



AAC Publications

Rainbow Mountain, Ginger Buttreß

Nevada, Red Rock National Conservation Area

In the early morning alpenglow, Red Rock comes alive. Every morning that I drive the loop road, my eyes trace the skyline back and forth. Watching the features, tracking the shadows as they dance. There are many distinct features that pop out, but few distinct lines that demand your attention. The Ginger Buttreß is one of those lines.

On the east face of Rainbow Mountain, near the mouth of Juniper Canyon, the Ginger Buttreß rises proudly for 2,000' from the desert floor to the summit. For years, I assumed the upper buttreß had been climbed, until I talked with a friend who had developed the neo-classic Blade Runner (350', 5.10b). After the first five pitches of Ginger Cracks (900', 5.9, Anderson-Holbek-Moore, 1977), Blade Runner follows a wildly exposed arête to the top of a distinct tower on Ginger Buttreß. From this tower, it looked like a 1,000' moderate ridge led to the summit of Rainbow Mountain. My friend had not continued his line to the summit, and to his knowledge no one had ever explored the terrain on the upper buttreß.

Lani Chapko and I put it at the top of our list. We had a window of opportunity in February and capitalized on it. We started with Ginger Cracks into Blade Runner; future parties could potentially start on the bolted Unimpeachable Groping (760', 7 pitches, 5.10b, Clifford-Urioste, 1999) for more sustained climbing that only requires a super-light rack.

On the upper buttreß, above Blade Runner, we found generally fun, moderate climbing. The majority was exposed but well-protected face climbing on the knife-edge arête of the buttreß. Near the top, we relied on a 40' tree climb to bypass an offwidth crack for which we didn't have wide gear. Once the difficulties eased, there was a 300' fourth-class scramble to the east summit of Rainbow Mountain. From there, we followed a straightforward and previously established descent, typically used after people climb Chicken Lips.

We added 700' of new climbing in six pitches, with difficulties up to 5.9. The full Ginger Buttreß (1,700', 14 pitches, IV 5.10b) has sustained 5.9 climbing with a 5.10 crux on Blade Runner.

— Sam Boyce

Editor's Note: After proofreading his report about the HURT link-up in Red Rock, Alex Honnold read this report on the adjacent page in AAJ 2023 and told us he had onsight free soloed the terrain above Blade Runner, five or six years earlier, "assuming it must have been an existing route." Near the top, he kept farther right than the line reported here, seeking the easiest path.

Images



Lani Chapko following pitch 12 on the Ginger Buttress (1,700, 14 pitches, IV 5.10-), Rainbow Mountain, Red Rock National Conservation Area, Nevada.



The complete Ginger Buttress (1,700', 14 pitches, IV 5.10-) is an extension of two existing lines: Ginger Cracks (7 pitches, 5.9, Anderson-Holbek-Moore, 1977) and Blade Runner (3 pitches, 5.10b). The extension adds about 700 feet of climbing up chocolate-colored sandstone to reach the summit ridge of Rainbow Mountain.

Article Details

Author	Sam Boyce
Publication	AAJ
Volume	65
Issue	97
Page	165
Copyright Date	2023
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions