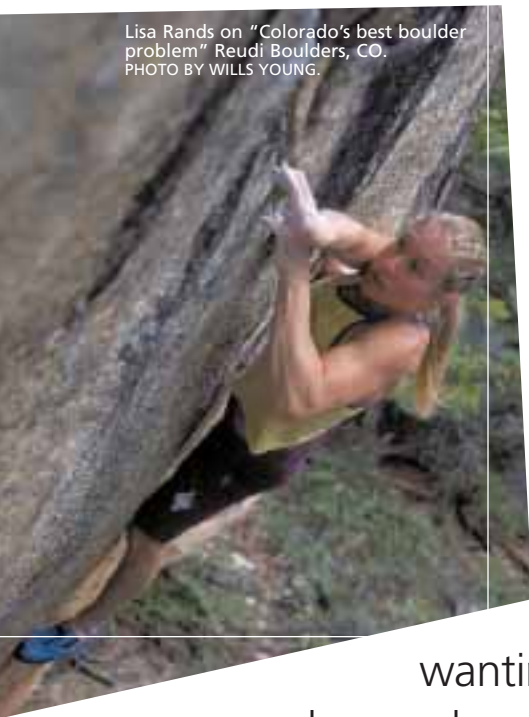


Lisa Rands on "Colorado's best boulder problem" Reudi Boulders, CO. PHOTO BY WILLS YOUNG.



Lisa Rands is one of the top women boulderers in America, and with her ascents of hard, highball problems such as Midnight Lighting and Plain High Drifter it is not hard to see why. Hoping to get some tips on sending hard problems and not wanting to miss an opportunity to talk with a hot chick who cranks, we decided to have a chat with Lisa.

**How long have you been climbing? When did you get into bouldering?**

I'm 26 and I started climbing when I was 17. I had friends who were into bouldering and climbing at Joshua Tree. I started off bouldering only because there was a place right by my parent's house that I could go to. I got into crack climbing for a few years because I wanted to aid climb. I wanted to learn how to place pro. My goal was to do a route on El Cap. I never accomplished that.

**Are you still working toward that or have you abandoned it now?**

I think some day I'll do it, but I'm not working toward it. I've realized I'll come back to it in the future. I got introduced to bouldering pretty hardcore about four years ago so that's what I've been doing.

**Social or solitary climber?**

Now I'm pretty social. I like to hang out with a bunch of friends on a nice day.

**Hottest climber dude?**

I have a boyfriend, I can't answer that.

**Shoes painfully tight or comfy?**

I would go for painful.

**How has climbing changed your view of yourself as a woman or has it?**

I have to remind myself that I like to paint my nails, do girlie things. I guess it's made me more aware of comments that I hear that I am a woman. I get a lot of positive feedback and a lot of negative feedback. It's really made me aware that there is a difference between what women are bouldering and what men are bouldering. A lot of it has to do with the rating scale, body physiology, I think this is a long topic.

**Do you find that men out at the crags are supportive of you or that they feel competitive with you and intimidated by you?**

I don't want to generalize. On average, I feel that I have a lot of positive feedback. I don't really feel that they are competitive with me. When I'm out there bouldering with them I feel like I'm just another boulderer. I think some men are really competitive and are offended if a woman is climbing harder than them and others are just psyched to see it. It depends on your personality and ego. I pretty much grew up climbing with guys, so I'm used to climbing with them. I find it odd when it's pointed out to me that I'm a woman. I've always climbed with

