing.com**.

As a climbing photographer, I often get asked how people can go about getting the best possible shots? My answer is always the same and doesn't relate to the quality of the camera equipment. I tell people to get themselves out there and make the effort to take the picture even if it might not appear to be from the best angle, or in optimum light conditions. These days the ability to take hundreds of shots at little cost has changed how I work and I now try and take at least one shot on nearly all the climbs I do, or see someone else doing. The results are often quite surprising and occasionally you capture something that you would have missed otherwise.

Starting up *Generacion spontanea* (6c) - *page 134* - at the superb venue of El Polvorin at El Chorro. Photo: Chris Dainton

Access

Over the years El Chorro has had a number of access problems affecting different crags. Currently the situation is much more stable than it used to be but there are still four areas of concern that the visiting climber needs to be aware of.

1) Railway Tunnels - Access to the railway tunnels is now totally banned with large sections of fencing erected and guards being posted at the entrance to one of the tunnels at popular times. The policing of the tunnels is for safety reasons, due in part to incidents involving people pushing prams through them or walking on the tracks with their iPods on! Although this has made access to the climbing in the Central Gorge area a bit trickier all the crags can still be reached at all times - see page 108.

2) Upper Gorge - Climbing in the Upper Gorge is now banned for environmental reasons and the area has been left out of this book.

3) Wild Camping - No camping or open fires in the National Park.

4) The Walkway - The 'Camino del Rey' itself has had its initial section dismantled but this is now easily bypassed by a via ferrata that starts down the slope from the bridge (see page 108) that is specifically intended for climbers to access The Gorge and avoid using the tunnels. For those who wish to negotiate the whole of the Camino del Rey, including the Upper Gorge, a rope and quickdraws are necessary to negotiate a section that is missing. This section is at the top of the Upper Gorge and necessitates a climb up, across and back down onto the Walkway and has some bolts for protection. This section can't be negotiated by those without climbing experience.

Feedback - El Chorro Route Database

The database at **www.rockfax.com** contains a listing of every route in the book with the opportunity for you to lodge comments and vote on grades and star ratings. This information is essential to help us ensure complete and up-to-date coverage for all the climbs. We can then produce updates and make sure we get it right in subsequent editions. To make this system work we need the help of everyone who climbs in El Chorro, so if you think you have found a badly graded route, or discovered a hidden gem that we have only given a single star to, let us know about it. Your general comments on all other aspects of this book are also welcome.

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 within this guide are recorded for historical reasons only and no reliance should be placed on the accuracy of the description. 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.

Andalucian countryside. Photo: Chris Dainton

Rob Knight on the first section of *Salida de emergencia* (6c) - *page 146* - on the Life is Sweet Wall at Makinodromo, El Chorro. Photo: Mark Glaister

El Chorro es uno de los mejores lugares en Europa para la escalada. Este cañon impressionante y su espectacular roca de los alrededores fue unos de las primeras escuelas desarroladas en España cuando la escalada deportiva empezó en la década de los ochenta. Tiene todo lo que el escalador nómada puede pedir - vias fantásticas, precios baratos, muchas opciones de alojamiento y, lo más importante, buen tiempo durante los meses de invierno. El famoso cañon y su sendero espectacular (El Camino del Rey) ofrecen una escalada única, aunque actualmente hay más sectores abiertos en la area que están llenos de vias de excelente calidad y de todos los grados.

Acceso

La mayoría de vias en este libro no tienen problemas de acceso y se pueden escalar todo el tiempo. Los túneles del tren que están usados para acceder algunos sectores en el cañon y más allá han sido cerrados a peatones por razones de seguridad. Por esta razón las aproximaciones a los sectores son un poco más dificiles aunque aún es possible usar el sendero que pasa por encima de los túneles, o usando el sendero que atraviesa el cañon. Ver la página 108 para más información.

La guía

Esta guía de escalada contiene la información necesaria para localizar y evaluar las mejores escaladas en la isla aunque tu idioma no sea el inglés. Los mapas te van a ayudar a llegar a los sectores y las reseñas y símbolos te van a mostrar que vias hay en el sector.

Material

La mayoria de las vías deportivas en esta guía estan bien equipadas por las cuales sólo se necesita un juego de cintas exprés y una cuerda larga. Recomendamos el uso de cuerdas de almenos 60 metros. Si quieres escalar vías de varios largos vas a necesitar cuerdas dobles de 9 milímetros y 50 metros para los rápeles.

Internet

Todas la vías de esta guía estan incluidas en el “Rockfax Route Database” del Rockfax sitio web - **www.rockfax.com**. Allí puedes encontrar más información sobre las vías como la votación de grados y comentarios de otros escaladores. Si no estas de acuerdo con los grados de las vías que has escalado, entra en el “Rockfax Route Database” y dinos lo que piensas.

Rockfax

Rockfax ha estado produciendo guías de escalada desde 1990. Estas son 27 guías de escuelas europeas y 4 guías de escuelas en Estado Unidos. También hemos producido más de 50 miniguías en formato PDF que puedes encontrar en nuestro sitio web. Recientemente hemos publicado una serie de manuales de entrenamiento de escalada. Más información en **www.rockfax.com**

Símbolos de las vías

1	Vía buena que mereze ser escalada.
2	Vía muy buena, una de las mejores del sector.
3	Vía excelente, una de las mejores en la región.
Top 50	Una de las 50 vías más populares del libro. Ver página 38.
	Escalada técnica que requiere buen equlibrio y técnica, o pasos difíciles y delicados.
	Escalada de fuerza; techos, desplomes o pasos de presas pequeñas que alejan.
	Escalada de continuidad; muchos pasos duros o roca desplomada que hace la escalada agotadora.
	Escalada de regleta con presas pequeñas en los pasos difíciles.
	Escalada delicada con peligro de caída y seguros que alejan.
	Es necessario hacer pasos largos o que alejan en una o varias partes de la vía.
	Vía semi-equipada. Es necessario llevar un juego de fisureros y friends.
	Se puede encontrar roca descompuesta en la vía.

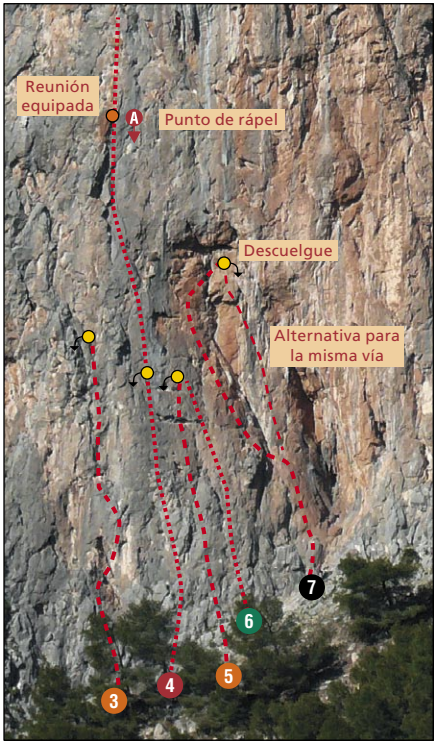
Símbolos de las paredes

	Inclinación del sendero con el tiempo estimado de aproximación.
Afternoon	Tiempo del día cuando le da el sol al sector (en dias soleados).
Dry in the rain	Se puede escalar en caso de lluvia.
Seepage	La roca puede tener filtraciones de agua después de períodos de lluvia.
Windy	Sector de escalada expuesto, puede hacer frío cuando sopla el viento. Possiblemente en media/alta montaña
Sheltered	Sector protegido del viento.
	Desierto - Sector en desuso y normalmente sin gente. La aproximación puede ser larga y/o con vías de poca calidad.
	Tranquilo - Partes mas tranquilas de los sectores, o buenos sectores con aproximación larga.
	Concurrido - Sectores donde raramente vas a estar sólo, especialmente en los fines de semana. Vías buenas.
	Multitud - Los sectores más populares que siempre están llenos de gente.

Código de color de los grados

Todas las vías de escalada tienen un código de color que indica a que banda de grado corresponden:

1	4+ o menos
2	5 a 6a+
3	6b a 7a
4	7a+ o más



El Chorro ist eines der bekanntesten Kletterziele in Europa. Diese dramatische Schlucht, sowie die spektakulären Felsen der Umgebung war eines der ersten Gebiete in Spanien, die entwickelt wurden als Sportklettern in den 1980er Jahren begann. Das Gebiet hat alles, was anreisende Kletterer von einem qualitativ hochwertigen Wintersonnen Kletterziel erwarten: großartige Routen, preiswerte Anreise, reichlich Unterkünfte und vor allem gutes Wetter während der kälteren Wintermonate.
Die berühmte Schlucht und ihr spektakulärer "Wehrgang" (der El Camino del Rey) offerieren eine einzigartige Klettererfahrung. Heutzutage sind in diesem Gebiet wesentlich mehr Felsen verfügbar, die meist Weltklasseklettereien im gesamten Schwierigkeitsbereich bieten.

