

June 26th 2006

The Coliseum

The Coliseum is significant new sport climbing area on Grotto Mountain that has been under development since spring 2005. It is located in the large canyon west of Bataan, a one hour hike from the Alpine Club of Canada. Currently there are a dozen or so routes that range in length from 12m to 45m. Yes, 45m. The grade spread is from 11a to 13d. As for the all-important sun exposure, the cliffs are south and south-east facing, but the sun does not hit them until mid morning due to their location in the back of the canyon (See photo). The Pie Wagon and the Little Wall go into the shade at around 4pm, while the Saddle Up gets sun later but stays in it 'til night.

The crag consists of three different sectors that vary greatly in character. The Saddle-up sector is long, steep endurance climbing that feels more adventurous than the average sport crag. Just standing at the base of this wall can feel intimidating! The three completed routes are all 45 meters long and consistently overhanging. Midway anchors are in place at 30-35meters to allow descent with a 70 meter rope. All the same, tie a knot in the end!!! The other two sectors are more "normal" sport cliffs, with a range of grades from 11a to 12c. A sixty meter rope will do.

Most routes are designed to be stick-clipped. It may be worth bringing one.

Route-building is ongoing at the crag and potential is huge, so check back for updates.

As with any new area, grades are unconfirmed; feel free to provide feedback. Also, while the routes have been cleaned to be both safe, sendable, and enjoyable, most have only seen a few ascents at the time of writing and more traffic is needed to get them 'pristine.'

Enjoy!

