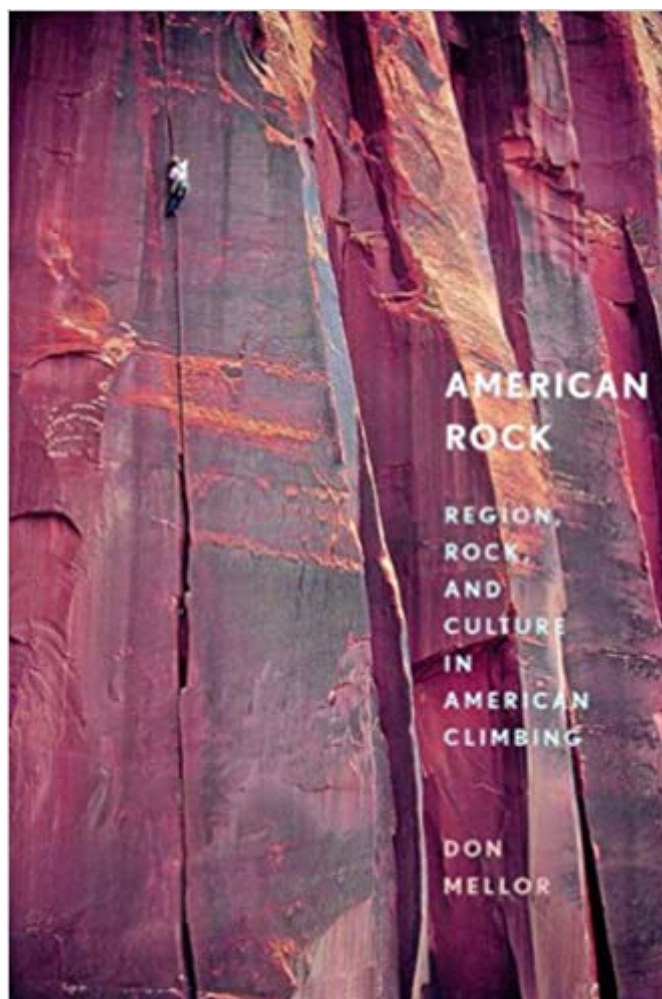


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# American Rock: Region, Rock, And Culture In American Climbing



## Synopsis

Explores the different types of rock found at a dozen major climbing destinations across the United States, and discusses how these physical environments have affected the history, style, ethics, and culture of the sport. The elite sport of rock climbing continues to evolve at lightning speed as techniques and technology improve, opening up hundreds of new routes each year. In this thoughtful overview, Don Mellor reveals how the sport has developed in a dozen climbing hotspots across the country in direct response to the characteristics of local rock and the eccentricities of regional culture: Shawangunk conglomerate provides hundreds of climbs marked by positive handholds and a busy climbing scene built upon rich and raucous traditions. The fragile red sandstone towers of the Southwest desert remind climbers of a changing earth and challenge them to tread gently. Climbers spend days on slings and port-a-ledges while ascending stark white walls of Sierra granite, immersing themselves in a lonely encounter with the mountain wilderness. And in the Rockies, Tetons, and Cascades, technical rock climbing merges with cold weather alpinism in perhaps the ultimate expression of mountaineering. Mellor also explores the meanings behind ongoing debates in the climbing community over techniques and equipment. Climbers of all levels will appreciate his knowledgeable history of the sport, as well as his insider's tips on where to go, what to take, and how to climb the local rock. 35 black and white photographs, 1 map, index. A history and cultural guide to a red-hot sport. Mellor's traditional viewpoint is sure to spark discussion in the climbing community. Will appeal to both serious rock climbers and armchair athletes.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As American as Rock Climbing and Baseball Rock climbing, once the exclusive province of the wealthy and the tough, has become increasingly popular in recent years. In *American Rock: Region, Rock, and Culture in American Climbing*, Don Mellor (Rock Climbing), a professional climbing guide and instructor for more than 20 years, surveys the history of the sport in the U.S. He explores the effects of regional variations in landscape and culture on approaches to climbing, whether in New England's White Mountains and New York's Adirondacks, the deserts and canyons of New Mexico and Arizona, Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park, Utah's Zion, Oregon's Smith Rock or Washington's North Cascades. Climbers will enjoy it, but for light travel they may prefer to wait for the paperback. 42 b&w photos, one map. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Building on his rock-climbing guide experience and earlier books (*Climbing in the Adirondacks* and *Rock Climbing: A Trailside Guide*), Mellor has written a thorough overview of American rock climbing destinations. His belief that "a route is more than just a route it's an encounter with the physical world, and it's an association with climbers of past generations" resonates in every chapter. Dividing his text geographically (e.g., New England, Dixie, California, Colorado), Mellor introduces the natural history and rock, the original climbers and the historic routes they put up, the local climbing scene, and the regional eccentricities for each area. In the last chapter, he highlights the impact overuse can bring to climbing areas, which are often on public lands. He challenges climbers to "cherish the resource" (vertical rock) as access and regulations on use become more common. *American Rock* is unique for what it is not: a guidebook or a climbing memoir. This work will interest both new and experienced climbers who want to learn about America's climbing areas from a single volume. Recommended for public libraries where there is interest. Margaret Atwater-Singer, Univ. of Evansville, IN Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Mellor provides a very thoughtful balanced view of today's climbing community. He weighs the inconvenience and administrative problems associated with over crowded crags against the benefit of a large population of like minded individuals who can vote and influence bureaucratic decision. He also does a good of communicating the ethics of self reliance and leave no trace behavior for the benefit of those entering the sport. Along the way, he also imparts a respect for the customs as well as the history of our richly varied national climbing scene.

Why have I not encountered Mellor's writing before? Where the hell have I been? He has written two

other books, is the resident climbing expert on gorp.com and has been an active participant in the sport for decades. His style sets a high standard for reflective, artful consideration of often contentious problems. This is no dry tome, however: Mellor's book is a true adventure. Here's a grand tour of many of the premiere climbing destinations in this country. He celebrates both the majestic and the more humble arenas. The book is informative and insightful. His writing is clear and concise, exhibiting a tasteful balance between the sociological and the athletic, the academic and the pragmatic. *American Rock* imparts a fresh perspective on the issues surrounding ethics and access, as well as the responsibilities climbers carry toward the resource and other users with both common and conflicting interests. Geology is not neglected here, but that information is available in a hundred other places. This book's strength is in its study of the key players and the milieu in which each of the areas presented developed historically and how they are being transformed presently. Much food for thought. This is both a great reference for the traveling climber, and a thoughtful plea for sanity. His love and reverence of the medium and the sport are apparent throughout.

Book provides a summary of the history of the larger and many of the smaller climbing areas. Provides information about how each area developed and explains why each area is the way it is. Probably wouldn't be interesting to non climbers.

This was a gift and a very well-received one! I looked around at others on the market, but this really had some interesting options for the beginner and the expert.

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