



AAC Publications

Mt. Jepson, Northeast Face, Witch Hunt

United States, California, Eastern Sierra

In mid-June, Aivaras Sajus and I approached the northeast face of Mt. Jepson (13,390') via the South Fork of Big Pine Creek in search of an adventure. We chose a line up a triangular pillar on the left side of the face. After a snow slope with a 'schrund, a steep, clean corner woke me up from a post Himalayan hangover. (I'd just returned from a two-month trip to Nepal that was physically and emotionally draining.) I found thin laybacking and jamming with nice crimps and committing moves. A number of good cracks then got us to easier ground. The rock was as good as one could ask for on a first ascent in the southern Palisades. When the final pitch didn't collapse completely, we hiked up to the summit, signed the register, and hurried down toward Scimitar Pass via a west-leaning rib of choss—onsighting this descent in the dark would have been difficult. We named our route Witch Hunt (800', 6 pitches, III 5.10d). Overall, a good adventure...so long as that last pitch stays standing.

— Vitaliy Musiyenko

TOO FAR, TOO HIGH ON MT. JEPSON: Another line was climbed on the northeast face of Mt. Jepson on April 13, 2021. Joel Kauffman, George Lowe III (then 75 years old), and Tad McCrea climbed a formation they dubbed the Southeast Pillar via Too Far, Too High (800', 6 pitches, 5.9+). R.J. Secor's guidebook to the Sierra briefly describes two earlier routes on Jepson's northeast face. The Steeple (II 5.8, Dobeman-Fischer) is described as a "prominent pillar split by a crack" on the far left side of the face. It's not known where that route lies in relation to the two reported here.

Images



The base of the southeast face of Mt. Jepson. The first pitch of Witch Hunt (800', 6 pitches, III 5.10d) follows the shallow left-facing corner.



Aivaras Sajus on the lead during the first ascent of Witch Hunt (800', 6 pitches, III 5.10d) on the southeast face of Mt. Jepson (13,390'), Eastern Sierra, California.



Aivaras Sajus follows a steep pitch during the first ascent of Witch Hunt (III 5.10d) on the northeast face of Mt. Jepson (13,390').



Witch Hunt (800', 6 pitches, III 5.10d) on the southeast face of Mount Jepson (13,390'), Eastern Sierra, California. The 2021 route Too Far, Too High is just to the left.

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