

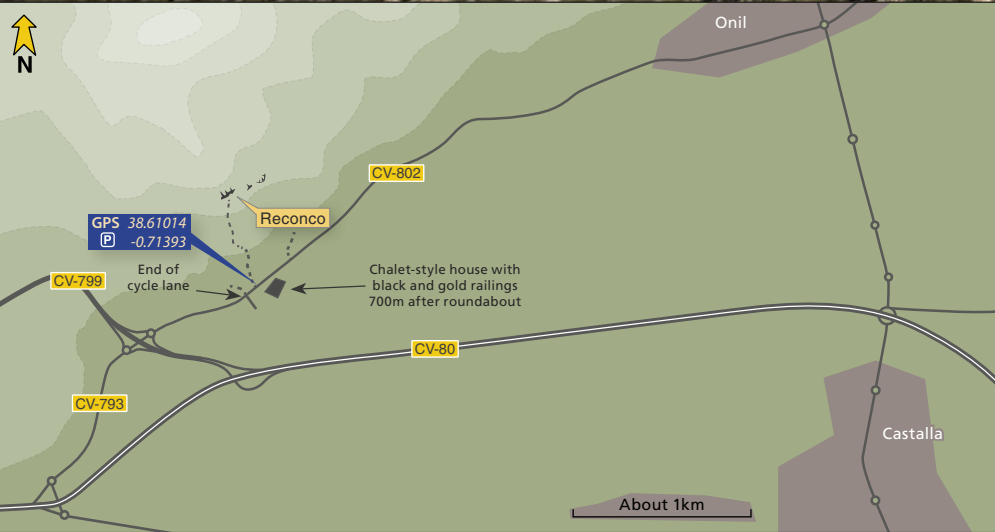
Reconco is a fine crag with a good range of middle grade routes on lovely pocketed rock; it is a pity the place isn't bigger. It is beautifully situated on a hillside above a rural valley and is easy to find. The only slight drawback is its distance from the main accommodation spots but using the motorways will get you here surprisingly quickly. It makes a good alternative to the popular areas at Toix and Sella with a similar grade range. Most of the routes are long single pitches, although there are a few two pitch routes as well. All the routes are clean and well-equipped but the rock has many small pockets and is a bit hard on the skin. Route finding shouldn't be a problem as the names and grades are stamped on tags on many of the first bolts and there are occasional names painted on the rock.

Approach

From the coast, leave the AP-7 which is initially signed to 'San Vicente' and then 'Alcoi' and take the CV-80 towards Castalla. After passing Castalla, head west on the CV-80 towards Sax and Villena and get off at Junction 13 (signed to Biar and Onil). Immediately turn right towards Onil and 0.7km after the roundabout is a chalet-style house on the right with black and gold railings. Park sensibly here, the cliff is clearly visible on the hillside directly above. Walk up the track right of the orchard, steeply up the wooded hillside and then up open slopes above.

Conditions

The crag faces just east of south and is exposed so it catches plenty of sun and any wind that is going. There is little shelter at the base of the wall apart from a single almond tree. Access isn't a problem at the moment but try to park with consideration to avoid antagonising the locals and don't block the access track.



Claire Aspinall climbing *Central* (5+) - page 144 - at Reconco. Photo: Mike Hutton



1 Espolón Aureli 5

1) 4+, 20m. 2) 5, 20m. The left edge of the cliff.

2 Xino xano 6b

Climb the lower slab then the bulges on better holds, left then right. The right-hand variation start is 6c and fingery.

3 Pata chula 5+

Excellent, now called *Poc Treslat* in the local guide. Climb a grey tufa streak and thin layback crack then move left. Steeper rock and a slab lead to the belay. There is an extension at 6a+.

4 El rey del sisa 6a+

Climb the rounded rib (hard) then go rightwards.

5 Corbella 6b

Start in an orange scoop and climb up this on pockets and past shrubbery onto a steep bubbly wall.

6 Pa en cubitos 6a+

Climb out of the right side of the scoop and trend slightly rightwards to a lower-off at the level of some ledges.

7 Gorbachov 6a

Follow small sharp holds and then easier jug-pulling as things steepen to a lower-off at the change in angle.

8 Tachar 6b+

Climb to and straight up the brown streak to the hole at its apex. Sharp, sustained and hard for the grade.

9 Desconeguda 5

A good, long route on excellent rock, the easiest hereabouts. The start is polished, after which things are fine. Climb straight up pocketed rock past a bush. Loop right then left to reach a lower-off. The short extension up the groove is worth doing even though it is only a couple of bolts long.



10 Sexta 6a

An excellent pitch. Climb flakes and cracks up a grey streak then past a white scar to a lower-off above a niche.

