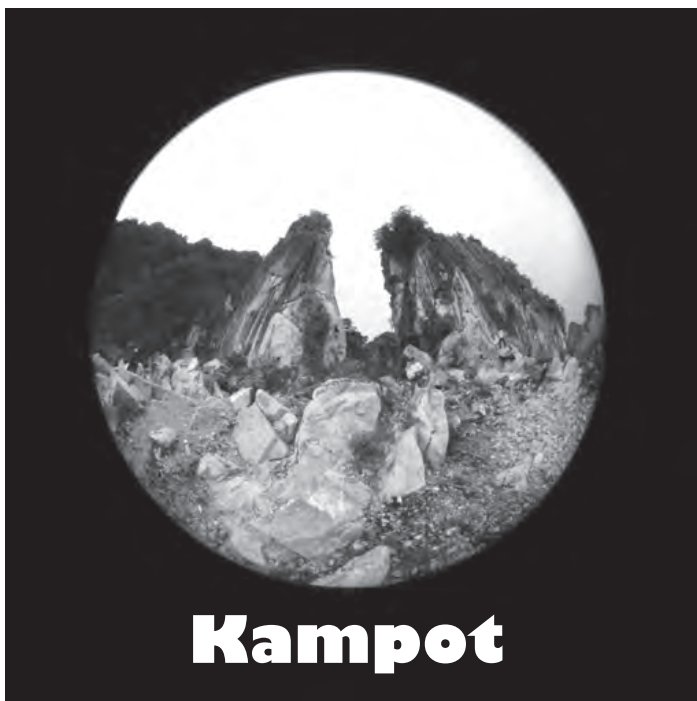
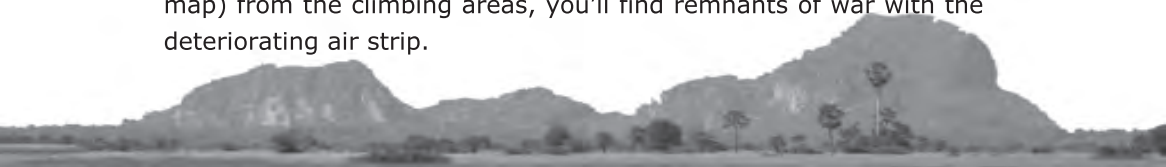


