

Leap, Sugarloaf and Donner Summit: Warren Harding, Royal Robbins, Steve Roper, Jeff Lowe, TM Herbert, Jim Orey, Bob Kamps, Mike Covington and Gordon Webster. And, of course, Tony Yaniro, author of *Grand Illusion* at Sugarloaf in the late '70s, recorded as the world's first 5.13. And lately, Jay Smith, Paul Crawford, Dan Osman and others at Cave Rock.

This also is a region of amazing diversity in climbing, from the fine hard granite of Donner Summit and Sugarloaf to the amazing dikes at the Leap—making possible such classics as Traveler Buttress and Robbins' Fantasia—the rhyolite of Cave Rock, and the limestone-like rock of the Emeralds on the South Yuba River. You can climb almost literally in the middle of a major highway (at Cave Rock) or in the wilderness (Eagle Lake Buttress). In all, there are routes on 13 distinct climbing areas as well as good sections on bouldering and ice climbing.

BILL STALL

*Southern Sierra Rock Climbing, Needles.* Sally Moser, Greg Vernon, Patrick Paul. Chockstone Press, Evergreen, CO, 1992. 230 pages, 118 photos, 69 drawings. \$18.00.

It was with mixed feelings that I first opened the new guidebook to the Needles. Although the original *Stonemasher Guide to Kern River* has been out of print for several years, the area still hasn't caught on with the majority of California climbers. Certainly, most have heard about this magical place of spires, knobby faces, and steep, difficult cracks; yet, until recently, few have come to climb.

For Needles aficionados, keeping the place at minimum impact and in the same timeless condition has been the most important consideration. Will the new guidebook change that? I hope not. . . . But with Joshua Tree, Tahquitz, Yosemite and Tuolumne becoming rapidly overrun with climbers, the need exists to disperse those climbers who seek solitude and wilderness experience into new areas. The vast area of southwestern Sierra Nevada with its domes, spires and rock walls offers a huge climbing potential, as well as a lifetime of exploring. It was this understanding that led Greg Vernon, Sally Moser and Patrick Paul to compile the region's climbing history. The Needles guidebook is the first of the three guidebooks for Southern California. It covers the rocks in southern Sierra from Trilogy/Jordan Peak and the Needles off Highway 190 on the north, to the town of Kernville on the south.

There are many things to like about this volume. It will guide any first-time visitor very well. The southern Sierra can still be considered backcountry climbing area, with spread-out locations, lack of "scene" and until recently, scant literature on the area. A good, thorough guide is essential for enjoyment here. The Needles guide is not only that, it's comprehensive as well. Its 118 quality photos, 69 maps and drawings will make it almost an effort to get lost (but you will, trust me). The authors also thoroughly researched and documented the sometimes tricky descents off these formations. Routes in Needles

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