



AAC Publications

Castle Rock Spire, East Face

California, Sequoia National Park

After two failed attempts, Tom Ruddy and I completed a new route on the east face of Castle Rock Spire in July. The route shares part of the first pitch with the Regular Route (Bettler-Long-Siri-Steck-Wilson, AAJ 1951) before it goes left and ascends an obvious crack system up the center of the east face for a total of five beautiful, steep pitches (5.9 C1) [Other routes ascend the spire, including Spike Hairdoo, the West Face, and Cinco de Mayo. See AAJ 2003.]

Our route could be free-climbed by strong crack climbers, but we aided through the crux sections to beat the sunset. John Salathé and Jim Wilson first attempted this line in 1949, before anyone had climbed Castle Rock Spire, but they turned back after a large block fell. We found a couple of Salathé-era pitons and some homemade hangers at their high point on our second pitch. The route can be rappelled with one 70m rope, removing the need to carry two ropes on the legendary (long) approach to Castle Rock Spire.

Images



The Jeffcoach-Ruddy on the east face of Castle Rock Spire.



Leading a steep crack on the route.



Topo of the finished route on Castle Rock Spire.

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