



AAC Publications

Wheeler Crest, The Space Needle, Selecta Ridge

United States, California, Eastern Sierra

On May 23, Damien Nicodemi, David Pearson, and I trudged up the narrow Fifth Canyon to approach a previously unclimbed 9,600'+ summit near the top of the drainage. This formation, which we dubbed the Space Needle, sits a few thousand feet above the increasingly popular Rocketship and features one of the few enticing alpine ridgelines on the Wheeler Crest—most routes here climb smooth, slabby buttresses.

The steep approach went quickly, with much 4th-class scrambling high in the gully. The toe of the north ridge was littered with shrubbery and overhangs, so we began our climb with a long leftward traverse along a prominent horizontal crack to gain cleaner ground. A few steeper pitches up to 5.10 led onto the exposed and narrow ridge, which presented solid rock and moderate difficulty. A ten-foot overhang required a couple of A1 moves to surpass—this section would likely go free at 5.11+, but would be risky to both leader and second.

We climbed nine long pitches with some unroped scrambling to reach the summit. A tedious descent by the western gully landed us back at our packs, and we improvised a few rappels while descending the gully below. Selecta Ridge (1,500', IV 5.10 A1) was named after our favorite reggae DJ, who kept us thoroughly entertained for over 13 hours that day. Big up!

— Richard Shore

Images



David Pearson on the third pitch of Selecta Ridge.



Damian Nicodemi at the short A1 overhang on Selecta Ridge.



Selecta Ridge, a rare alpine ridge climb in the Wheeler Crest, with about 1,500 feet of climbing leading to the top of a formation dubbed the Space Needle.

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