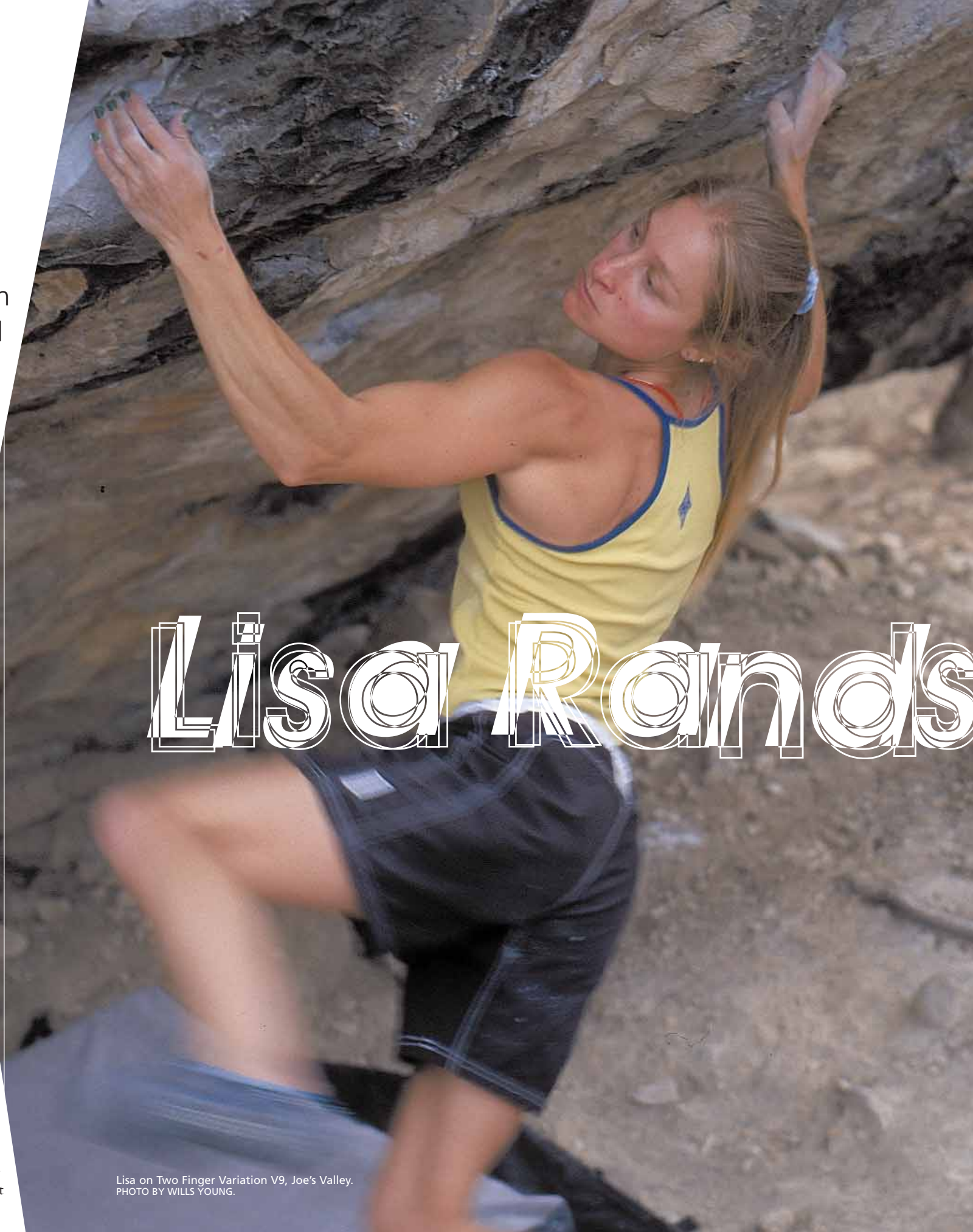
guys and I've always been accepted. So why is it different now that I'm climbing harder?

**Have you ever tried to make the statement that women are just as capable or more so than men when it comes to climbing? Or do you feel that they are different completely and they should be judged differently?**

I don't think that women should be judged with what men are doing. I think it's pretty obvious our bodies are different. On average, women are smaller and everything seems to be based on this ratings scale. To be honest, I find as soon as boulder problems go up to v1.0 and harder, the holds just get further away and it's really difficult to boulder at what people consider a hard grade, which is just based on an arbitrary ratings scale.

**So let's talk about ratings. Are you pro or anti ratings?**

I use ratings to judge how I'm bouldering. At the same time, I'm very aware that



# Lisa Rands

Lisa on Two Finger Variation V9, Joe's Valley. PHOTO BY WILLS YOUNG.