Zugang

Die Mehrzahl der Routen in diesem Kletterführer sind problemlos zugänglich und können jederzeit geklettert werden. Die Eisenbahntunnel, die als Zugang zu einigen Felsen in und um die Schlucht von El Choro dienten, sind aus Sicherheitsgründen für Wanderer geschlossen worden. Das hat den Zugang zu einigen Felsen etwas schwieriger gemacht. Gleichwohl ist ein Zugang möglich, wenn man einen neuen Pfad über die Tunnel oder den "Wehrgang" durch die Schlucht benutzt. Siehe Seite 108 für weitere Informationen.

Der Kletterführer

Dieses Buch enthält sämtliche Informationen die Du benötigst, um die besten Felsen des Gebietes aufzufinden und einzuschätzen - auch wenn Englisch nicht Deine Muttersprache ist. Topos und Symbole veranschaulichen die Art von Routen, die Dich an Deinem Ziel erwarten.

Ausrüstung

Die meisten Routen in diesem Kletterführer sind voll ausgerüstete Sportkletterrouten, für die lediglich ein Satz Expreßschlingen und ein langes Seil benötigt wird. Ein 60 Meter Seil ist angebracht, um sicher abseilen zu können. Wenn Du beabsichtigst, einige der Mehrseillängenrouten zu klettern, sind 9mm Doppelseile mit 50 Meter Länge fürs Abseilen unumgänglich.

Internet

Alle beschriebenen Aufstiege dieses Kletterführers sind in der Rockfax Routendatenbank auf der Internetseite - www.rockfax.com - enthalten. Hier findest Du auch mehr Informationen über die einzelnen Routen, einschließlich Votings zu Schwierigkeitseinstufungen und Kommentare anderer Kletterer. Wenn Du Routen kletterst und nicht mit diesem Kletterführer übereinstimmst, dann besuche unsere Datenbank, um uns Deine Meinung mitzuteilen.

Rockfax

Rockfax veröffentlicht seit 1990 Kletterführer. Das schließt 27 Bücher zu Gebieten in Europa und 4 Bücher zu Gebieten in den USA ein. Darüber hinaus sind auf der Rockfax Website mehr als 50 Miniguides im PDF-Format verfügbar. In letzter Zeit haben wir eine Serie von Büchern zum Thema Leistungstraining veröffentlicht. Weitere Informationen findest Du auf unserer Internetseite - **www.rockfax.com**

Symbole

Lohnende Kletterei.

Sehr lohnende Kletterei, eine der besten Routen an diesem Felsen.

Brilliante Kletterei, eine der besten Routen im Gebiet.

Top 50 — Eine der populärsten Routen in diesem Buch, Bestandteil der "Top 50" (siehe Seite 38).

Technisch anspruchsvolle Kletterei, die eine gute Balance und Technik erfordert oder komplexe und trickreiche Züge beinhaltet.

Anstrengende, kraftvolle Kletterei; Dächer, überhängender Fels oder weite Züge an kleinen Griffen.

Durchweg anstrengende Kletterei; entweder mit vielen harten Zügen oder überhängender Fels, der zu dicken Armen führt.

Kleingriffige Kletterei mit signifikant kleinen Griffen in den harten Routenabschnitten.

Heikle Kletterei mit hohem Sturzpotential und schaurig weiten Hakenabständen.

Lange Arme sind hilfreich bzw. unerläßlich für einen oder mehrere Züge.

Eine Route, die nicht vollständig mit Bohrhaken ausgerüstet ist - Absicherung durch Klemmkeile und Friends notwendig.

Möglicherweise lockerer Fels im Routenverlauf.

Felsymbole

5 min — Steilheit des Zugangsweges mit ungefährer Zeitangabe.

Afternoon — Ungefähre Zeit, zu der der Felsen in der Sonne liegt (wenn sie scheint!).

Dry in the rain — Überhängende Wände, die trockenen Fels bei Regen bieten.

Seepage — Rinnwasser, der Fels tropft nach längerem Regen.

Windy — Exponierter Fels, möglicherweise hoch in den Bergen; wenn der Wind bläst, könnte es hier kalt werden.

Sheltered — Windgeschützter bzw. warmer Fels.

Menschenleer - Zur Zeit wenig besucht und meistens ruhig. Langer Anmarsch und / oder weniger lohnende Routen.

Ruhig - Weniger beliebte Sektoren an Hauptfelsen, oder gute Felsen mit langem Zugangsweg.

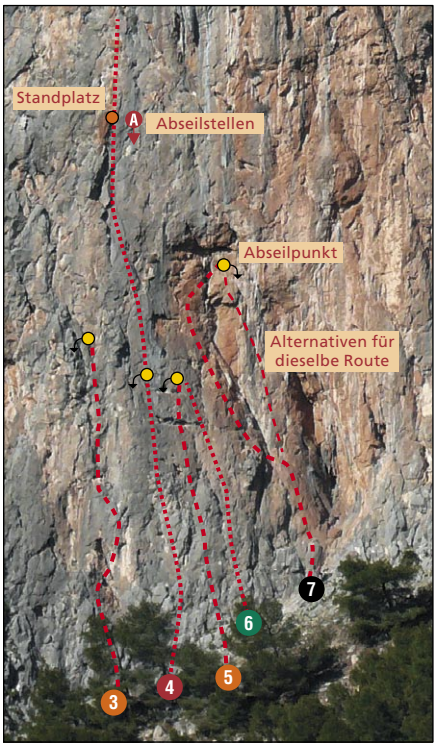
Belebt - Plätze, an denen Du selten allein sein wirst, besonders an Wochenenden. Lohnende Routen und leichter Zugang.

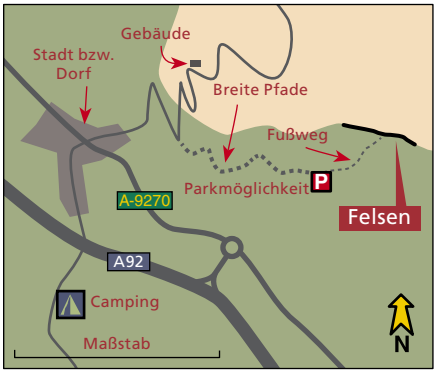
Zum Brechen voll - Die populärsten Felspartien, an denen ständig Hochbetrieb herrscht.

Farbig markierte Routennummern

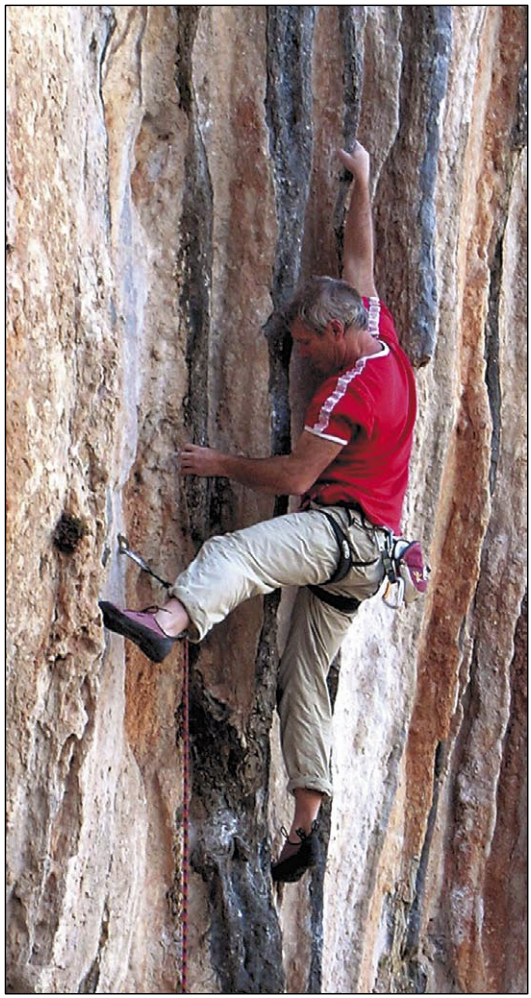
Die farbigen Routennummern entsprechen den folgenden Schwierigkeitsbereichen:

1	Grad V+ und darunter
2	Grad VI- bis VII-
3	Grad VII bis VIII
4	Grad VIII+ und darüber





Over the past 15 years my trips to El Chorro and its neighbouring crags have left me with some of the best memories of my climbing life, both on and off the rock. Stunning climbs, fine countryside, lots of fun times and great company have all intermingled and left me a little lost when it comes to planning on going somewhere else. Many thanks to all those who I have shared a rope with, helped with the guidebook and of course to those who have grafted hard to put up the routes for us all to enjoy.



Mark Glaister. Photo: Glaister Collection

Thanks especially to Lee Proctor, Paul Cox, Dave Henderson, Marti Hallett, Arran Deakin, Rob Knight, Alison Martindale, Phil Black, Chris Gore, Jon Hofor, Rob Sutton, Ken Palmer, Steve Watt, Clare Dyson, Natalie Prensa, Duncan Booth, Rich Harris, Rich and Sam Mayfield, Wilf and Jane Williamson, Emma Medara, Gav, Caff, Hock, Wes and Alan and Helen at Finca Los Llanos.