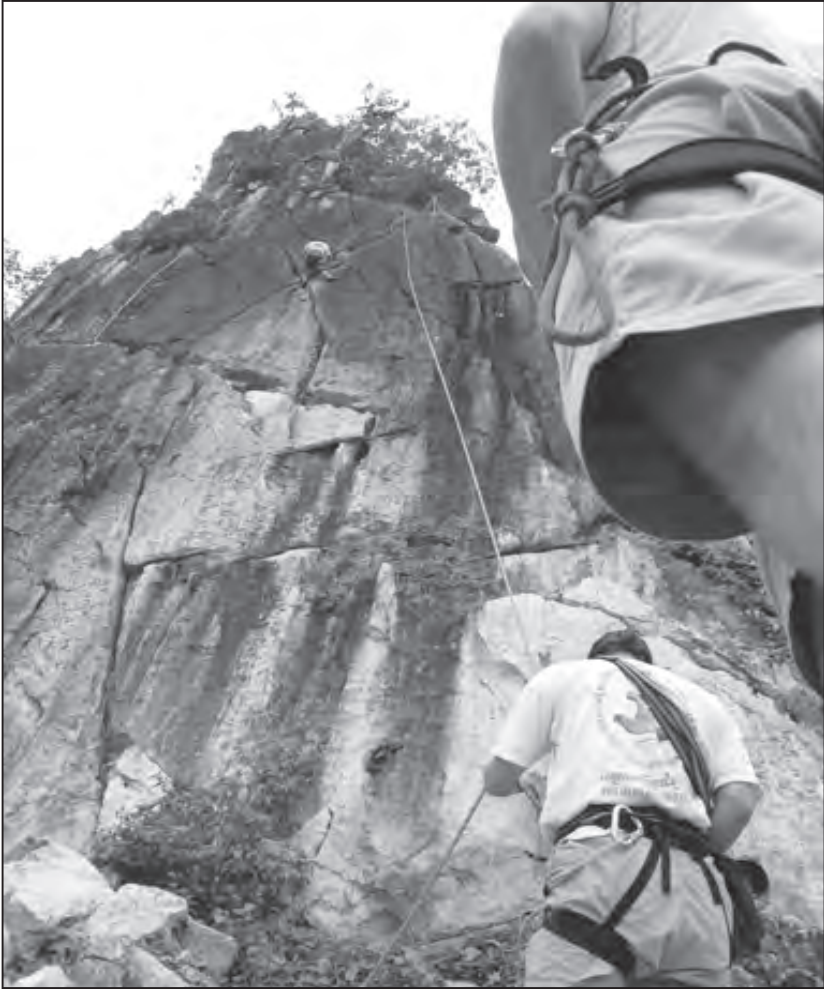


Overview

History of the Area: The Kampot/Kep area of Cambodia is one of the most beautiful areas of the county. It's mixture of sea and hills, green fields and friendly people will eventually make it one of the most visited areas of Cambodia. At present though, the area doesn't boast many tourists, so it's possible that you will see things seldom seen by foreign eyes. If you climb either Shark's Fin or Pillar Rock, you'll enjoy a view few have ever experienced in Cambodia.

History abounds in the area. If you venture into some of the local caves, you'll find graffiti from Scouting troupes announcing their presence in 1959 and you'll also find writing in Vietnamese (probably from more recent times when they were in Cambodia "liberating" the people in the 1980's). Just down the road (see map) from the climbing areas, you'll find remnants of war with the deteriorating air strip.





Ben Rawson on *Zen X*, BEN SHERIDAN
(Previous: Sharks Fin Rock fish eye Photo by BEN SHERIDAN)

The area is somewhat infamous as one of the last strongholds of the Khmer Rouge. Just a few kilometers south of this climbing site is a place called Phnom Voar (Vine Mountain), where in 1994 three westerners were abducted, and later killed, while traveling by train from Phnom Penh. Many in the area are soldiers from the Khmer



Rouge, but climbers have never had a negative experience.

In fact, if anything, the locals are more friendly here than in other locations in Cambodia. This could be perhaps because the head Monk at the local Pagoda is in such close proximity to the climbs and/or he's a positive role model to the local youth. Theft has never been an issue here, but as always, when traveling keep an eye on your things and conceal anything of value. If, however, you think something has been removed from your belongings it's best to go to the Pagoda and seek assistance there in resolving any issues.

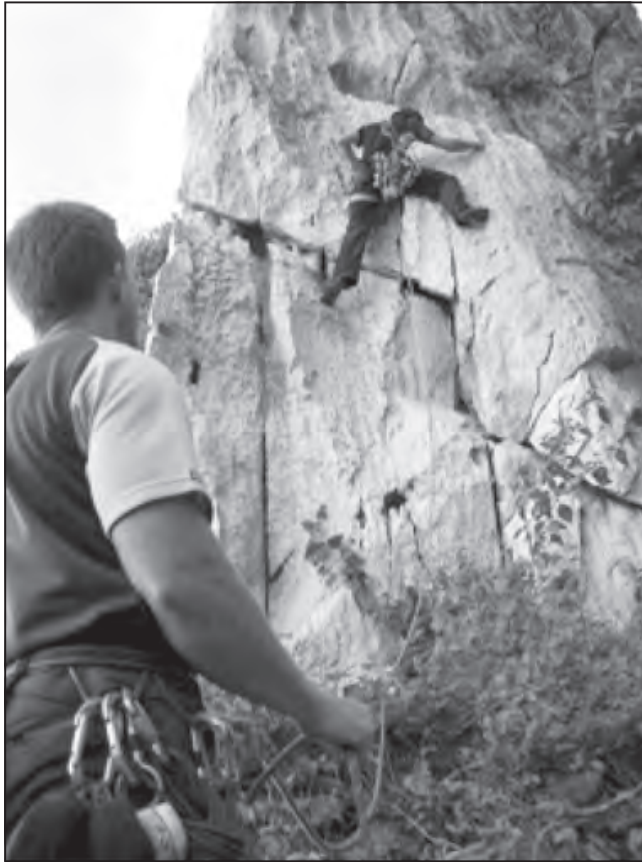
In more recent news, 2005 saw the conviction and subsequent capture of the leader responsible for the group of KR soldiers that abducted the foreigners. His name is Chhouk Rin and until 2005 he was living at Phnom Voar. He's now taken up residence within the prison system of Cambodia.