**I FIND IT ODD WHEN IT'S POINTED OUT TO ME THAT I'M A WOMAN. I'VE ALWAYS CLIMBED WITH GUYS AND I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ACCEPTED. SO WHY IS IT DIFFERENT NOW THAT I'M CLIMBING HARDER?**

the ratings are not designed for somebody my size. I won't want to climb a certain boulder problem because it's given a hard rating versus one that has an easier rating but looks better to me. I may not find the one with the harder rating to be really harder. Oftentimes there are certain problems that are v6 or v8 and I find them extremely difficult, maybe there's a long reach on them. I guess I get a general idea of what ratings are using this ratings scale, but I have to keep in mind it's not written in stone. I think they

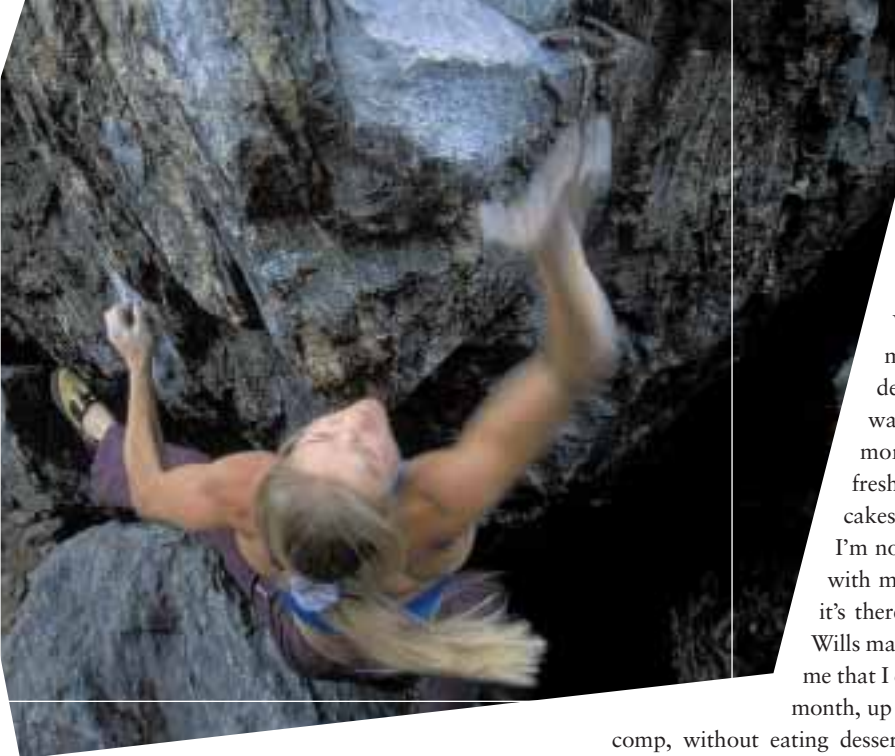
serve a purpose. They make you realize how you are climbing, but you just can't completely rely on them.

**What is it that you envy the most in someone else's style?**

I like watching people who make it look really easy and maybe they are struggling but you just don't know. I think it goes back to technique. When you see somebody just completely technique through a hard sequence, you're just like, "wow, I wish I could do that". Then I get on and my feet are cutting. It's funny when you watch somebody who's just making a mess out of it. They're just crunching like mad and then you'll see someone who looks like the weaker climber just dance through it, not a peep. I really respect people like that. My bouldering style isn't like that.

**So what are your views on ethics and access? Anything you see out there that bugs you or things that you think people could work on?**

I think people are becoming aware that there is a link between the two and you have to protect the areas that we climb in or else they might get shut down. I think for the most part people, especially boulderers, are pretty clean. The only thing is when I have seen people put their pad on plants and bushes and then you find finger tape lying round the crag. Other than that, I think that people are pretty good and pretty aware. With Hueco closing down, it is a possibility that if you don't take care of the area and take responsibility you could lose the area. I don't have a problem picking up someone's trash, I just wish they would realize that you can't leave the trash. We all need to do our part.



**What is it that you love most about bouldering?**

I get asked this question so much and I never have a good answer. There is just something about it that I enjoy. I like not fiddling with gear and the fact that you can easily try a bunch. It's social, you can hang out with friends on a nice sunny day. I guess there's just some weird high you get when topping out a hard boulder problem, especially if it's got a hard mantle. You just push yourself physically, the moves look impossible, but you are doing them.

**Were you always athletic or has climbing inspired you and suddenly you became more motivated get stronger?**

No, I was always athletic. I was a little tomboy. I was always running around the neighborhood doing stupid things. I did gymnastics when I was younger. In high school I ran track and field and cross country. I've always had a lot of upper body strength. I've always been able to do as many pull-ups as the guys. It's just genetics, if you saw my brother you would understand. My brother is just a mass of muscle. He doesn't climb. He's always been into bike racing, biathlons, and triathlons. He went to a [rock] gym once and then said "man sis, I didn't realize how hard that was." I think he thought it was easy because I could do it.