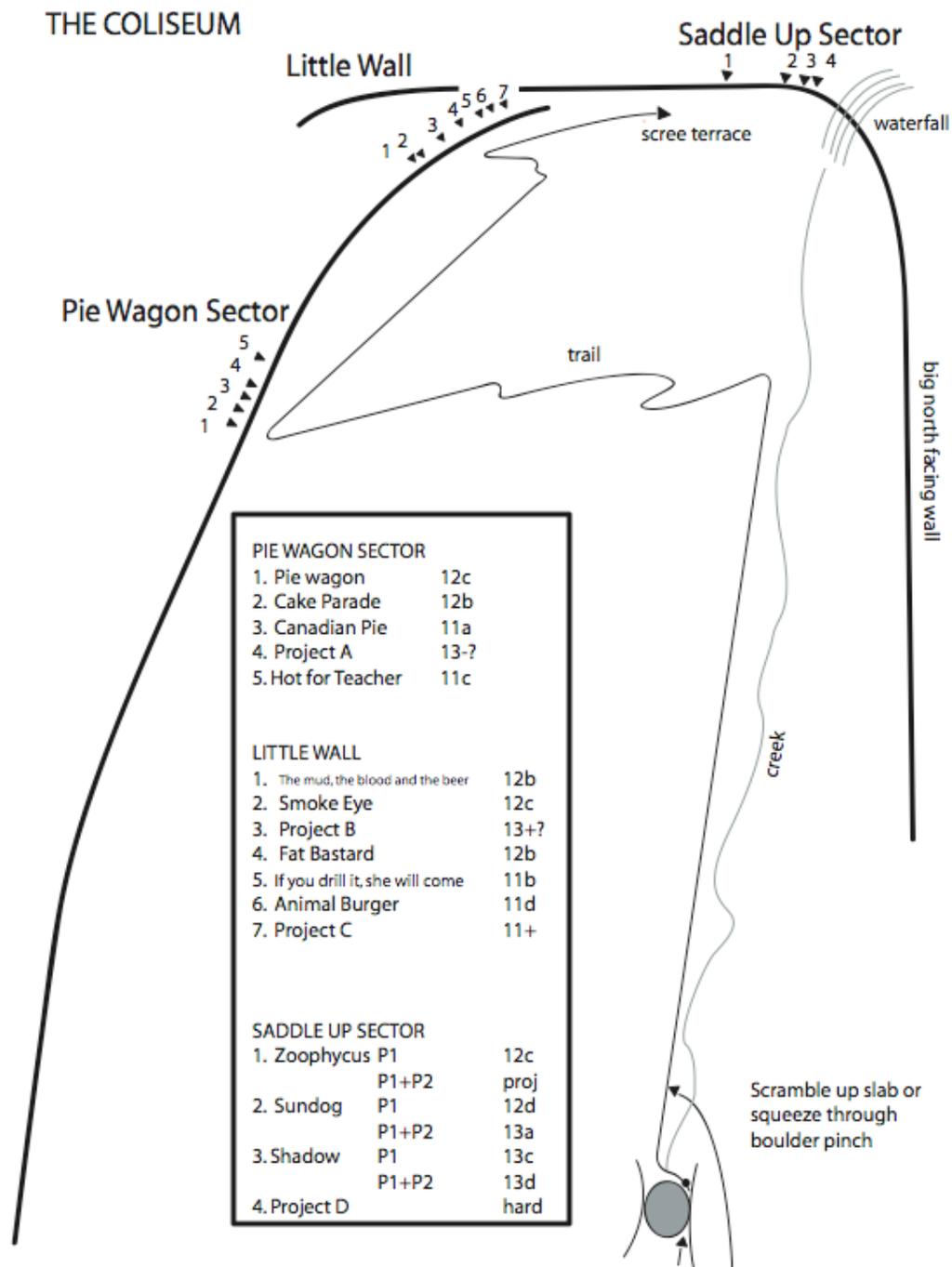
Matt, Ross, and Simon

APPROACH

Park at the Alpine Club lot. Take the trail that starts opposite the maintenance shed and heads up Grotto Mountain. Drop into the drainage when the trail forks, then continue up the drainage. You will get cliffed-out half way up, but contour up left 20 meters or so and re-enter the creek bed by down climbing. Continue up a while, past the "Hideaway Crag" on your left until you are presented with the choice of a slab on the right of the creek-bed or a chimney/boulder choke straight up. Take your pick. I'd go slab unless it's wet. Continue up the creek a short while, then take switchbacks up the slope on your left.

One hour.

For the descent, it may be nicer to leave the creek-bed a few hundred meters downstream of the hideaway crag where some blue flagging tape leads up and left (east) out of the drainage. Grotto mountain descent trails (that crisscross all over) can then be followed down.



THE ROUTES

-described from left to right.

Pie Wagon Wall

Pie Wagon 12c

The namesake route. A midway rest keeps the grade reasonable. Crux through the grey roof at the top. 30 meters.

Cake Parade 12b

Great roof crux midway. Keep it together to the top. 30 meters.

Canadian Pie 11a

The long right-facing corner. The higher you get, the better it gets. Then it ends. Full 30 meters.

Project A**Hot for Teacher 11c**

Five bolts. Feels like a lot of climbing.

Little Wall**The Mud, the Blood and the Beer 12b**

Hard undercut start, but it keeps going. It may be acceptable to stick clip the first two bolts. 20 meters.

Smoke Eye 12c

Don't build a fire right under it, even if it's really cold. Fun, bouldery middle section. 20 meters.

Project B**Fat Bastard 12b**

Left of the tree. Thin vertical bouldering through three bolts, easy, then slabby slab to the anchors. One with character. Six bolts, 15 meters.

If You Drill It, She Will Come 11b

The trail deposits you at this warm up classic. Very good rock. Six bolts, 15 meters.

Animal Burger 11d

Left of two trees. Five bolts. Excellent sustained route. Five bolts, 15 meters.

Project C 11+

Undercut start behind the two trees. Five bolts, 15 meters.

Saddle Up Sector

(Grades are given for first and second anchors. From second anchors do two lowers)

Zoophycus 12c, proj.

Just right of the huge grey streak that descends from the top of the cliff. No stopper moves, pump crux below the anchors. A few holds are often wet in spring, but don't let this deter you. Lower off is a full 35 meters from first anchors. Tie a knot in the end! A few longer slings reduce drag. 16 bolts to first anchors.

Project D

A few meters right of Zoophycus.
~100 meters to the right is Sundog

Sundog 12d, 13a

Starts in a right-facing corner for two bolts, then a ledge, then an overhanging ramp and beyond. Back clean the first two bolts to reduce drag. Use long slings where needed. The hardest section is in the first pitch, but the second pitch is an endurance test. Grade is for those with endurance!

18 bolts plus anchors. 32 meters to first anchor, 45m to second anchor.

Shadow 13c, 13d

The large and overhanging right-facing corner through the middle section is the obvious feature. Funky and technical: should keep the riffraff away. Leaving the roof at the top of the corner is difficult. Enduro crux at 40 meters. Ends near the Sundog anchors.

17 bolts plus anchors. 32 meters to first anchors, 45 to second anchors.

Project E