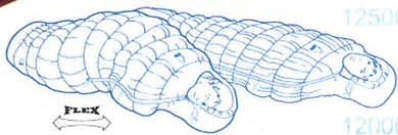


SIERRA
DESIGNS

FLEX-OLGY (n):

NITRO 30: 1 lb 10 oz

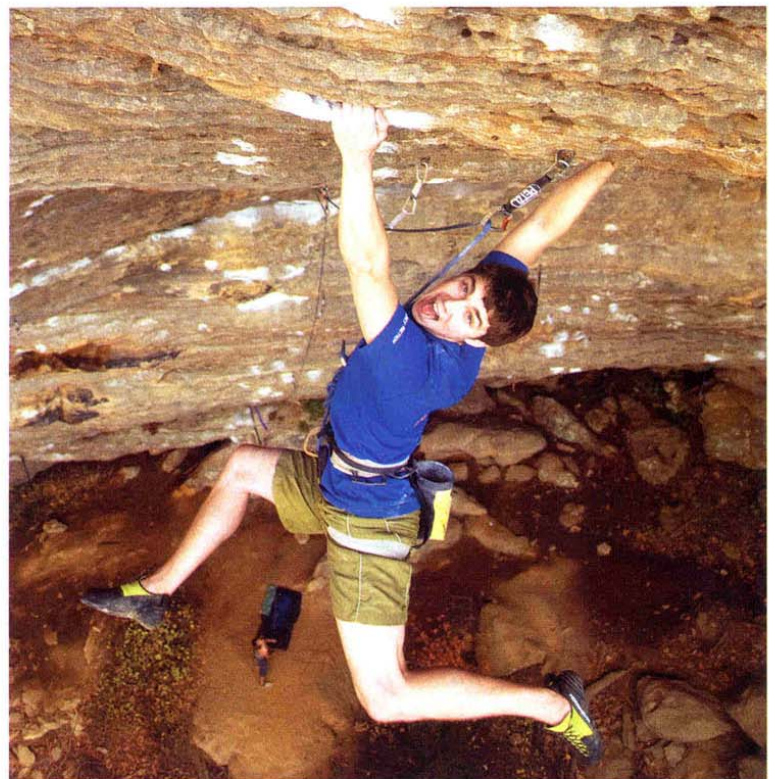


THE SCIENCE OF
THERMAL EFFICIENCY
WITH A CUSTOM-FIT

SPOTLIGHT

BY ALEX LOWTHER

04.08



Greg Kerzhner, with rope, making light work of *BOHICA* (5.13b).

MORE THAN ONE TRICK

The kid who soloed *BOHICA*

ONE SUMMER DAY in 2006, then 17-year-old Greg Kerzhner arrived at the Motherlode in the Red River Gorge, Kentucky, looked around, and saw no one he knew to ask for a belay. Spontaneously, he decided to climb without one, up *BOHICA* (5.13b).

Located in the Madness Cave sector of the Motherlode, *BOHICA* is one of the steepest and most sustained routes at the Red, zipping up 110 feet of severely overhanging finger jugs.

The Motherlode is a standing tsunami of sandstone rearing up suddenly out of the Eastern Kentucky forest. The Madness Cave lies at the innermost reaches of the crag, reposing at more than 45 degrees past vertical over a massive, boulder-strewn hole excavated by the waterfall that pours over its lip. It is littered with positive holds, which, being sandstone, can break. Kerzhner later repeated the solo for a photographer.

Kerzhner is young, 18 as of May. His parents, Jews from the Ural Province of Russia, won the green-card lottery, and jumped at the chance of emigration to avoid religious discrimination and requi-

site military service for their sons. Kerzhner was 10 when the family relocated to Cleveland, Ohio.

The first day of school, speaking no English, he went attired in pink Capri pants and Velero Power Ranger shoes, and was for the rest of the year dubbed "Power Ranger shoes" by his witty fellow fourth-graders.

As soon as Kerzhner's older brother, Mike, got his license, he began driving himself and Greg six hours south to the Red River Gorge to go climbing.

"My parents were both busy at work and let me do whatever I wanted as long as I paid for it and kept my grades up. I may have done a few things younger than I should have, but I would not have my childhood any other way," says Greg.

Last summer, having ticked the whole Motherlode, including *Thanatopsis* (5.14b), and most of the Red's testpieces, Kerzhner drove alone to Rifle, Colorado, where he redpointed *Zulu* (5.14a), *Living in Fear* (5.13d) and *Simply Read* (5.13d), all in short order. He started at Duke University in the fall on a full scholarship.

DAN BRAYACK

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