**Do you modify your diet a lot, like have a strict rice and...?**

Not even. I gain weight when I travel because I love cakes and chocolates.

Wills' mom makes lots of desserts. You wake up every morning with fresh scones and cakes and things. I'm not good at all with moderation. If it's there I must eat. Wills made a bet with me that I couldn't go a month, up until the OR

comp, without eating desserts. I think I pulled it off. I found a way to make a cake with sweetener instead of sugar, so I considered that not a dessert. He bought it. I eat big portions. I never really ate around women, and my brother is a huge eater, so I just thought that was how you ate. Now I started hanging out with climber guys, and I'm just like "that's it, that's all you're having."

**How hard do you train and do you train for specific problems or just train in general?**

I don't train for specific problems...I just climb. I usually start the season doing a lot of mileage, just completing a lot of different problems and getting my technique back. Getting my bouldering head back for climbing high off the ground and then I just start mixing it up and just start trying harder problems. I'm into doing intervals on boulder problems. I just start bumping up the level day after day and eventually you suddenly feel really fit, and then I'll try something hard.

**In your opinion, what is the most important factor in climbing hard problems?**

For me, just building my base up. I think if you have a good base of boulder problems, you just keep bumping the base level up. It just makes sense that you're

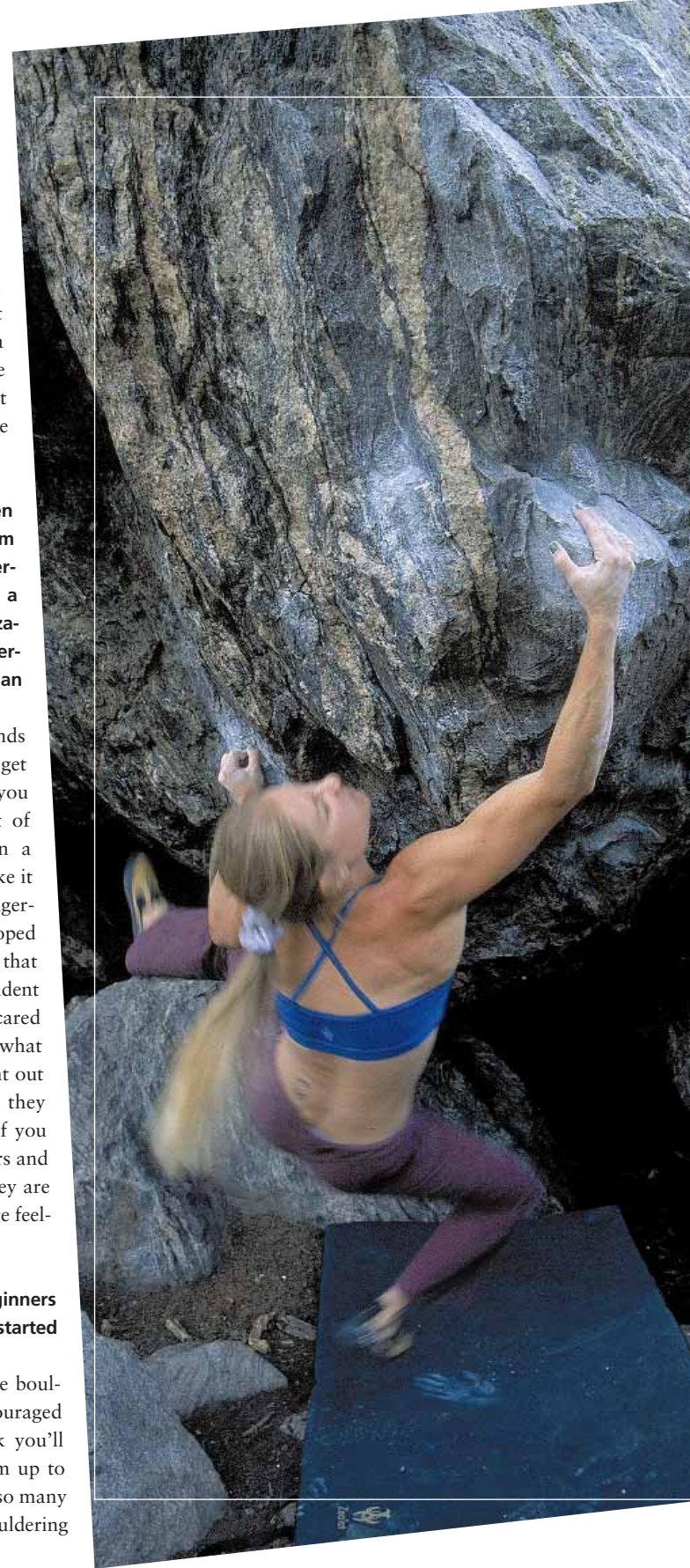
then going to bump up what you can work. You don't just go out there and say "I've got to climb a hard problem." Just try one move, one move, and not ever get any fitness in, I think you lose your motivation that way.

