

can be extremely satisfying but also bold and lacking in protection. Some creative styles have been employed on routes sporting large knobs, i.e., throwing ropes over them or lassoing them. The authors have given consideration to these varied techniques and each area is prefaced with general information about its routes. An “R” and “X” ratings signifying protection possibilities have been added.

The authors are well qualified to write about Needles. They’ve spent many years and done numerous first ascents there. Their combined effort, at least in this climber’s opinion, can be considered a complete success.

So buy the guide and have fun in Needles. But please treat the place as the gem it really is. Act responsibly, don’t litter, climb in the tradition of first-ascent pioneers and be friendly to your fellow climbers. Needles locals, in my experience (especially one of the authors of this guidebook), have not had a possessive attitude and been generous to newcomers. Let’s hope that continues.

ALOIS SMRZ

Rock Climbs of Indian Cove, 74 pages, \$8.95; *Rock Climbs of Lost Horse Valley*, 92 pages, \$8.95; *Rock Climbs of Hidden Valley*, 108 pages, \$9.95. All by Alan Bartlett, 1992. Topos. Quail Springs Publishing, PO Box 240, Joshua Tree, CA 92252.

Joshua Tree Rock Climbing Guide, 2nd edition, 624 pages, photos and maps, \$40.00; *Joshua Tree Sport Climbs*, 100 pages, \$12.95. Both by Randy Vogel, 1992, Chockstone Press, Evergreen, CO.

Randy Vogel’s first (1986) edition included over 1300 routes, enough to keep one from Yucca Valley’s fleshpots; then a 1989 Supplement, co-authored by Vogel and Alan Bartlett, described an additional 1200 routes. Now Vogel has a 1992 edition, with an overwhelming 3854 routes, and Bartlett has published the first three of a projected series of *eight* guides that will cover subdivisions of the monument. And, though not adding to our information overload, Vogel’s *Joshua Tree Sport Climbing* recently hit the newsstands.

The first thing you may notice about Vogel’s complete guide is a sticker price of \$40.00. That’s only a penny a route, though, and Vogel masterfully meets the challenge of presenting thousands of rock climbs—by marking most of the typically short, densely-packed routes on photos, recommending them with 1 to 5 stars, and striving for accuracy. In an era when guidebooks get away with a misspelled title on the cover, and blatant errors in the first edition can persist even unto the fifth edition, it’s reassuring to suspect only one mislocated route in *Joshua Tree Rock Climbing Guide* and expect it to be in place in an update. (The book even comes with a few loose pages of errata.)

If you have the first edition, perhaps the supplement, and are wondering about the new edition, you may be tempted by subtly improved maps, more

plentiful warnings about sparse protection, photos and recommendations for the supplement's routes (it had few photos and no stars), and more accurate ratings. Not much is new around Hidden Valley Campground (except for the Pinched Rib's ever-increasing rating). So Vogel offers mostly new, obscure areas. Whether Oz, Planet X, the Oyster Bar, Human Sacrifice Boulder, and the Galapagos are worth the new book depends on the quality of the climbs.

Vogel lured me to Oz, undiscovered at the time of the first edition, the site of only six routes in the supplement, but now subdivided into Munchkinland and the Emerald City. The maps led me uneventfully over the desert into the intended canyon, and from one canyon to another, but the quality of some of Oz's rock implied I was doing a second ascent. Such present-day classics as *Loose Lady* no doubt had similarly friable origins, but it's hard to imagine *If I Only Had a Brain* and *Oil My Joints* with weekend queues.

In earlier editions, Vogel often perplexed climbers with his inconsistent ratings. So I checked my grievances in the new opus: they're rectified. The most memorable, of course, were underrated climbs at my limit. Their upgrading makes the new guide valuable for self-esteem alone.

The main differences between Vogel's and Bartlett's endeavors are pictorial and financial. Bartlett relies on topos, rather than photos, and you can acquire Bartlett for \$8.95 or \$9.95 per installment. Like all such plans, you pay more in the end for the whole set. But if you're in Hidden Valley Campground without a car, or climb only in winterized Indian Cove, or lack interest in the Zebra Cliffs, you won't need the whole set.