Trip Planning

Location: Kampong Trach District, Kampot province.

Camping: Spending the night at any of this areas climbing sites is feasible but not wise. Most Cambodians would most likely advise against it. However, if you are wanting to stay near the area instead of heading back to Kampot or Kep after a long day's climb a rather rundown guesthouse is located in town. Better yet, would be to stay at any of the local Pagodas. Thieves tend to stay away and the monks will likely welcome your presence there and look after your wellbeing. Another option is also to stay at a local's house that a few climbers have come to know over the years. His home is very near the climbing area and he speaks English well enough to be of assistance, his number is: 855- (0)11-630-835. A suggested donation to the family would be around \$5 per person. If you are going to attempt any of the above options don't forget a mosquito net.



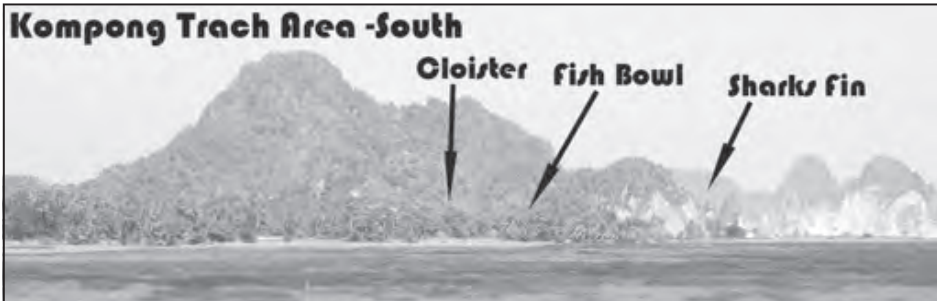


Ryan Sinclair on *Dorsal Fin*

Climbing Season: Kampot is very wet in the rainy season with anywhere from 1-5 small squalls daily which makes for wet and miserable climbing. So, it is suggested that you plan to visit this area between October and April. Between August and December the surrounding countryside is a lush green so if you can make it before the harvest the scenery is worth it!

Gear: Bring a full rack and gear for top-roping. In the not so distant future more sport routes will undoubtedly be developed on



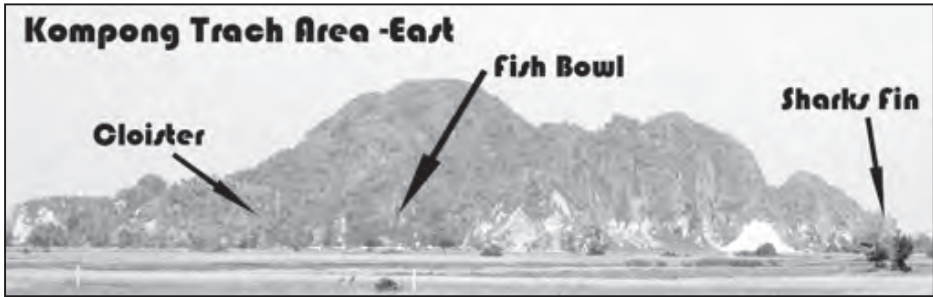


routes that don't have good placement so a sport rack might suffice in the coming years. For now it's for traditional climbers only.

