



AAC Publications

Lower Castle Dome, Knights Errant

United States, California, Sierra, Kings Canyon National Park

Castle Domes, a cluster of granite formations set above a beautiful meadow in the Upper Woods Creek valley, is perhaps best known for the Southeast Are te (1,100', IV 5.10 PG-13) on Upper Castle Dome, a striking line established by Vitaliy Musiyenko and Caitlin Taylor in 2014. While repeating that route in 2021, I noticed new route potential on Lower Castle Dome.

On September 5, Brandon Thau and I established Knights Errant, a six-pitch 5.10+ line that proved more challenging and complicated than we had anticipated. Roofs, thin seams, wide shallow cracks, crotch-stretching stemming, and even some old-school vertical bush crawling made for a fine and diverse outing. The route is easily rappelled with a single 70m rope; there is also the option of a circuitous walk-off to the west.

A knight-errant would wander the land in search of adventures to prove his chivalric virtues. The route name seemed fitting, as we had wandered into the Sierra seeking adventure and found it on the sunbaked ramparts of Lower Castle Dome.

— Dave Nettle

Images



Knights Errant (6 pitches, 5.10+), on Lower Castle Dome, Kings Canyon National Park, Sierra Nevada, California. Dave Nettle and Brandon Thau did the first ascent on September 5, 2022.



Knights Errant (6 pitches, 5.10+), on Lower Castle Dome, Kings Canyon National Park, Sierra Nevada, California. Dave Nettle and Brandon Thau did the first ascent on September 5, 2022.



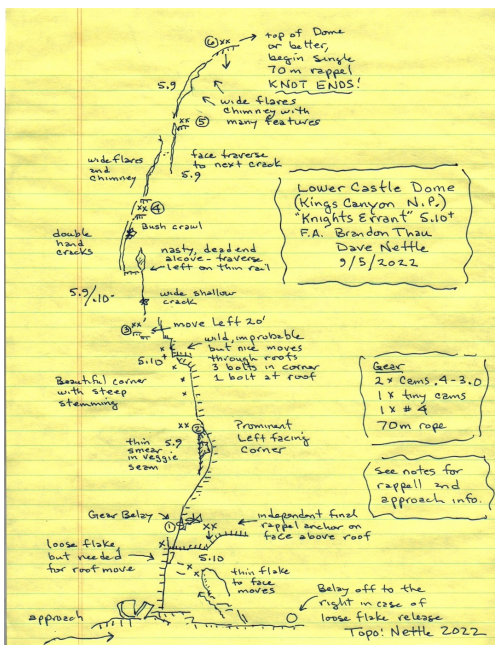
Brandon Thau following Dave Nettle's lead on pitch two of Knights Errant (6 pitches, 5.10+), on Lower Castle Dome, Kings Canyon National Park, Sierra Nevada.



Brandon Thau scouting thin seams on pitch three of Knights Errant (6 pitches, 5.10+), on Lower Castle Dome, Kings Canyon National Park, Sierra Nevada.



Brandon Thau starting up pitch one of Knights Errant (6 pitches, 5.10+), on Lower Castle Dome, Kings Canyon National Park, Sierra Nevada. The pitch climbs through the obvious notch in the roof above and slightly left of Thau's helmet.



Topo for Knights Errant on Lower Castle Dome.

Article Details

Author	Dave Nettle
Publication	AAJ
Volume	65
Issue	97
Page	156
Copyright Date	2023
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions