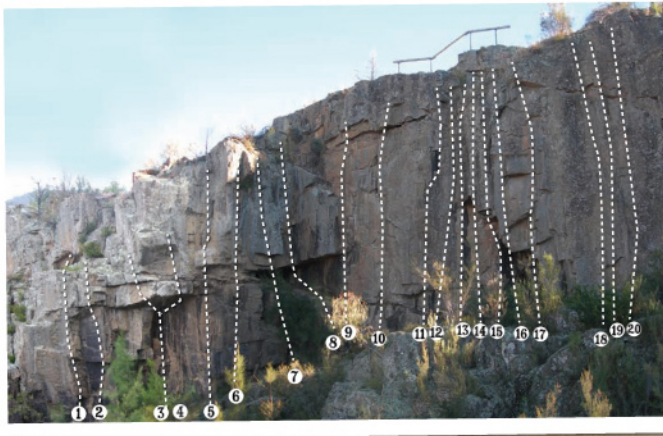
RED ROCKS GORGE & Kambah Rocks

Kambah Rocks

The local popular top rope crag with climbs from 8 to 10m. Nice and shady on a summers afternoon and it has a good swimming hole a couple of metres away. Kambah has many routes packed densely pack together and every part of the cliff has been climbed on. While some leading bolts still exist – don't bother.

The routes that are not in bold are largely too crap to worry about or have been reclaimed in some way by nature. The climbs down the left hand end have their start obstructed by a nasty black berry bush.

Ensure that you take a 3-5m long sling to set up anchors. Back up and note that the rail was not intended as an anchor.



1. **Close Suspects, 22**
2. **Downward Bound, 20**
3. **Romance in the Cow Paddocks, 20**
4. **Right hand variant, 24**
5. **Prosthetics, 18**
6. **Blurred Vision, 20**
7. **The Hanging Garden, 15**
8. **Robot Monster, 20**
9. **Dead Fish Crack, 20**
10. **Standing Room Only, 21**
11. **Scrofula, 22**
12. **Closed Circuit, 20** Blunt arete
13. **Charlotte Sometimes, 19** Corner
14. **Robbins Memorial Route, 19**
15. **Extremely Anal, 22**
16. **Uncut Pork, 24**
17. **Missionary Positions, 23**
18. **The Bummer, 14**
19. **Vandalism Behaviour, 17**
20. **Silent Running, 18**
21. **Heat and Dust, 18**

RED ROCKS GORGE

Red Rocks is the largest of the Canberra river crags and with Kambah Rocks, is the closest to town (so close that it's marked in the street directory). The cliff provides excellent climbing on steep, angular rock. Though there are only a handful of routes, all are worthwhile and a few are proper classics. Add to this the picturesque casurina studded gorge, beautiful swimming, a couple of good boulders and after-work convenience. It's not Taipan, you wouldn't fly across the country to climb here, but it's good for a town crag.

Climbing is banned here between August 1st and January 1st every year because of the peregrine falcons that nest on the cliff. Please respect the seasonal climbing ban.

HISTORY

Red Rocks originally saw development in the early 90's. From reading the first ascent details, a good guess would be that Mike Peck found the place then called all his mates, could be wrong though. Thanks to the CCA, the crag has been rebolted with stainless steel. All routes now have quality hangers and lower offs that avoid the mantles onto dirty ledges. For those who have shied away because the climbing was too difficult, the crag now sports a few easier routes.

At this point it seems traditional for guidebook editors to carry on about how visitors find the grades stiff. But you know, just like everywhere else, once you get used to the rock, these grades are more or less right.

SEASON & GEAR

Red Rocks is fantastic on clear winter mornings as it's fairly sheltered from wind and catches the sun from first thing (bear this in mind before you go and risk frostbite at Booroomba). Summer afternoons are also pretty good as long as there's enough water running for a bit of a swim.

This crag responds well to a drought. The river is easy to cross and the rock stays clean. Unfortunately, heavy rain brings lots of silty run-off and some of the routes need a little cleaning (a toothbrush won't cut it, send your draw monkey up with a dunnybrush)

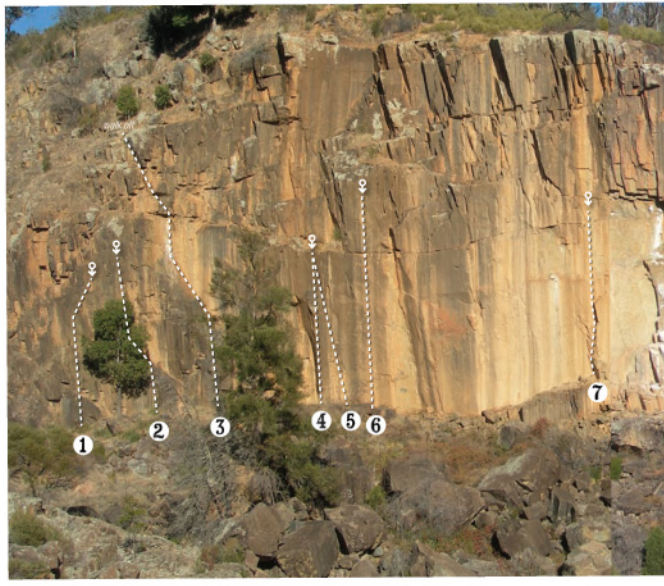
Many of the climbs here require a full 60m rope. You can make it work with a 50m in an old-school, dodgy way (abseil off the long routes, hang off the ends and jump). Remember to put a knot at the end of your rope.