The photography in this book has been supplemented with some stunning contributions from Mike Hutton, Chris Dainton, Dave Pickford, and Chris Sims.

Thanks also to Chris Craggs, Sherri Davy, Martin Heywood, Hillary Lawrenson, Keith Waddell, Karsten Kurz, Ramon Marin and André Selmer for their help with translations, checking, advertising and last minute information.

As ever we are very grateful to all those who have contributed to the documentation of information in the area. The bulk of the work in the earlier Rockfax editions was undertaken by Mike Owen and Rab Anderson, which was based in part on Chris Craggs' Andalucia Rock Climbs (1992). Other local guides have been produced by Pedro Garcia, Juan Carlos Perez, Javier Romero Rubiols and David Munilla.

Thanks also to Alan who as usual has been brilliant to work with and together this year we also managed a first - a holiday where it didn't rain, in Lofoten of all places!

Once again a huge thanks to Rachel for her support and patience and to my constant office companions Jack, George and Harvey.

Mark Glaister, in El Chorro, November 2008

Pillar dorada, 6c
El Polvorin
El Chorro,
February!

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Awesome Walls - Page 25
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The Engine House, Stockport.
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www.awesomewalls.co.uk

Outdoor Gear

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www.berghaus.com

Black Diamond - Outside back cover
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www.blackdiamondequipment.com

Climbers' Web Resource

Climb Europe - Page 27
www.climb-europe.com

The beautiful lakes above El Chorro passed on the way to the crags of Desplomilandia. Photo: Mark Glaister

The sustained line of *Heat Exchange* (6c+) - *page 147* - at the deceptively steep Mega Flash area of Makinodromo, El Chorro. Climber: Paul Cox. Photo: Mark Glaister

Cruzcampo
1904

El Chorro Logistics

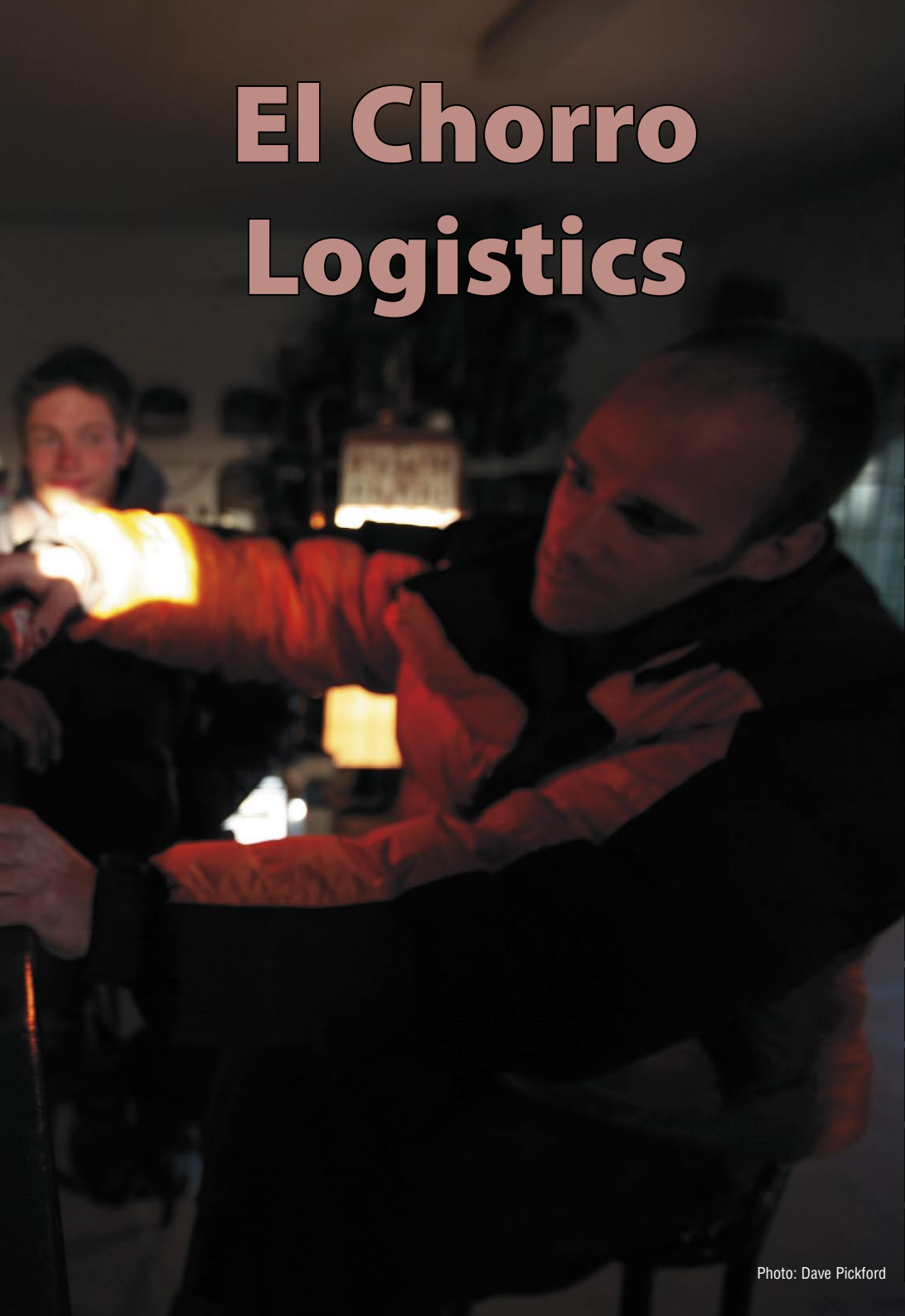
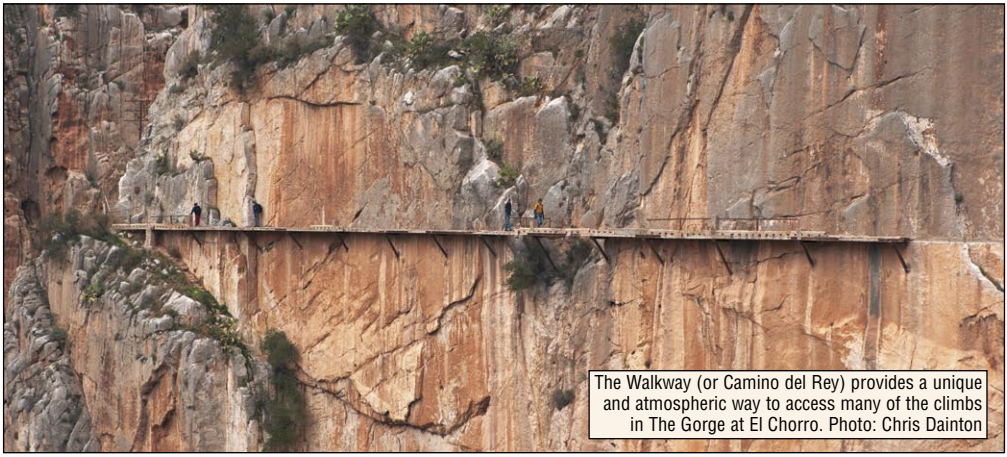


Photo: Dave Pickford



The Walkway (or Camino del Rey) provides a unique and atmospheric way to access many of the climbs in The Gorge at El Chorro. Photo: Chris Dainton

Flights

The main airport for the area is Málaga International Airport. Luckily this is one of the best served and most popular airports in Europe and with flights from all major European destinations all year round. Prices are some of the cheapest available to any climbing destination in Spain and look likely to stay that way for the foreseeable future. If a bit of time is spent searching out the bargains outside of the holiday periods, it is still not uncommon to be able to pick up return flights from the UK for £65 or less.

www.easyjet.com - from East Midlands, Bristol, Glasgow, Liverpool, London Airports, Manchester, Newcastle.
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It is also worth checking on charter flight availability as occasionally they are cheaper, especially for trips during holiday periods.
www.cheap-flights.com, **www.charterflights.co.uk**.

Car Hire

El Chorro is perhaps the best of Spain's major winter sun climbing destinations to consider for those wishing not to hire a car, but having one makes getting to other nearby spots possible and is essential for those who don't like walking very much! Car hire is relatively cheap - in the region of €15/day for a small car. All the following companies have on-airport offices and pick-up and drop-off. **www.holidayautos.co.uk**, **www.europcar.com**, **www.hertz.com**

Without a Car

El Chorro, more than any of the other winter sun climbing destinations in Europe, lends itself to those on a tight budget, or those who wish to climb without making use of a car. Travel from Málaga's airport or train station to Alora, and then on to El Chorro, is relatively straightforward and cheap. From the accommodation centred on El Chorro it is possible to walk to many of the areas great cliffs such as Encantadas, Makinodromo, The Gorge and Frontales. For the crags further afield, hitching a lift is a real possibility, or hooking up with others with transport in the cafe, bar or refugio. The small food shops in El Chorro stock all the basics.

