



AAC Publications

Peak 12,640'+ (Seven Gables North), Hot Cherries

California, Eastern Sierra

After a low snow year in California, much of the alpine melted out earlier than usual, providing an early start to the high-country climbing season. With an extra day off to explore over the Fourth of July weekend, Johnny Lomas and I decided to push over the Sierra crest to see what we could find on the imposing east face of Peak 12,640+, a.k.a. Seven Gables North. We started from the Pine Creek trailhead, labored up the countless switchbacks, and hiked down past the Bear Lakes to a camp just below Seven Gables Lakes. Armed with a topo for the Direct East Face (Clevenger-Fiddler, 1981), we gawked at the looming black wall above us while gorging ourselves on a big bag of Grocery Outlet cherries.

The following morning we started climbing in a recess left of a pillar and did two long, easy fifth-class pitches to the base of the east face proper. We quickly realized we were well left of our intended route, and were standing below an ever-steepening headwall filled with ominous cracks and corners. After deciding that traversing back onto the original line might be too hazardous, we began our vertical quest into the unknown. [Editor's Note: The Direct East Face description in the Secor guide mentions climbing the right side of the central pillar. This route climbs the left side of the pillar, between the Direct East Face and Consolation Prize (5.9, Cable-Tipton, 1998).]

We delighted in the continuous climbing, bobbing and weaving up a surprisingly vertical line through a number of right-facing corners. After three quality 60m pitches, all clocking in around 5.9 to 5.10, Johnny freed the crux overhanging flared corner in style and propelled us onto the crest of the east ridge. After six new pitches, we climbed the final three pitches of the Direct East Face along the ridge, landing us right on the summit prow. We named our route Hot Cherries (1,700' climbing distance, 9 pitches, 5.10) for the bag of cherries that fueled the fun throughout this magnificent excursion across the high country.

— Peter Throckmorton

Images



Johnny Lomas picking his way up easy fifth-class, before the start of the main wall, on pitch two of Hot Cherries (1,700' climbing distance, 9 pitches, 5.10) on the east face of Seven Gables North. Lomas and Peter Throckmorton climbed this six-pitch direct start to the Direct East Face (Clevenger-Fiddler, 1981) in July 2020.



The east face of Peak 12,640+, a.k.a. Seven Gables North, showing the line of Hot Cherries (1,700' climbing distance, 9 pitches, 5.10). The route shares the final three pitches along the ridge crest with the Direct East Face (Clevenger-Fiddler, 1981).



Peter Throckmorton on the approach to Seven Gables North, the lower, right-hand summit visible in the photo.

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