



AAC Publications

Castle Rocks, New Routes and Traverse

Sequoia National Park

In the spring of 2017 I completed several new routes in the Castle Rocks area with different partners. Daniel Jeffcoach and I hiked out to climb the east face of the Fin, which to our knowledge had never been attempted. We took a wide system on the east face, down and around the corner from the wide system of the North Buttress (IV 5.10) route. We climbed seven full 70m pitches up cracks of all sizes with good rock. This is now the easiest route up the Fin, and it does not involve run-out face climbing or even a single bolt. We dubbed it the Cutting Edge (1,000', IV 5.9). On the following day, Daniel and I traversed the Castle Rocks ridgeline from north to south. I do not know how many of the spires had previously been climbed via their northern ridges, but we summited all of the main formations and sub-summits, including Amphitheater Dome and the Axe.

I returned to the Fin a few weeks later with Jeremy Ross, and we climbed a fun route that started up a steep crack system just right of the Cutting Edge. The route features quality, sustained climbing on great rock right off the ground, with the first pitch clocking in at about 5.10c/d and the pitch after that 10d/11a. Difficult face climbing and fun corner systems provided a good mix of challenges, and we placed only three lead bolts. We called it Super Totally Trad (1,000', IV 5.11a).

After mentally preparing myself for a real battle, I was back in the late spring with intentions to climb a direct line on the west face of the Fin. Chaz Langelier and I climbed a truly awesome route that we named Tainted Love (IV 5.11a R X). It had more sustained and even higher quality face climbing than the classic Silver Lining (IV 5.10 R) to the right. Unfortunately, bolting lower on the route slowed us down considerably, and I led the last three pitches of face climbing by headlamp, with only about six bolts remaining in our kit. This resulted in very runout upper pitches with potential for severe injury or death in the event of a fall. I am planning to return in the near future in order to add bolts to the upper pitches and make this climb more manageable for those climbers without a death wish.

– Vitaliy Musiyenko

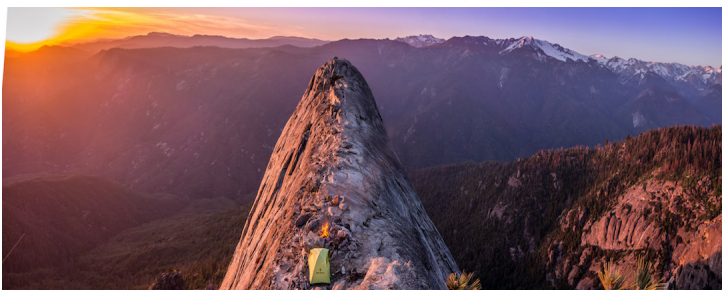
Images



Daniel Jeffcoach down-climbing a small tower during he and Vitaliy Musiyenko's complete traverse of the Castle Rocks massif in the spring of 2017. Over the course of one day, they traversed over all the major summits and sub-summits in the massif from north to south.



Chaz Langelier climbing perfect granite on he Vitaliy Musiyenko's new route Tainted Love (IV 5.11a R/X) on the west face of the Fin, one of the prominent formations of Castle Rocks, in Sequoia National Park. Musiyenko is planning on returning to add more bolts to the climb to make it a safer route.



A scenic sunset camp on top of the Fin, in Castle Rocks of Sequoia National Park.



The Castle Rocks massif, in Sequoia National Park, showing the line of Tainted Love (IV 5.11a R/X) on the west face of the Fin, climbed by Vitaliy Musiyenko and Chaz Langelier in the spring of 2017. Silver Lining (IV 5.10a R, Laeger-Laeger-Carson, 1985) is also shown.

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