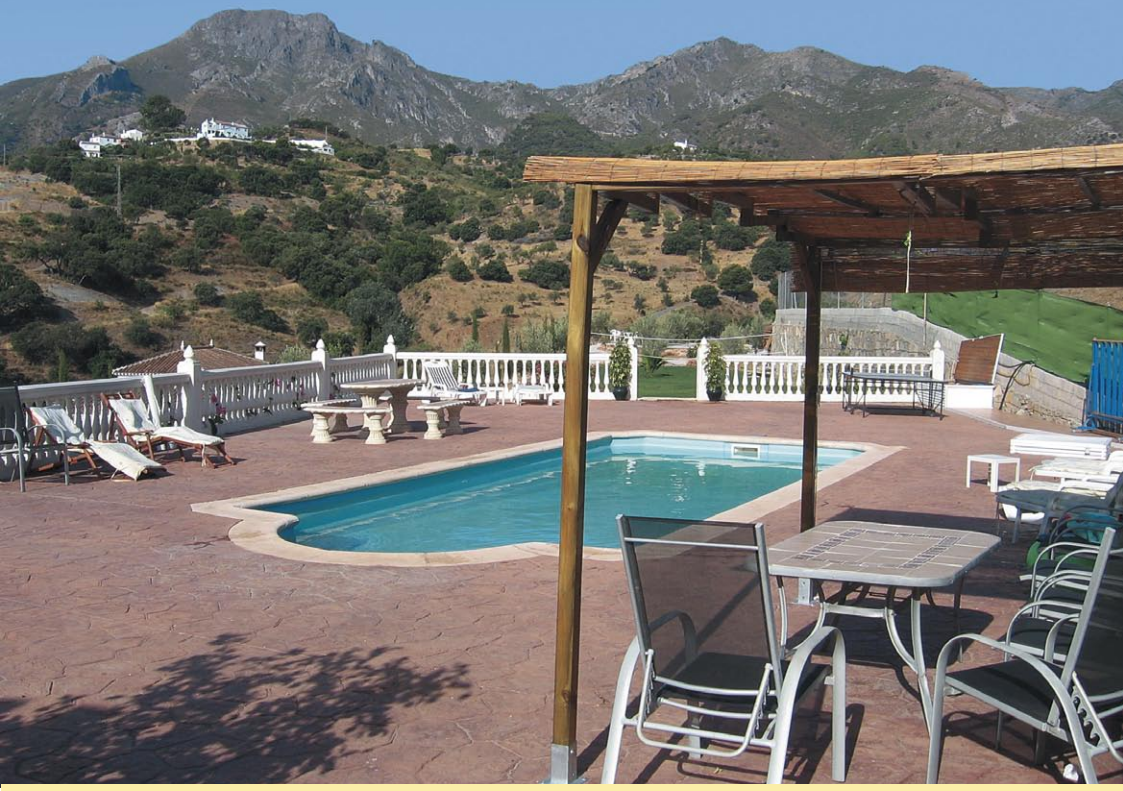
Ardales Village

Ardales Village
Holiday Rental

We have a selection of properties to suit all needs and budgets in the Ardales and Carratraca areas. These range from villas with pools to town houses.

Prices from €225 a week for up to four people.

Just twenty minutes from El Chorro.



www.ardalesvillage.com

tel. (0034) 635105943

Getting Around

The road network in and around Málaga is good and the approach to El Chorro and a number of the other crags has improved greatly since the last Rockfax was published in 2001. Road signs and road numbers still seem to be a little random at times and missing a junction or a turn-off is common on the 'onsight' approach to some of the crags. Speed traps and cameras are on the increase and on-the-spot fines are common. A few of the crags require that the final approach be made on dirt tracks; none of the tracks are too bad but care should be taken as the drop-offs on some of them are impressive!

See the area map on page 200.

Public Transport

There are good public transport links from Málaga Airport to the town Alora, south of El Chorro. The train service to El Chorro itself is in a state of flux and the train times seem to change regularly so it is best to check before travelling (952 360 202). The railway service to Alora is good and from Alora it is easy to catch a taxi or hitch a lift to El Chorro. The number for taxis in Alora is 952 496 424.

There is a bus service but it is probably best to check locally on the routes and times at the tourist information office in Alora (952 495 577).

Mountain goats and The Gorge at El Chorro. Photos: Chris Dainton

Finca Rocabella

Ten beautifully situated independent properties just three kilometres from El Chorro. Each property has its own swimming pool, barbecue and spacious interior.

Prices start at €60 per night for four people

e-mail info@fincarocabella.com
web site www.fincarocabella.com

Recently refurbished holiday apartments with large terrace and panoramic view of the lake

El Arpa

in a beautifully restored Andalusian farmhouse in front of the Desplomilandia climbing sectors.

From €245/week for 2 people.
E-mail info@fincamalaga.com Website www.FincaMalaga.com

Weather

The best weather for climbing is normally to be found between the middle of October and the beginning of May. During this period the air temperatures can be perfect and the options of sun, shade and/or altitude can be utilised to keep the ambient temperature comfortable. It can be cold so a warm coat and hat are advisable additions to the packing list. However it is more likely to be on the warm side so shorts, suncream and a sunhat should also not be forgotten. Wet weather does occasionally close in but the chances of a complete wash out are low and there is usually always somewhere dry to climb. Summer is most definitely not the time to be planning on a trip, as inland temperatures regularly hit 40˚C, although high up in the shade at Loja or El Torcal it might be cool enough to venture out on to the rock without frying.

Temperature ˚C	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Maximum (average)	16	17	18	20	23	25	30	35	29	23	19	17
Minimum (average)	10	11	12	13	15	18	20	22	19	17	14	11

Rainfall Days	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average per month	7	6	6	6	4	3	2	1	3	7	6	6

Public Holidays

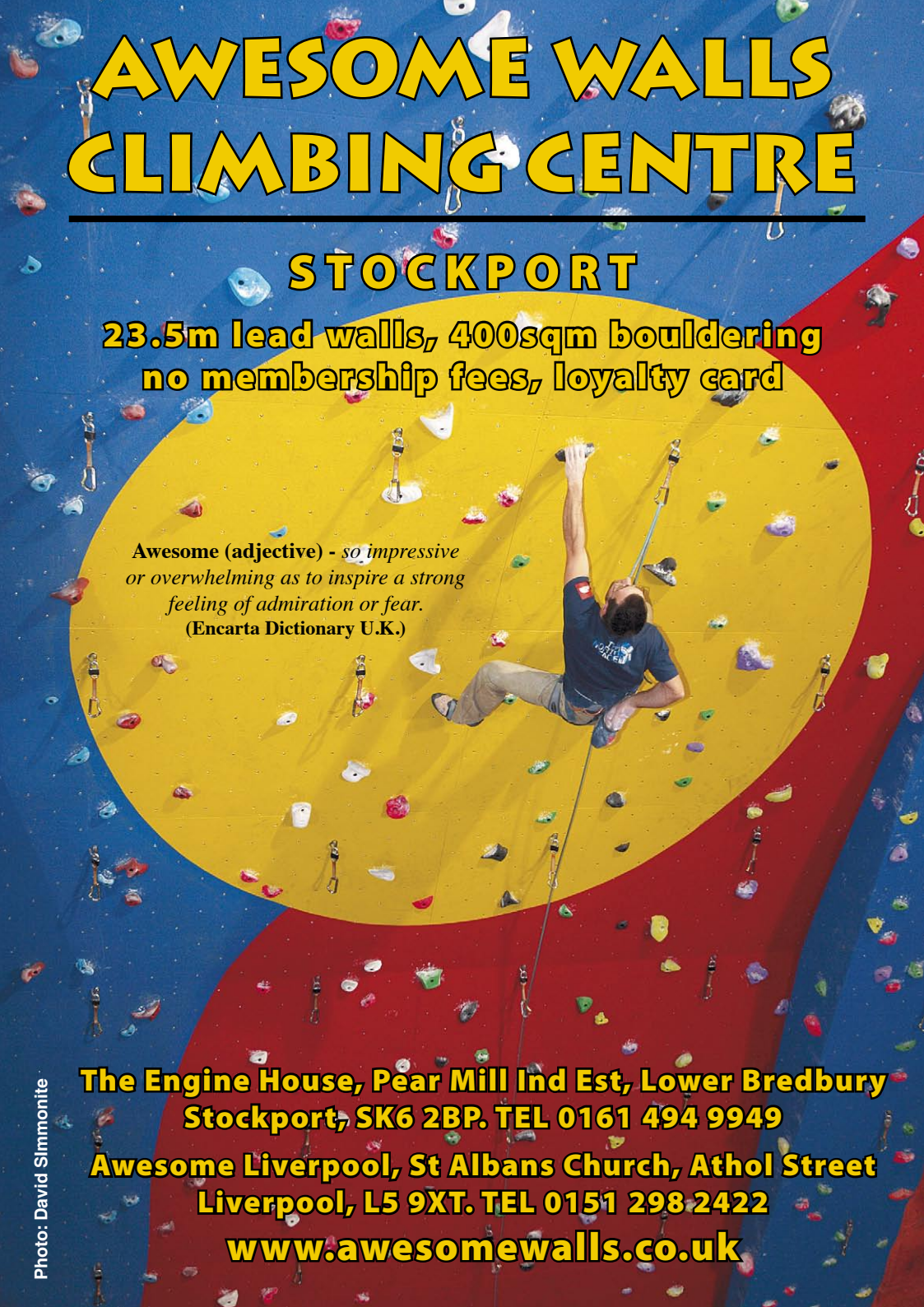
It is well worth taking note of the Spanish public holidays as most of the shops, bars and cafes are closed on these days and public transport will be limited.
1st January (New Year), 6th January (Epiphany), 28th February (Andalucia Day),
March/April (Easter Thursday and Good Friday), 1st May (Labour Day),
15th August (Assumption), 12th October (National Day), 1st November (All Saints' Day),
6th December (Spanish Constitution Day), 8th December (The Immaculate Conception),
25th December (Christmas Day).