All climbs are sport routes unless otherwise mentioned, the rack for the crag is small (unless you're foolish enough to climb the crack at the left hand end). For all the real climbs, you can get away with a set of 1-10 rocks and #0.5 and #3.5 friends. Other, optional rack is listed in the route descriptions.

GEOLOGY

Red rocks is made of solidish volcanic rock (Rhyolite? Rhyodacite? Rhyoda-lay-ee-who really cares?). Banana Benders and Taswegians have plenty of similar stuff at home so they may not be too impressed. Everyone else should find it different enough from their 'local' to be worth a trip or two.

The lower section on the right side of the cliff features river polished, black rock which is as smooth as glass and provides some of the funkier climbing. Most routes are quite long but have at least one ledge. This design feature wrecks the chance for staminafests but keeps the grades reasonable.



1 Ingrid Bergmann 14 10m
Easiest route on the crag. *Justin Ryan 2007*

2 Milla Jovovich 14 12m
Justin Ryan 2007

3 Corner Crack 14 *Some natural pro required*
Nasty! Take small wires and cams.

4 Listerine 24? 15m
Up the arête. *Justin Ryan 2007*

5 Wide World Of Sports 23 15m
First route on the crag. *Mick Peck, Simon Carter 1991*

6 Open Project

7 Beautiful and Bald Like Barten 24 10m
Short but hard all the way. Five bolts and a thin crux up the pale wall. Start in the vague corner on a small ledge. *Tony Barten, Andrew Bull 1991*

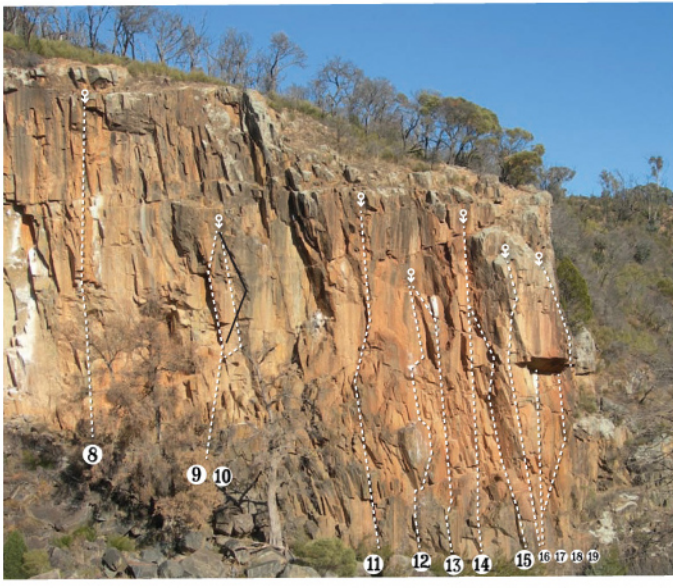
8 Mills and Boon 23 28m
A great long route with hard moves all the way. A few loose bits and lots of runoff after rain.Start on the small ledge below the short, shallow chimney. Climb chimney to the ledge at 6m. Tend left through the steep stuff to lower off just below the top. *Peter Mills, John Fantini 1992*

9 Straight Edged Emo 22 18m
Start up Carp Attack then up arête to finish at shared chains. *Justin Ryan, Adam Roberts 2007*

10 Carp Attack 22 18m
Well protected and easy through the lower section, and then a few good, harder moves above. *Mick Peck, C.Patrick 1992*

11 Instant Inches 20 28m
An excellent route, tricky sections separated by easy climbing. Starting at the vague, left facing arête. Be wary of blocks which, though quiet stable, seem to be completely detached. *Andrew Bull, Tony Barten 1991*

12 Red Sorghum 18 18m
Classic. Start in a short, left facing corner. Traverse diagonally right up the slab then straight up following bolts. *Mick Peck, Brogan Bunt, 1992*



13 The Long Goodbye 22 18m
Start at the distinctive fin, boulder to the ledge then head straight up the face. For the nervous types, a #1 friend with a sling protects the easy but runout bit off the first ledge. Finish for Red Sorghum. *Mick Peck, Brogan Bunt 1992*

14 Tahini 20 28m *Some natural pro required*
Start to the right of The Long Goodbye. Boulder to ledge, then up the steep wall. Squirm into a short corner (vital #0.5 friend), mantle ledge, then step right and join Bosch Imperialist to the top. Optional #1/1.5 friend at first ledge, then #0.5 friend and wires. *Mike Peck, John Stone, Ken Lock 1991*

15 Bosch Imperialist 20 28m *Some natural pro required*
Classic! Start off the boulder, and slide on up the smooth grey wall to the ledge. Up funky corner and steep wall to stance, place a 3.5 friend then mantle leftwards onto ledge. Keep stemming above the ledge, passing bolts and wire slots to grunt and mantle rightwards onto top ledge (helpful #7 rock right in top of corner). Optional #2.5 and #3 friends on the low ledge, then #3.5 friend and wires. *Mike Peck, Ken Lock, John Stone 1991*

The next four routes share the same start

16 In The End Zone 24 25m
The mega route of the crag. Follows the obvious blunt arête at the right end of the cliff. The route originally climbed through to the ledge and anchor of B.I. (if you choose to finish this way, take one bolt plate and rap rather than lowering off). *Tony Barter, Andrew Bull 1991*

17 Willy Wonka 18 15m
Start in the same spot as ITEZ then up and right to the set of chains under the roof. *Justin Ryan 2006*

18 Willie the Pooh 16 15m
Climb The Little Unknown, but stop at the chains before the overlap.

19 The Little Unknown 19 30m
Climb Willie the Pooh tending right before the chains. Hard through the overlap; better than it looks and quite long.
First Ascent Unknown