**I have heard from many women climbers that they shy away from bouldering because of the perceived danger of not being on a rope. This is sort of a generalization, but do you feel that bouldering is more or less dangerous than roped climbing?**

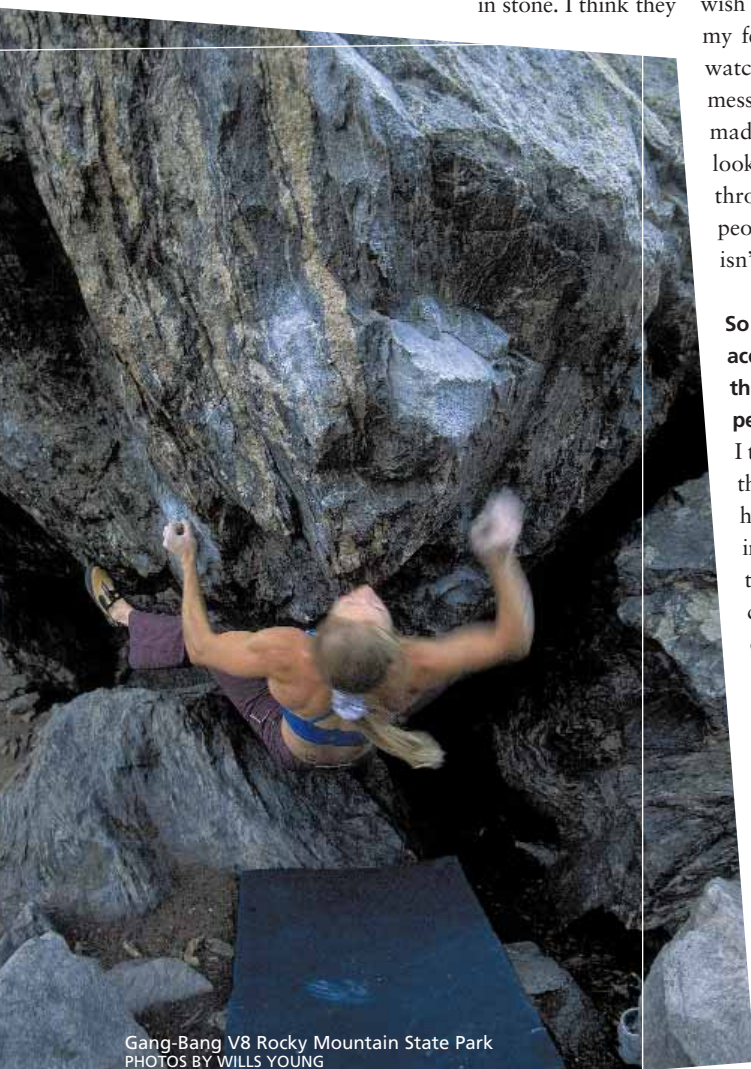
I've always felt that it just depends on how careful you are. You can get just as hurt roped climbing as you can bouldering. I hear of a lot of crazy accidents that happen on a rope. Your sport is what you make it and if you're not careful, it's dangerous whether it's bouldering or roped climbing. I guess I just don't have that much fear of getting in an accident bouldering, whereas I'm pretty scared falling on a rope. I think it's just what you do. Maybe if ...women...went out bouldering for a while, then they would get comfortable with it. If you start off climbing smaller boulders and then suddenly you just realize they are getting taller and taller, and you're feeling comfortable with it.

