Bass clarinet fingering article

I thought I'd share this chart for the "altissimo" register with any of you that are interested. As with so many fingering charts many fingerings resemble the pitch of the note but often are either not close enough to be practical or are what I call "to crippling" to play. So here is a chart that works for me with my old Selmer bass clarinet. Some of these may or not work as well for you because each make and model might differ slightly so pick the ones that work best on your equipment.

From altissimo C# to F there are two sets of fingerings often used by many players. The first set is closely related to the same fingerings on the regular clarinet with the addition of the half hole for the first finger in the left hand (the C# and D work well with or without the half hole). These are the fingerings that I learned first and use them almost exclusively with the exception of the C#, which I often use the "other" fingering when possible because it sounds so good on my horn. I also occasionally use the opened D, over blowing the throat tone G, with or without the register key. It works well for me in a passage like the one at the end of the 2nd movement of the Grand Canyon Suit, repeating high C-C#-D and getting softer and fading out.

The alternate set of fingerings that many players use are shown in the chart below as well as the regular ones. I think you will agree that in many cases the regular set of fingerings, those that I prefer, have a better, more focused tone quality and generally play better in tune but this is an individual preference. There are some passages that I may use the "alternate" fingerings because the difficulty of the passage warrants using them.

My advise is to learn both sets of fingerings for the high C# to the F on the bass clarinet.

Fortunately I've had very few instances that I've had to play above the high G though I've included fingerings up to the high C. I find that extreme upper register sounds non-characteristic of the instrument and I try to avoid it when ever possible. It's even possible to go a fifth higher than the G but I never want to go there so I didn't bother trying to figure them out.