Access: Although the locals think that the 'barangs' (foreigners) a bit nuts for climbing on the rocks, access has never been an issue in this area. "Officially" mountains cannot be owned by anyone in Cambodia, but many examples to the contrary exist, especially in Kampot province (some of the sites with the most potential are off limits). This area isn't off limits yet. The bigger issue in this area is blasting. And you'll know it when you visit the area that dynamite is used, and often. Although the locals are very cautious and will be particularly cautious around foreigners, one must keep a vigilant lookout. You will feel the earth shake a bit when they are blasting.

Services: The local town has a sizable market for fruit, drinks and restaurant type fare (during meal hours only), very basic soup in a pot or fried meat on rice. It is advised that you bring the foods that you'll need for the entire day with you instead of relying on the local fare. Drinks can be purchased at the local Pagoda as well.

Emergency Services: The closest building that resembles a hospital is in Kampot town, but as with the other climbing areas in Cambodia contacting emergency medical services is first priority (numbers in the appendix). Getting to Phnom Penh is your secondary priority. For snake, or spider bites refer to the appendix of

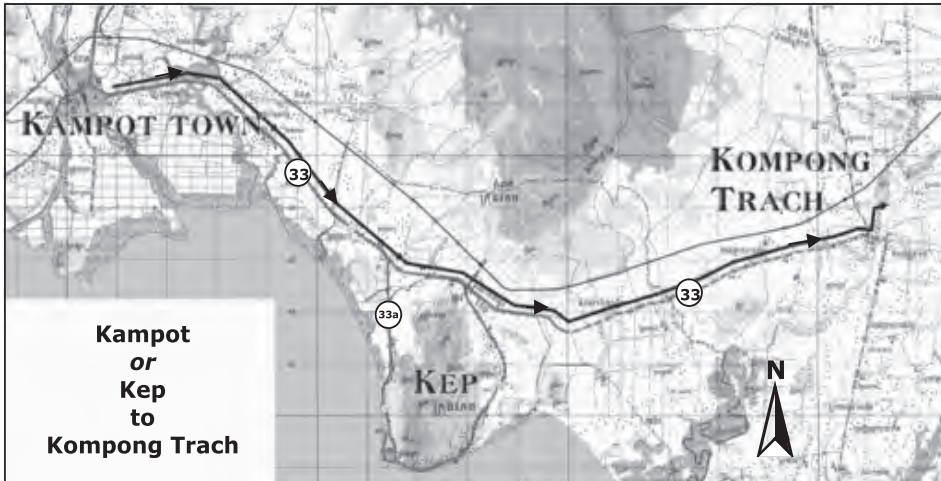


this guide.

Must Climb: If you are only passing through the following are musts. *Xen X, Pillar direct, Natural and Dorsal Fin.*

Getting to the area: Many options exist for travel between Phnom Penh and Kampot /Kep. Taxis, bus services and public transport travel daily between the locations. Renting a motorcycle is also an option. **Bus** fare will cost \$4-6US and travels past Kompong Trach where you can get off for a day of climbing and then continue on to Kampot/Kep for lodging via motorcycle taxi (note: tell the bus company that you plan to get off there if you intend to and the fair will be reduced, or at least it should be). At present only one bus company travels this route and tickets may be purchased at the bus station north of Olympic Stadium on Charles De Gaulle Blvd. (call 012-376-807 for departure times and availability)

Motorcycles may be rented in Phnom Penh in many different locations for \$5-10/day depending on the size. If you ask around a bit in Phnom Penh they are easy to find and most require that you leave your passport or a large deposit. Note: only attempt this option if you are well versed in motorcycle driving, this is a long and dangerous trip for an inexperienced traveler. Private **taxis** can be arranged at many guesthouses in Phnom Penh for \$25-35/day. You can also get a seat in a Taxi at Psah Dumkor for about 12,000R/person, travel time 3 hours.