Photo: Chris Dainton

AWESOME WALLS CLIMBING CENTRE

STOCKPORT

23.5m lead walls, 400sqm bouldering
no membership fees, loyalty card



Awesome (adjective) - *so impressive or overwhelming as to inspire a strong feeling of admiration or fear.*
(Encarta Dictionary U.K.)

The Engine House, Pear Mill Ind Est, Lower Bredbury
Stockport, SK6 2BP. TEL 0161 494 9949

Awesome Liverpool, St Albans Church, Athol Street
Liverpool, L5 9XT. TEL 0151 298 2422

www.awesomewalls.co.uk

Photo: David Simmonite

Mountain Rescue

Dial 112 - Ensure you have details of your location and what the incident involves. This number works on any mobile on a Spanish network.

Travel Insurance

Although also part of the EU and subject to providing medical help for other EU residents under the EHIC (European Health Insurance Card) scheme it is strongly recommended that personal travel insurance is taken out to cover rescue, medical and repatriation following an accident. **BMC Travel Insurance** - **www.thebmc.com**

Shops and Eating Out

For the El Chorro based visitor there are a number of small shops spread out around the village that stock all that is needed to sustain a visit. Meals are served at the Refugio, the Station Bar and the La Garganta Hotel. Further afield there are many more options. Alora is around 10km from El Chorro and has lots of bars, restaurants, cafes and larger supermarkets. Up at the lakes above El Chorro are some superb bars and restaurants that have wonderful views. Málaga (about an hour from El Chorro) has all the attractions, and distractions, of a large city along with hypermarkets on its outskirts.

The climbing shop in El Chorro. Photo: Mark Glaister

Climbing Shops

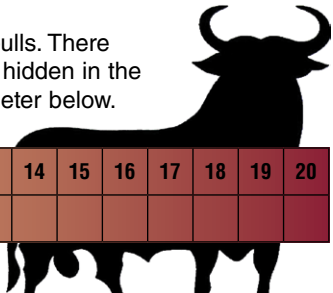
There is a small climbing shop in the centre of El Chorro village that stocks plenty of gear and clothing. Málaga has larger shops.

Other Activities

For the sunlover the warm Mediterranean waters and sandy beaches are only an hour away. Walkers and mountain bikers will find the hills and mountains of the El Chorro and El Torcal Natural Parks provide plenty of potential. Day visits to the major historic cities of Antequera, Cordoba, Sevilla and Granada are possible by car, or train, from Málaga. There are many opportunities for relaxing in the quiet villages that dot the neighbouring landscape and the city life of Málaga is only a quick train or car journey away. Slightly further afield, but good for a rest day, are the tourist hot-spot of Mijas, a pretty village perched high above the Mediterranean, and the impressive town of Ronda.

A Load of Bull

....and if all else fails you can search this book for the hidden bulls. There are 20 to find, including the one on this page. They are all well hidden in the photos so look closely and log your progress using our bull-ometer below.



Bull	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Page		26				Bull-ometer														

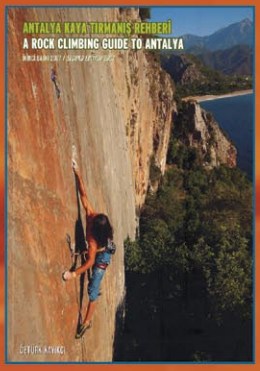
After a good day climbing you deserve some comfort!
Located between the white hill town of Álora and the crags of El Chorro,
we are just a short drive between the best climbing areas
and a good choice of tapas bars and restaurants.

Self Catering or Bed and Breakfast - ideal for couples or groups of up to 10.
Spacious and comfortable accommodation - great breakfasts - friendly hospitality - Wifi Internet.
Car and bike hire, horse riding, tickets and tours, all can be arranged.

Tel: 0034 952495592 Mob: 0034 686 291 485
E-mail fincalosllanos@yahoo.co.uk
Finca Los Llanos, Crtra El Chorro, Km 3, Álora 29500, Málaga, Spain
www.fincalosllanos.com

Climb Europe

Discover the best places to go rock climbing in Europe.



Climb Europe is the web site to help you plan your next rock climbing holiday in Europe.

Check out a new climbing area in Europe, by browsing maps, photographs & text in the comfort of your own home.

Climb Europe hold in stock a wide range of European guidebooks such as the Antalya sports climbing guidebook shown opposite.

All guidebooks can be bought from our on-line shop, visit our web site at:

www.climb-europe.com

Apartments, Villas and Cottages

There are lots of options available in the immediate surrounds of El Chorro that vary from small cottage-style terraces to huge villas complete with pools and luxury accommodation. There is plenty of accommodation within walking distance of the crags, and the bars at the refugio and station, for those without a car. The surrounding villages and towns also have many places of all shapes and sizes to rent and will be of interest to those looking for a broader selection of shops, eating and cafe/bar options such as those in the bustling town of Alora. The cost of the accommodation is on the best side of reasonable and varies from around €50 to €140 per person, per week.

Web sites worth checking:

www.fuegoblanco.com
www.el-chorro.com
www.holiday-rentals.co.uk (no. 2678)
www.rockclimbingcompany.co.uk
www.fincarocabella.com
www.fincamalaga.com
www.fincarocabella.com
www.fincalosllanos.com
www.ardalesvillage.com

Photos: Mark Glaister

Refuges

There is a refugio in the centre of El Chorro that has very basic accommodation (and a bar) at around €10 per person, per night with breakfast. There are a couple of other excellent refugio-style set-ups in El Chorro village that offer a good standard of accommodation and are fully geared towards the rock climbing market. A big advantage for those travelling on their own is that during the climbing season there are always plenty of other climbers staying at the refugios. There are also refugios in other towns such as Archidona.

Camping

The El Chorro campsite is very close to the climbing and the centre of El Chorro but is not a particularly cheap option with prices of about €10 per person, per night. There are also some small chalets on the campsite that are reasonably priced if the other accommodation locally is full. The website for the camping is **www.alberguecampingelchorro.com**

There are several beautiful campsites up on the shores of the lakes just above El Chorro but these are only open from Easter until the end of September.

Important - Wild camping in the National Park of El Chorro is banned and campfires are also forbidden.

Fuegoblanco

Exploring El Chorro?
Want to relax as well as climb?
Spacious rural guesthouse
10km from El Chorro

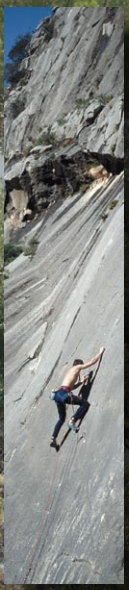
Six ensuite rooms with lovely views,
large guest lounge, terraces, pool,
gardens, organic lemon groves
Fish and vegetarian meals

45 km Málaga airport,
2.5 km Alora village
(bars and restaurants)

Website www.fuegoblanco.com
E mail enquiries@fuegoblanco.com,
Phone (+34) 952497439

