

suspects, the catalysts of joy or the occasion for an individual sense of triumph. They should be judged by the friendship, the atmosphere they generate. And as Bob Craig's account makes it bitterly clear, all that these climbers took back home with them were memories of fear and loathing. As you'll have gathered, this is a tough book to read—emotionally demanding, sometimes tedious. But because of the freakish scale, the sheer awesomeness of the disaster, it would be read widely by any climber who wants to understand in his heart the true risks of the game he plays.

JOHN THACKRAY

Climbing Ice, by Yvon Chouinard. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books in association with the American Alpine Club. 192pp. 175 black and white photos. 16 pages of color photos. Price: \$15.00 cloth; \$9.95 paper. 1978.

To climb intelligently today one must come to terms with the mosaic of systems which makes up modern ice climbing. With this book, Yvon Chouinard tells us how. Clearly a leading forerunner of contemporary rock and ice climbing and consistently prophetic in his approach to both, he now gives us a book that captures all of the grace of climbing ice while demonstrating the force and breadth of its current revolution.

Within a skillful layout he has managed to combine his personality and sensitivity with his experience of ice climbing to give us a highly informative book. The photographs, aside from their instructional purpose, are spectacular and beautiful. The writing is of the same calibre, again being twofold in its result. The style is that of a handbook interspersed with personal anecdotes which often brings to light a specific point, but, more importantly, gives us an insight into what Chouinard's world of climbing is really all about.

The first chapter provides a precise and yet thoughtfully, realistic view of ice climbing's history. From this as a basis, he begins by giving us efficient instructions and photographs of how to deal with low-angle snow and ice and throughout the course of four chapters progresses to vertical and overhanging ice. A variety of techniques are presented with some helpful advice on each. Not to stop short, he reaches further and provides the information needed to cope with the rock and mountains where ice is found.

A major theme of the book, and inherent within the title itself, is simplicity and versatility. Again, Chouinard rings home this theme in his chapter about equipment. In a day with so many ice tools on the market, one questions if a golf bag would be more suitable than a rucksack. The answer to this and many other problems are handled plainly from experience.

Finally, he deals with style and ethics, and unlike most, he has not gotten carried away. Chouinard's understanding of the dangers of technique in itself is quite sharp and he rightly insists on the constant need to refocus our goals. I am very thankful for his refreshing view of solo climbing. Although his treatment of values is without a basis, he has set a fine balance.

The last decade has seen an explosion in the art of ice climbing and it is still progressing at a screaming rate. Have we a book that will soon be outdated? I think not. Our technique and strength will advance but only on a variation of a theme. The Fosbury flop of ice climbing has taken place. Like a signpost to the future, *Climbing Ice* has firmly grasped a continuity that far outruns any problem of obsolescence.

Chouinard has pointed out, contrary to the current trend of specialization, that the climber should be complete in his techniques and experience. This book is a reflection of that completeness. I believe that *Climbing Ice* is one book that stands out as a major contribution to contemporary climbing. It is clearly an invaluable guide that many have been waiting for and something from which we all can learn.

TOBIN SORENSON

Technique de L'Alpinisme, edited by Bernard Amy, Paris: Arthaud, 1977. 404 pages, 266 sketches, 325 photographs.

Finally, the book I wish I had written on climbing has appeared. *Technique de L'Alpinisme*, edited by Bernard Amy, is an authoritative collection of information on mountaineering. Its contents range from personal ethics to legal responsibility as well as from techniques to objectives. Certainly, the material on the legal aspects of roping with a stranger is unusual. That is the nature of climbing on the continent, but more important, there are some technical discussions useful for all climbers. For example, there are answers to questions like: What are the best ways to solo with a heavy pack? Which way does lightning flow down a mountain? How can meteorological conditions be interpreted in an unfamiliar area? What can the climber expect from certain types of rock or ice? Essentially, the text deals with the concerns of all climbers without lapsing into the banality of other instructional books.

However, I did have a complaint. The book's binding reminded me of a Walt Disney special at the A&P.

Even without a knowledge of French, the book is worth looking at. The illustrations and photos clearly convey the content of the text—so much so, that I'm a little taken aback by the thought of how Bernard Amy views the literacy of the international climbing community.

JOHN BOUCHARD