

Joshua Tree Rock Climbing Guide. Randy Vogel. Chockstone Press, Denver, 1986. 401 pages, black and white photographs, line drawings, maps. \$25.00 (paper).

Joshua Tree National Monument is *the* winter playground of snowbound climbers from all over the U.S., and its exotic desert environment, unusual rock formations, and endless number of routes make it one of the finest outdoor gymnasiums in the world.

Randy Vogel has done a superlative job in capturing the flavor of Joshua Tree with his monumental new guidebook that contains no less than 1374 routes! No effort was spared to make the book a pleasure to use and the routes and rocks easy to find. Besides being well written and attractively designed, it is profusely illustrated. Numerous maps are included that range from topographical reproductions of the overall area to detailed locations of the individual formations. Most of the routes are carefully delineated on photos, which are sometimes augmented by line drawings (topos) when additional details need to be shown. All the illustrations and route names/descriptions are conveniently cross-referenced and located adjacent to each other in each section. Route names are bold-faced and even italicized to make them readily identifiable in the text.

Other welcome features include a 0–5 star rating system for route quality; the inclusion of top-rope routes, which are all too often ignored in less progressive guidebooks; an alphabetized checklist of the routes by grade (5.7 and up); a definitive international grading comparison chart; and, perhaps most unusual of all, a translation of the Summary into several languages (French, Japanese, and German) for visiting foreign climbers.

One of the strongest points of the book is the excellent section on ethics and local standards. For once, ethics and style have been clearly defined for all those climbers who loosely bandy about the terms without understanding their difference. Vogel then goes on to mount a powerful and eloquent defense of traditional climbing standards and rightfully condemns the destructive and degrading practices of chopping holds and placing bolts on rappel. It's nice to see an area where the locals actively work to preserve the rock and the sport from the excesses of the less competent. Bravo!

Only a few minor difficulties crept into the book, none of which detracts from its overall excellence. On page nine, "prospective" and "uncomparable" should probably have been "perspective" and "incomparable" instead. The use of and and a-b-c-d subdivisions in the difficulty ratings seems oddly inconsistent. Why not one or the other? Also, the use of 0–5 stars to indicate quality seems a bit too excessive; perhaps the more commonly used 0–3 star system would have been better.

Even if one does not like the modernistic lavender cover, this guidebook is certainly one of the two or three best ever published in the U.S. and is a great credit to the author, the publisher, and the area. It is well worth the \$25 price.

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