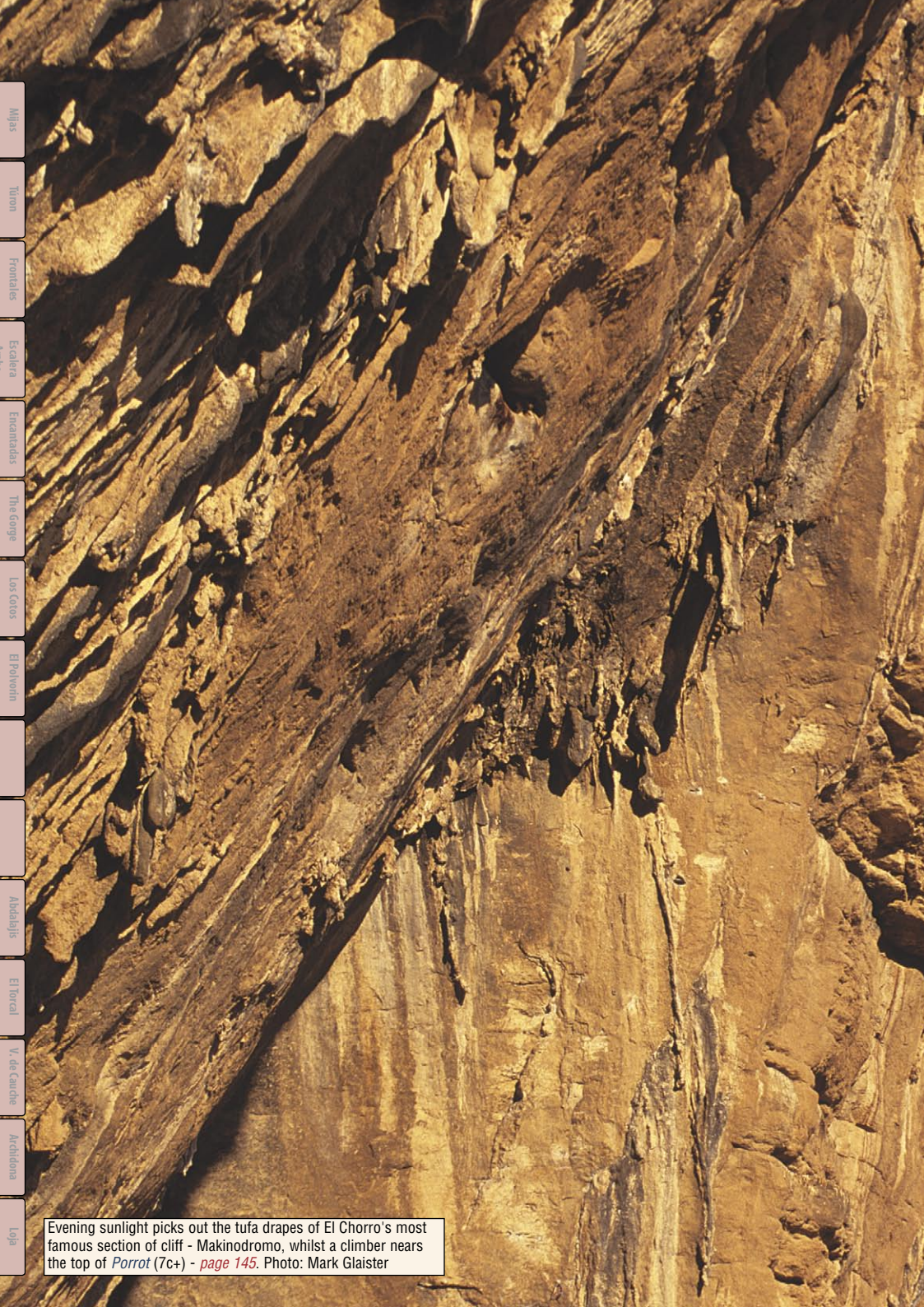
La Almona Chica

Converted farm cottages in the heart of magnificent El Chorro.
We are within walking distance of The Gorge, the station (and its bar!) and many of the cliffs .
All four cottages (sleeping between two and six persons) share the pool.

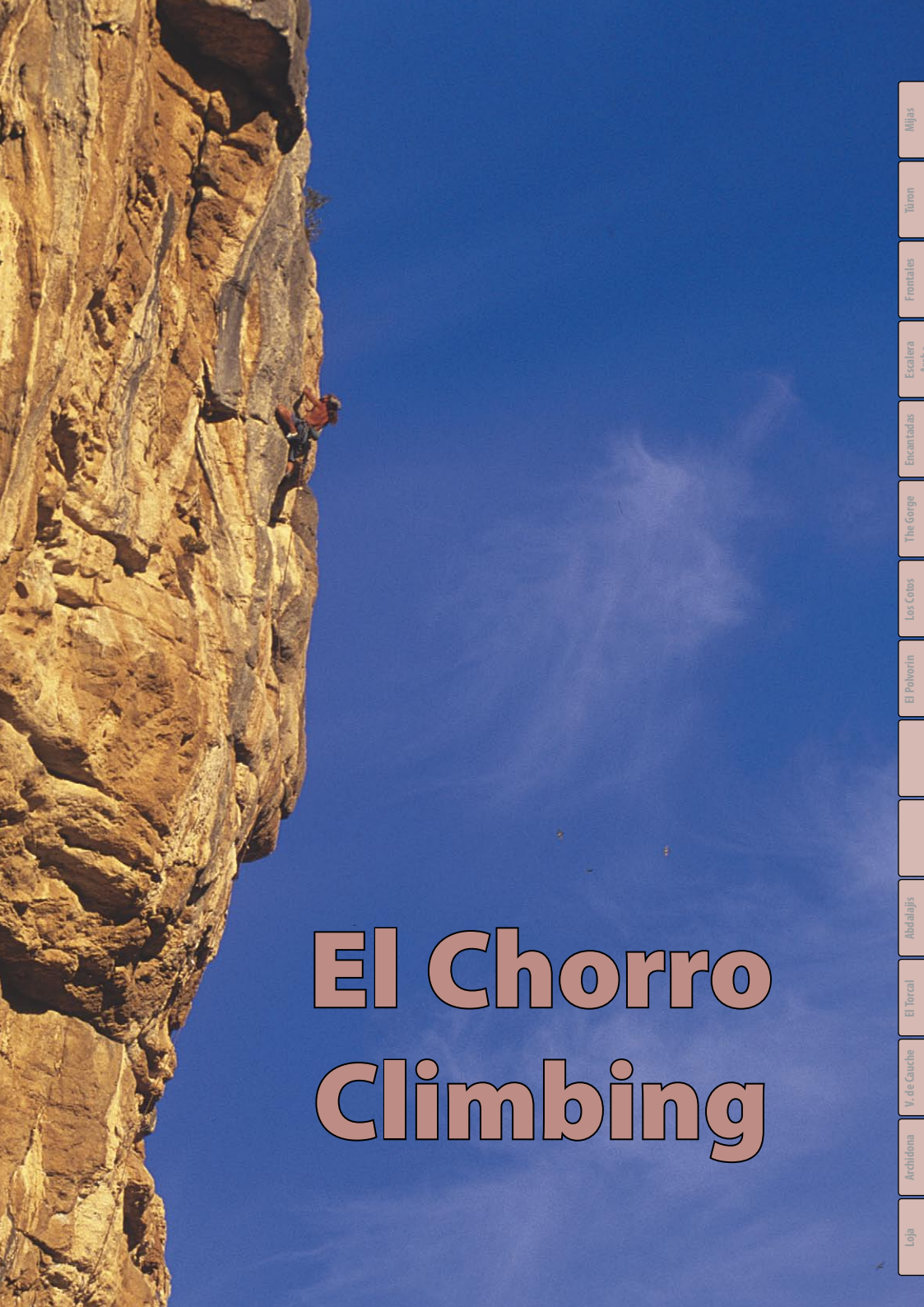


e-mail: sumitch@mercuryin.es

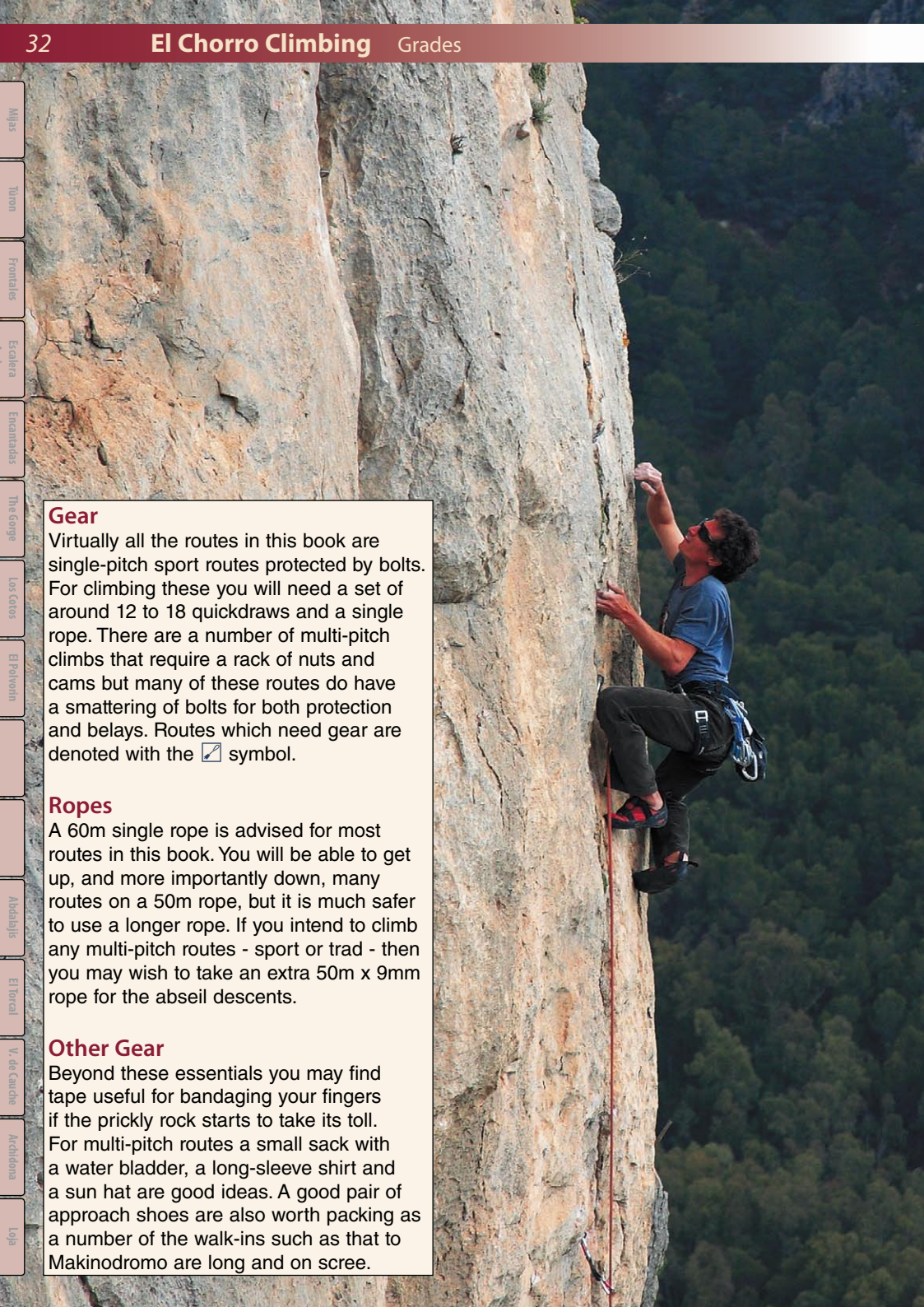
see *Holiday-Rentals.co.uk* Property Number 2678