11 Sexta Extension 6a+

Climb *Sexta*, then traverse a long way up and right to the roof. Pull over to finish. This is around 40m so take care if lowering off.

12 Paris Texas 6a+

Start at the blue painted name and climb the white rib, passing a thread and then some ledges, to a lower-off in a bay.

Main Wall

The main wall is in a lovely sunny situation looking out over the orange and almond groves that surround Castalla. The rock is generally just less than vertical; the routes tend to be fingery and sustained.



13 Canal 6a

The left side of the scoop with a tricky start and finish.

14 Servina 6b+

Excellent climbing up the rounded scoop. The bulge at the start is tricky, as is the finish. There is a pointless lower-off in the middle of the crux moves.

15 Directa 6b

Another fine climb from the scratched name climb the right rib of the scoops to a small ledge. Lower-off here or, better, an extension (6a+) leads to the lower-off of *Sexta*.

16 Dit Laser 6a+

Start at a crack that rises diagonally to the right. Climb the broad front of the buttress to chains below the overlap.

17 Lengua Free 6b+

A good lower section through the diagonal overlap leads and up the sustained face to final desperate moves to the lower-off. Sadly it is easier to step left to the last route. An extension is 7a+.

18 La Perla del Caribe 6c

Climb to an overlap then pull through this and on up the hard grey face to an easier finish.



19 Chunay-Free 1 7a
Start left of the tree and climb steepening rock into a scoop. The leftward exit from this proves to be the crux.

20 En busca del Poset. 7b
Behind the right edge of the tree, an easy start leads to sustained climbing trending leftwards up the tan-coloured wall.

21 No es tan guay ... 7a+
Climb past the left edge of the prominent overlap then head up the steep sharp wall to a lower-off by a tree in a bay.

22 Gemma Boom 7a
Start behind the tree and climb the left-hand side of the pale grey streak by a fiercely sharp and sustained pitch.

23 Central 5+
This neat route follows the big flake and right-slanting overlap to a mid-height lower-off. The groove is mostly juggy, but there is one tricky section. *Photo on page 141.*

24 Chica de moda 6b+
1) 6a+, 2) 6b+. Climb right of the flake crack, then pull through the centre of the overlap to a tiny stance. A fine long pitch up the wall and a delectable blank slab leads to easy ground.

25 Ruda 6b+
1) 6b, 2) 6b+. The centre of the slab is sustained and crimpy with crucial moves at half height to a poor stance just below a bulge. Pass the bulge by moving out left (crux), then continue on finger holds through another bulge to easy ground.

26 La lágrima (P1) 6a
A good and popular pitch. Steep moves lead to a hole, and leaving this is tricky and sustained to a stance. From here there are two extensions/finishes.

27 La lágrima 6b
Pull left through the bulge and into the large hole of the teardrop. Exit from this (crux) and head for the top.

28 La lágrima derecha 7a
A superb right-hand finish along the undercut flakes with some well-positioned moves into the scoop.