**Any tips for women and/or beginners in general who are trying to get started in bouldering?**

They're a lot of women out there bouldering now. Just don't get discouraged and if you enjoy it then I think you'll stick with it. Make sure to warm up to keep yourself injury free. I think so many more women are out there bouldering now, it's great. **VB**



**I GUESS THERE'S JUST SOME WEIRD HIGH YOU GET WHEN TOPPING OUT A HARD BOULDER PROBLEM, ESPECIALLY IF IT'S GOT A HARD MANTLE. YOU JUST PUSH YOURSELF PHYSICALLY, THE MOVES LOOK IMPOSSIBLE, BUT YOU ARE DOING THEM.**



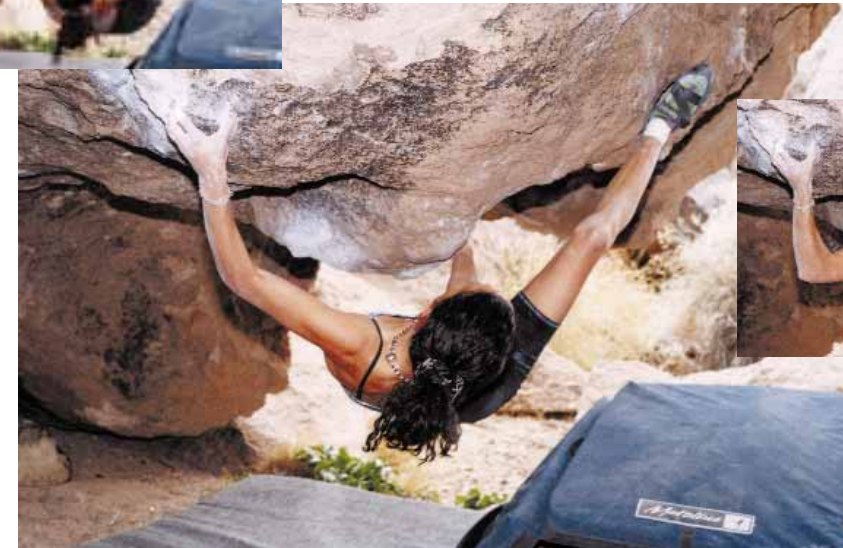
Gang-Bang V8 Rocky Mountain State Park  
PHOTOS BY WILLS YOUNG

# You **know** you're a boulderer when...

BY BARNEY WATERS

- 1 You arrive at your date's house and spend the evening staring at the fieldstone fireplace wondering if it will go.
- 2 You blame your recent weight gain on accidental black fly consumption.
- 3 As a result, DEET has become less of a necessary evil and more like ketchup.
- 4 You think bug spray is when mosquitoes tell all of their friends how many people they've bitten that day.
- 5 You easily won the 'who has the driest hands' competition among a field that included Ghandi, a Nigerian sand salesman and an 86 year old camel.
- 6 You never describe your elbow tendonitis as 'tennis elbow' in case anyone thinks you actually play tennis.
- 7 You can get from your front door to the kitchen and into the bathroom without touching the floor.
- 8 You can be a climber...and scared of heights.
- 9 You're always the 'go to' person when a jar needs opening.
- 10 The words 'a sweet finger crack' don't amuse you in the slightest.
- 11 People assume you are a scientist for a company making vegetable based juice drinks after you told them you were "working on a V8 problem".
- 12 You admit that you once spent money to get a rack. You were desperate, she was young and needed the money.
- 13 The cupboard that contains your climbing shoes smells like a skunk crawled in there and died in the early 18th century after eating an anchovy sandwich.
- 14 After a bouldering session your feet retain the skunk smell and are also glowing orange from the shoe dye, attracting moths from a distance and then killing them at close range, a condition known as 'camp fire foot'.
- 15 A 'mixed' route to you is one where you also need to use your feet.
- 16 Active Pro = Heidi Fleiss out jogging.
- 17 Wired Stoppers = spotters after multiple cups of coffee.
- 18 Shock load = the result of crapping yourself on a highball.

PHOTO BY PATTUCCO PHOTO



## Alexa McBean on Cow Skull V6, Sad Boulders, Bishop

PHOTOS BY KEVIN MCBEAN