Evening sunlight picks out the tufa drapes of El Chorro's most famous section of cliff - Makinodromo, whilst a climber nears the top of *Porrot* (7c+) - *page 145*. Photo: Mark Glaister



El Chorro Climbing



Gear

Virtually all the routes in this book are single-pitch sport routes protected by bolts. For climbing these you will need a set of around 12 to 18 quickdraws and a single rope. There are a number of multi-pitch climbs that require a rack of nuts and cams but many of these routes do have a smattering of bolts for both protection and belays. Routes which need gear are denoted with the ⊿ symbol.

Ropes

A 60m single rope is advised for most routes in this book. You will be able to get up, and more importantly down, many routes on a 50m rope, but it is much safer to use a longer rope. If you intend to climb any multi-pitch routes - sport or trad - then you may wish to take an extra 50m x 9mm rope for the abseil descents.

Other Gear

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 are also worth packing as a number of the walk-ins such as that to Makinodromo are long and on scree.

Grades

The routes in El Chorro are graded using the usual sport grade. Over the years El Chorro has had a reputation for slightly softer grades than elsewhere in Spain. Most of those routes should now have been brought back in line with other areas although there may be the odd 'soft touch' out there for you to track down!

Colour Coding

The routes are colour-coded corresponding to a grade band.

Green Spots - Everything at grade 4+ and under. Mostly these should be good for beginners and those wanting an easy life.

Orange Spots - 5 to 6a+ inclusive. General ticking routes for those with more experience.

Red Spots - 6b to 7a inclusive. Routes for the very experienced and keen climber.

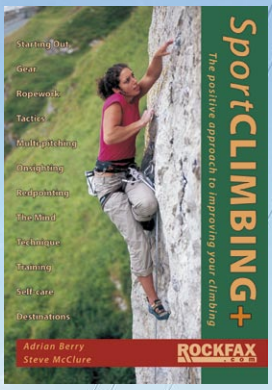
Black Spots - 7a+ and above. The hard stuff!

Route Grades

Sport Grade	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	V+	5.9
6a	5b E2 6a	VI-	5.10a
6a+	5c E3 6a	VI	5.10b
6b	6a E4 6b	VI+	5.10c
6b+	6a E5 6c	VII-	5.10d
6c	6b E6 6c	VII	5.11a
6c+	6c E7 7a	VII+	5.11b
7a	6c E8 7a	VIII-	5.11c
7a+	7a E9 7b	VIII	5.11d
7b	7a E10 7b	VIII+	5.12a
7b+		IX-	5.12b
7c		IX	5.12c
7c+		IX+	5.12d
8a		X-	5.13a
8a+		X	5.13b
8b		X+	5.13c
8b+		XI-	5.13d
8c		XI	5.14a
8c+		XI+	5.14b
9a			5.14c
9a+			5.14d
			5.15a

The ever popular technical rib of *Arabesque* (7a) does not disappoint - *page 88* - on the Sector Arabesque at Escalera Arabe. Photo: Mike Hutton

Onsighting - *an extract from Sport***CLIMBING+**



Whatever your situation you will always have both limited climbing time and limited energy. In our drive to climb lots of great routes, it is tempting to try to onsight everything simply because it is so quick. Below your limit, onsighting is the way to go, covering a lot of ground and gaining valuable experience in movement and boosting your confidence. Closer to your limit a little more thought is required before diving into a hard onsight attempt. Be ambitious, but realistic at the same time. If your hardest recent onsight is 6b, then you'll probably want to push yourself to 6b+, or even 6c if you're feeling confident, and the route favours your strengths. However, it would be an unwise use of time and energy to jump on a 7a, or even a 6b+, that does not suit your style.

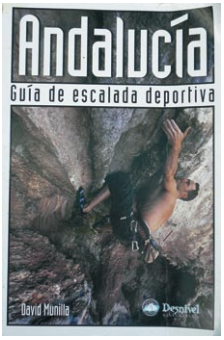
If there's a special route that you really want to climb then be realistic in your style of attack. Assuming you give it your all, and fall at around three-quarter's height, you'll be so tired that it's unlikely you'll have the energy for a redpoint attempt that day. Returning the following day most of the moves will be forgotten and you'll be starting again from scratch. A better strategy would have been to spend the first day working towards a redpoint in the afternoon, with the result that you will save the next day to pursue a more likely onsight prey. An alternative strategy might be to watch someone else on the route and quiz them about the moves – getting 'beta' on how to do it – allowing you the possibility of 'flashing' the route, which might well be within your reach if you get the right 'beta'! Though the onsight is the most coveted style of ascent, the 'flash' is also highly respected and for many the most enjoyable as it gives an onsight 'feel' without missing crucial or unobvious holds.

*Sport***CLIMBING+** is published by Rockfax and available from **www.rockfax.com**

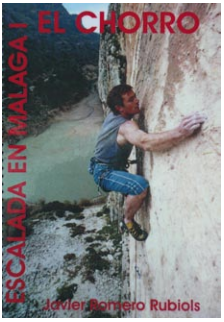
Gavin Symonds on *La conexión pelirroja* (8a) - *page 152* - on El Triangulo at Desplomilandia. Photo: Dave Pickford

Mid crux on *Viejos y puretas* (7a) - *page 157* - on sector Buena Sombra, Desplomilandia. Photo: Mark Glaister

There are a couple of other local guidebooks that are worth a look for those interested in exploring the area in more detail. All of the books are available locally or via a search on the web.

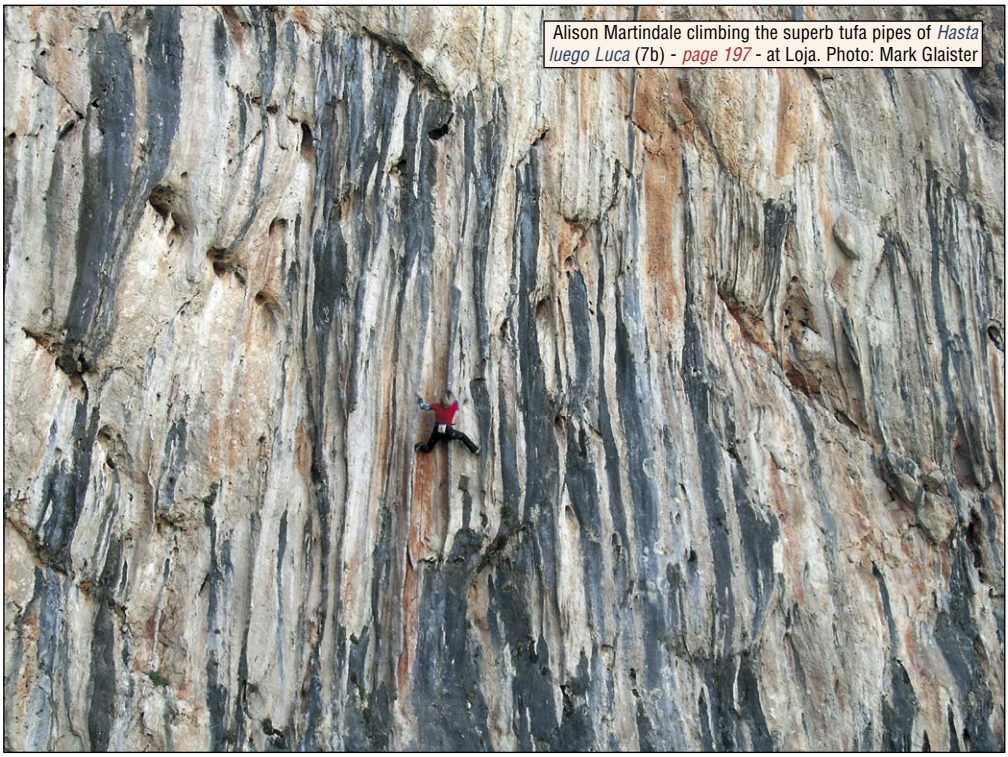


Andalucia, Guia de escalada deportiva (2007)
by David Munilla, Ediciones Desnivel
A huge guidebook of drawn topos covering a vast amount of the climbing in Andalucia. The number of climbs is astonishing and the approach descriptions to the crags reasonably accurate, however no details on the quality or style of the individual climbs is presented. The book has lots of superb colour photos of the harder climbs. In both Spanish and English.