In Joshua Tree's climbing store (managed by Bartlett), there's a loose-leaf "notebook" that could well be the dream of a guidebook writer who ate anchovy pizza too near bedtime. On motel stationery or paper bags cut into 8½ x 11 scraps, first ascensionists proclaim their creations. They all seem to be located on "the aesthetic arête" on the "most prominent" 30-foot tower among the "obvious" jumble of boulders seen from "the" sandy turnout along one road or another. Vogel and Bartlett both have pored over this notebook's mystifying entries, but also perhaps because of their earlier collaboration, or perhaps because they can interest only each other in doing the odder routes, their information agrees better than either may have intended. Both, let me emphasize, have done a first-rate job.

For routes I've done in Bartlett's Lost Horse area, I subjected his and Vogel's ratings to a comparison more scientific than the fuzzy decimal system warrants. Their ratings agree for 48 routes. Of those that disagree, I agree with Vogel on 3 and Bartlett on 4, and the disagreements are petty: 5.7 vs. 5.7/5.8, or 5.9+ vs. 5.10a, which indicates that both writers listen to dialogue and consensus and that by using one book rather than the other, you're not necessarily setting yourself up for the fire department.

While Vogel's photos are more reassuring, Bartlett's simple topos are as effective as need be. He's good at using one-liner text to characterize one-pitch routes—for instance, "This route is harder and better than it looks." The books' difference may be no more than ambiance—Vogel's has a polish that would fit better on the proverbial coffee table. Bartlett's hints at days spent clamboring

through prickly pear to see if a 30-foot psoriatic lump could be the classic the notebook asserts. Bartlett includes a few more routes (and upcoming volumes presumably even more), though they tend toward the unprotectable 5.4.

Finally, there's Vogel's *Joshua Tree Sport Climbing*. The routes are a subset of the 3854—same ratings, same stars, though topos instead of photos. I was anxious to see if Vogel would offer a more rigorous definition of this activity than the only precise one I've seen—John Sherman's bumper sticker, which reads "SPORT CLIMBING IS NEITHER." However, the introductory section "What Is a Sport Climb?" gives three criteria—"mostly all fixed protection," "usually fixed anchors," and "reasonably good protection"—with a vagueness that may allow a climb more *sport* than a sport climber seeks. The routes span the range from low-angle, sparsely bolded, 5.7 *Stichter Quits* to a few 5.13ds.

The *Sport Climbing* guide seems more for those who can't afford 4000 routes, nor much gear beyond a loopful of quick-draws, than for prototypical sport climbers. Some routes require plodding a few miles across desert, searching, and impaling lycra on yucca.

This book doesn't violate the Joshua Tree tradition of undocumented, convoluted descents. Someone who expects to slap a chain and shout "Sport lower!" at a ground belayer will broaden his/her perspective seeking the way down from *Run for Your Life*—which Vogel does qualify as "Not quite a sport route, but very good" (both true).

JOE KELSEY

Red Rocks Select. 500 Selected Routes in the Red Rocks of Nevada. Todd Swain. Chockstone Press, Evergreen, Colorado, 1993. 186 pages, 42 black-and-white photographs, 20 sketch maps, numerous topos. \$18.00.

The desert is a land of contrasts and Red Rock is a shining example. The extremes of sun and shadow, of searing heat and bitter cold are reflected in the climbs of the area. Classic thousand-foot climbs and remote committing wall routes neighbor convenient user-friendly sport climbs. In the north, the Calico Hills harbor the densest concentration of modern bolted sport routes in the area. On numerous accessible, well-equipped cliffs are found routes of every grade.

Easy-to-moderate, hard-to-extreme, there are tendon-wrenching test pieces to rival any area. In the southern canyons, many long adventure routes ply the steep varnished walls. On many of these climbs, arduous approaches and long convoluted descents become part of the whole experience of canyoneering. Although modern styles and technology have been embraced by many local climbers, a strong ethic of bold ground-up ascent still thrives here and, surprisingly, there exists a climate of understanding and mutual respect of these diverse styles. These contrasts were not lost on the author of *Red Rocks Select*, who approaches this project with experience and objectivity.

The presentation of this guide is in the usual high quality typical of Chockstone Press. The text and photos are crisp and correctly aligned. The layout is simple and logical with an attractive typeface. The book is of a manageable size and well