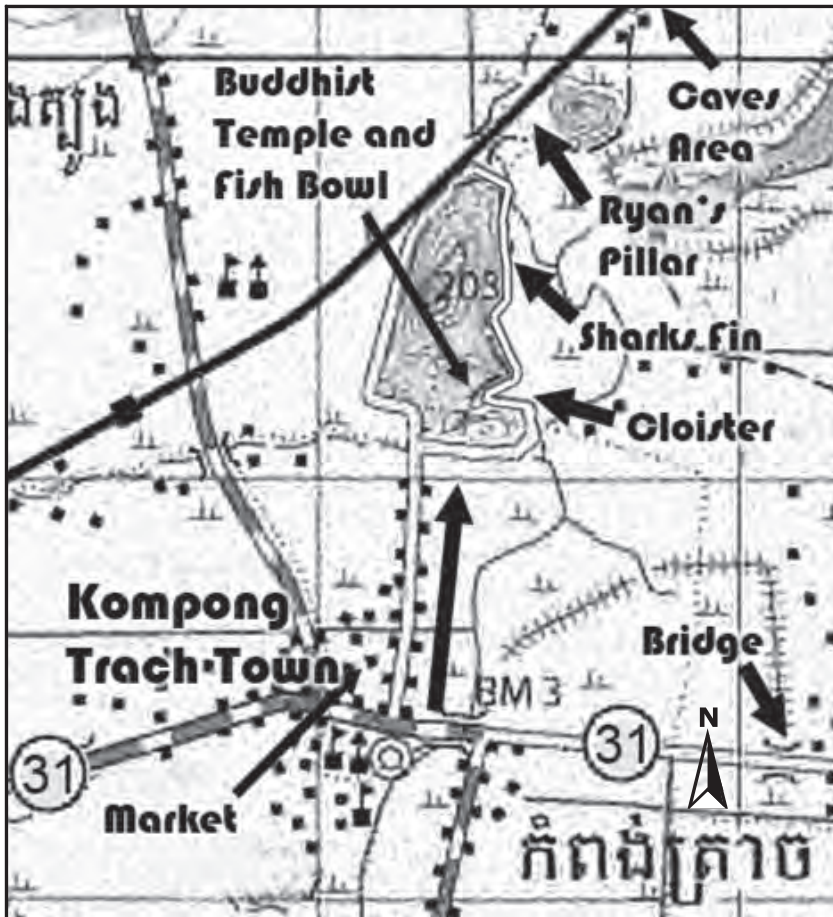
From Phnom Penh: Head south out of Phnom Penh towards the airport, at the round about head south on Route 3. Continue south for 64km and then veer left onto route 31. Follow this tarmac road for an additional 58km until you arrive in Kompong Trach town. To get to the climbing site please refer to the map on page 28.

From Kampot: Rented motorcycle, private taxi (Khey taxi, 012-514-630), or motorcycle taxi are the recommended ways get from Kampot to Kompong Trach. The travel time is approximately 1 hour to Kompong Trach and will cost about \$25-35 for a private taxi for the day, 15,000R for a motorcycle taxi and \$5-8 for a rented motorcycle (250cc). You can rent motorcycles from various different places in Kampot, just ask around and if you are just renting a motorcycle for the day (you can also ask just about any motorcycle taxi driver to rent theirs for \$4-5/day).

Head east out of Kampot on route 33 (past the Vietnam Cambodia Friendship Monument) for 37km (veer left when you come to the white horse monument, Kep is to the right).

From Kep (pronounced "Kieb"): Private taxi or motorcycle taxi are the two best options for getting to the climbing site from Kep.





Directions from Kompong Trach to Cloister, Fishbowl, Sharks Fin, Pinnacle, and Caves

A taxi for the day may run between \$15 and \$20 and a motorcycle taxi will cost about 10,000R.

Depending on where you are in Kep you can head to Kampong Trach one of two ways. You may head in a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction around the hills of Kep. The road (route 33a) connects with route 33 in either direction and when you connect with it head east (right). If you meet route 33 at the white horse