El Chorro, Escalada en Málaga (2007)
by Javier Romero Rubiols
The local guidebook to El Chorro and Desplomilandia. The routes are presented in colour photo and drawn topo form but no details on the quality or style of the individual climbs is given, although a gear list is included for the traditional climbs. In both Spanish and English and available locally.

Scott Sadler on *Los genelos* (6c) - *page 94* - at the base of El Navegador Pillar, Escalera Arabe. Photo: Mike Hutton



Alison Martindale climbing the superb tufa pipes of *Hasta luego Luca* (7b) - *page 197* - at Loja. Photo: Mark Glaister

This list contains 50 of the most popular routes in this guidebook. They are not necessarily the best 50, but they are amongst the most coveted. On the Rockfax web site - **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 of this list.

Route	Grade	Photos	Page
Orujo *Archidona*	9a+		186
Cous cous *Makinodromo*	8c		144
Trango *Frontales*	8b+		81
Mar de Ortigas *Desplomilandia*	8a		152
Musas inquientantes *The Gorge*	8a		116
Lourdes *Makinodromo*	8a	*opposite*	144
Atlas Shrieked *Makinodromo*	7c+		145
Danza agresiva *Archidona*	7c	*178*	187
Madre Salvaje *Desplomilandia*	7c		152
Honk Down *Frontales*	7c		77
Viejo traidor *Frontales*	7b+		79
The Speed Kings *Makinodromo*	7b+		142
Hasta luego Luca *Loja*	7b	*above, 188*	197
Akira *Desplomilandia*	7b		153
Diedre candela *Villanueva de Cauche*	7a+	*183*	183
Hakuna mata *Makinodromo*	7a+		146
Cosas caseras *Desplomilandia*	7a+		157
Sara *Las Encantadas*	7a+		102
Tipo sueca *The Gorge*	7a		116
Poema de Roca P1 *Frontales*	7a		79

The best known route at El Chorro *Lourdes* (8a) - *page 144* - at Makinodromo. Photo: Mark Glaister

The huge pitch of *Un monton de chatarra* (6a) - *page 69* - one of several sunny wall climbs at the popular Sector Castrojo, El Chorro. Photo: Mark Glaister

Route	Grade	Photos	Page
Zeppelin *The Gorge*	6c+	*104*	119
Bee bee. *Desplomilandia*	6c+	*opposite*	161
Santimonia *The Gorge*	6c+		113
Pilar dorada. *Escalera Arabe*	6c	*15, 133*	134
Diedre torpedo *Escalera Arabe*	6c		88
Life is Sweet *Makinodromo*	6c	*136*	146
Generacion spontanea *El Polvorin*	6c	*6*	134
Yogur de Coco *Desplomilandia*	6c	*148*	157
La sonrisa vertical. *Escalera Arabe*	6c		94
Africa. *The Gorge*	6b+	*115*	114
Buena sombre. *Desplomilandia*	6b+		157
Debora cuerpos *Desplomilandia*	6b		157
Sueno de Venus *El Polvorin*	6a+		134
Fisuras armoniosas. *Valle de Abdalajis*	6a+	*162*	166
Patranas *Loja*	6a+	*191*	193
Alobeitor *Desplomilandia*	6a+		157
Super galleta *Los Cotos*	6a	*123*	126
Sin mantenimiento *Desplomilandia*	6a		157
Asfalto *El Torcal*	6a	*170*	174
Un monton de chatarra *Frontales*	6a	*above*	69
Amptrax. *Frontales*	6a		71
Putifero *Frontales*	5+		70
Treprorzas *Loja*	5+		192
Floja y pendulona *Túron*	5+	*59*	57
Cursillos *Los Cotos*	5		126
Julay lama *Túron*	5	*52*	57
Number One *Los Cotos*	4+	*120*	126
Un pobre infeliz *Valle de Abdalajis*	4+		167
Rogelio *Escalera Arabe*	4+		92
Los timbales *Escalera Arabe*	4		92

Mark Glaister on *Bee bee* (6c+) - *page 161* - at Poza de la Mona at Desplomilandia. Photo: Glaister collection

	Routes	up to 4+	5 to 6a+	6b to 7a	7a+ and up
Mijas	54		26 ✓✓	24 ✓✓	4 ✓
Túron	60		19 ✓✓	26 ✓✓	15 ✓
Frontales	141	11 ✓	35 ✓✓	39 ✓✓	56 ✓✓✓
Escalera Arabe	80	14 ✓✓	26 ✓✓	27 ✓✓	13 ✓✓
Las Encantadas	36	1	8 ✓	10 ✓✓	17 ✓✓✓
The Gorge	94		13 ✓	38 ✓✓	43 ✓✓
Los Cotos	66	2 ✓	30 ✓✓✓	29 ✓✓	5
El Polvorin	16		5 ✓✓	10 ✓✓✓	1
Makinodromo	92		3	22 ✓✓	67 ✓✓✓
Desplomilandia	138		26 ✓✓	45 ✓✓✓	67 ✓✓✓
Valle de Abdalajis	44	14 ✓✓✓	24 ✓✓	6 ✓	
El Torcal	56		12 ✓✓	26 ✓✓	18 ✓✓
Villanueva de Cauche	35		4 ✓	15 ✓✓	16 ✓✓
Archidona	29	2	1	2 ✓	24 ✓✓✓
Loja	106		8 ✓✓	32 ✓✓	66 ✓✓✓

Approach	Sun	Multi-pitch	Dry	Shelter	Windy	Summary	Page
Roadside	Sun and shade			Sheltered		Situated high up on a hill overlooking the Med, and on the edge of the popular tourist village of Mijas. The climbing is good but the location leaves a bit to be desired. A possible dry spot if the mountains are wet.	44
5 to 10 min	Sun and shade	Multi-pitch				A remote area with far reaching views and some incredible limestone slabs that should not be missed. The steeper climbs are not as good as those found elsewhere.	52
2 to 15 min	Lots of sun	Multi-pitch	Dry in the rain			A huge wall of rock that overlooks the village of El Chorro. One of Europe's great climbing cliffs that offers both single and multi-pitch classics throughout the grades.	62
25 to 30 min	Lots of sun	Multi-pitch				One of the nicest places to climb in El Chorro being set away from the main village crags and with extensive views from the crag base. Lots of brilliant pitches for all to enjoy.	82
4 min	Lots of sun					A classy roadside venue that is as good as it appears on first viewing. There have been access problems in the past but these have now eased. Please follow the approach description carefully.	96
12 to 30 min	Sun and shade	Multi-pitch			Windy	The walls and interior of The Gorge are lined with lots of super exposed climbs both traditional and bolted. The access via the 'Camino del Rey' is unique and should not be missed.	104
5 min	Lots of sun			Sheltered		A major venue for those who like their climbing on the friendly side of vertical. Many of the climbs are outstanding but will only be enjoyed by those who possess good technique and footwork. A tranquil and sunny location.	120
25 min	Afternoon					A great wall of well-featured rock that gives some of the most sustained and varied climbing anywhere. A good place for the fit but not a place to get fit!	130
30 to 60 min	Lots of sun		Dry in the rain			The toughest and most famous of El Chorro's crags that lives up to its reputation. Some of the newer areas on the escarpment are now starting to gain in popularity.	136
3 to 4 min	Not much sun		Dry in the rain		Windy	A magical area not far from El Chorro but in a very different setting. Lots of great routes with plenty of mileage available in the mid and upper grades. A good retreat if things are very hot down in El Chorro.	148
3 min	Lots of sun					The easy-angled walls on the outskirts of Valle de Abdalajis are only a short drive from El Chorro and are home to plenty of lower and mid-grade sport routes. The views are superb and it is an all-day sun venue.	162
0 to 10 min	Lots of sun				Windy	Set on top of a 1000m mountain, the weirdly-eroded pinnacles of El Torcal provide lots of climbs in a very unusual environment. This is not a good place to head for in cool weather but is ideal during warm periods.	170
3 min	From mid morning			Sheltered		An attractive wall of vertical limestone that has easy access and a stunning outlook. Most of the climbing is technical and sustained which combined with the crag's aspect makes finding optimum conditions tricky in warm weather.	178
5 min	Not much sun		Dry in the rain	Sheltered		An awesome crag with some of Spain's most impressive sport climbs within its confines. The cave faces north and stays dry in the rain.	186
0 to 5 min	Not much sun		Dry in the rain		Windy	A fine two-tier crag that has a number of stunning climbs that are usually in condition in warmish weather. Another great crag with a great view.	188

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Mountain Rescue

Dial 112 - Ensure you have details of your location and what the incident involves. This number works on any mobile on a Spanish network.