29 La Pelma 5+
Tackle the left-hand line keeping left of the vegetated rock then move slightly right to the belay.

30 Sense por 5
From the bay, follow a pleasant flake up leftwards.

31 Fama de fuga (P1) 4
The easy slab to a stance.

32 Fama de fuga 7a
Above the stance the sustained wall leads to the bulge and a pleasant finishing scoop.

33 Super Ali (P1) 4
The unremarkable grassy slab.

34 Super Ali 6c
Above lurks a hard finish via the centre of the wall.

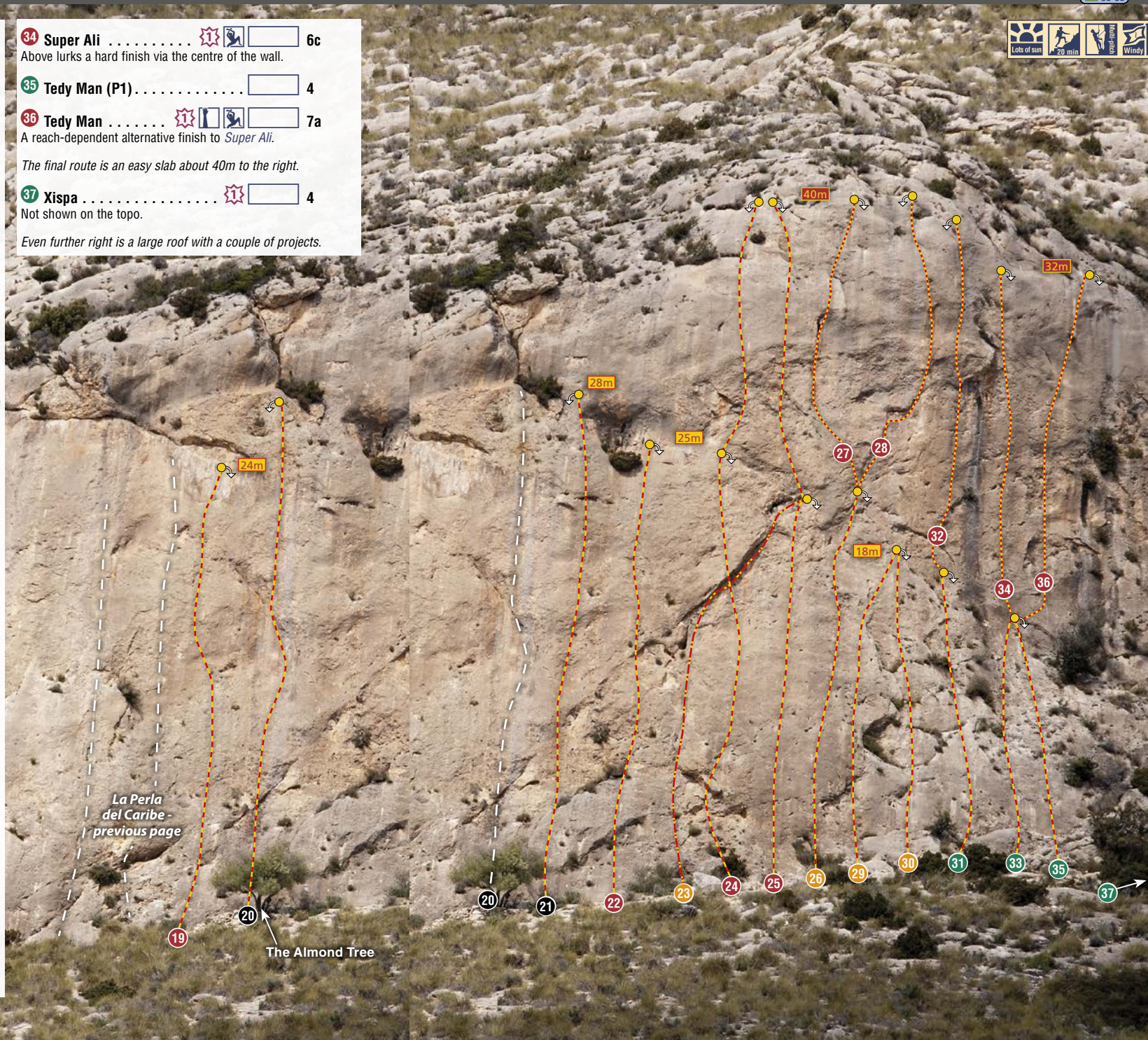
35 Tedy Man (P1) 4

36 Tedy Man 7a
A reach-dependent alternative finish to *Super Ali*.

The final route is an easy slab about 40m to the right.

37 Xispa 4
Not shown on the topo.

Even further right is a large roof with a couple of projects.





Sector Raconet

There are several buttresses spread across the hillside around the ridge to the right of the main wall. These are worth seeking out for somewhere different.

Approach - The crag must be approached from the Main Cliff path and **not directly from the road**. Head right across rough slopes (occasional cairns, no real path) from the main path once it leaves the trees. Alternatively, head down and right, around the ridge from the base of the Main Cliff.

The first buttress reached has half a dozen decent routes.




- 1 Los pepes**..... **1**   **7a**
The left-hand line on the grey shield.

- 2** Fan number one **2** 6b+
Photo opposite.

- 3 Aureli..... 2   6c

- 4 Vincent 1c

- 5 La spardeña** **2** **6a+**
Start up the ramp, then head up the neat wall.

- 6 Feliana**    **6b**
The longest route here starts up the grey slab on the right then continues up the headwall above.



Sector Virginieta

A bigger buttress away to the right has some worthwhile longer routes, which might be of interest to anyone looking for gentle multi-pitch outings. They are not marked on a topo. The crag is about 50m high and the best descent is by abseil.

- 7** Albaanna **1** 6a+

1) 5+, 2) 6a+. A slabby pitch weaves between the shrubbery to a stance under the steeper upper wall. Finish up this.

- 8 **Virginietta** 1 4+

1) 4+, 2) 4+. Trend right up the ramp then climb more directly to a stance on the right by a cave. Trend left to access a ramp which is followed rightwards to the top.

- 9** Massa Bonico **1**   **6b**

1) **6b**, 2) **6a+**. The pale slabs on the right are climbed to the highest ledge. Finish by weaving up the steep grey wall above.

Sector Barranquet

A similar distance right again is a short clean wall with another half a dozen decent looking routes from 6a+ to 7b. As ever the rock looks great, consult the local guide for more details.



Jack Geldard checking out somewhere a little different on *Fan number one* (6b+) - *opposite* - on the isolated Sector Raconet, a small wall with some decent routes. Photo: Alan James