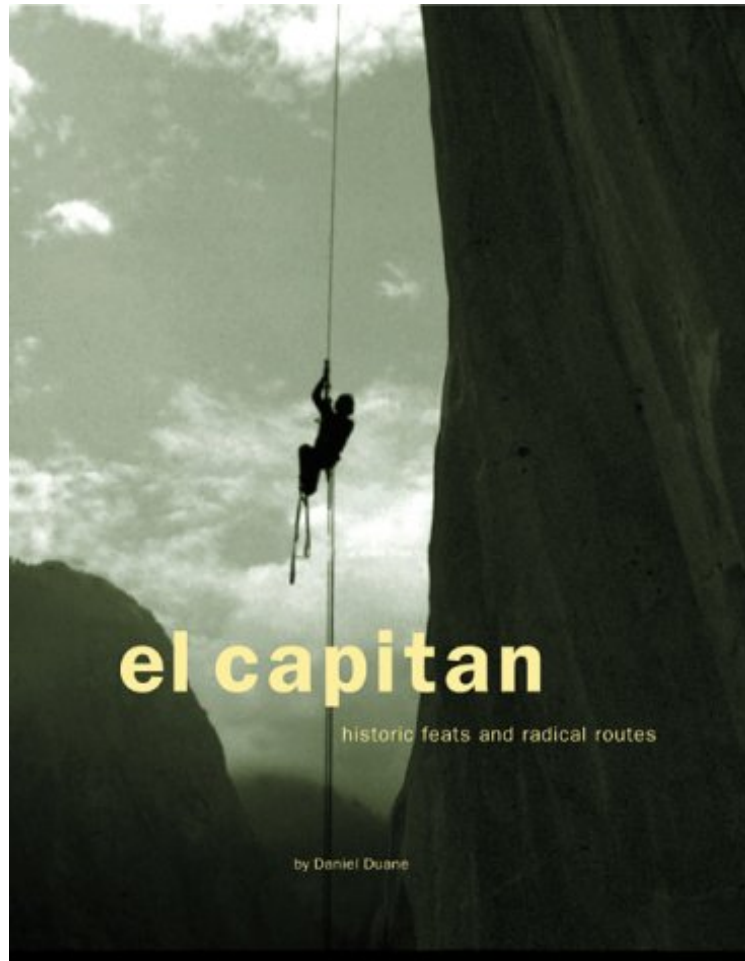


El Capitan: Historic Feats and Radical Routes

Daniel Duane

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Daniel Duane : El Capitan: Historic Feats and Radical Routes before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised El Capitan: Historic Feats and Radical Routes:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good Read.By MonteGreat book on a golden era in Valley climbing.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy M. laarmangreat book1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Musings about the Holy GrailBy Rick SpellEl Capitan is the Holy Grail of Big Wall Climbing and Duane does a very good job providing background history of the Walls and the Legends who made their mark on them. Yes, I've read the other reviews concerned with minor inaccuracies and lack of mention of significant climbers. But, hey, I'm a novice and have never been to Yosemite although I hope to go in the next year. Duane is best in interviewing the legends and telling their background stories and trying to translate the reasons they climb. It's a fascinating story. My favorite being the men stuck on the wall when a storm comes and their bivouac tents are virtually destroyed. Also, it's nice to read about the free spirits whose goal in life have nothing to do with money and all to do

with the Wall. Overall, I found this book informative, very concise, and filled with great pictures. It may not however, satisfy the experienced climbers who follow climbing history or have significant experience in Yosemite. But for people fascinated with climbing and the personalities involved, it was a great quick, informative read.

An unforgettable face all 3,000 granite feet of it. El Capitan towers above California's Yosemite Valley, a sheer rock wall, seemingly insurmountable, and by far the most coveted rock climb on earth. El Capitan traces the mountain's unique history and recounts the vertical adventures had therefrom Warren Harding's 45-day siege in 1958 up through the recent speed climbs of under 5 hours. Critically acclaimed author Daniel Duane articulates how this massive wall can totally consume a person. Duane profiles the legends who have devoted themselves to El Capitan, including Royal Robbins, Warren Harding, and John Middendorf. Accompanied by 36 moody duotones, El Capitan captures the essence of big wall climbing.

From Library Journal Like a younger, funnier Peter Matthiessen, Duane brought an easily worn literary and environmental seriousness to his beautiful 1996 book on surfing, *Caught Inside: A Surfer's Year on the California Coast* and followed with a surprisingly entertaining novel about rock climbers, *Looking for Mo*. In his new book, Duane is again a knowledgeable but scrupulously unheroic participant narrator, conveying the wonder and self-torture of his subject without lapsing into glorifying cliché. El Capitan basically draws on the research that went into Duane's climbing novel, re-creating the stirring ascents of the great 3000' granite chunk in Yosemite Valley known as El Cap, which is pictured throughout in dizzying photos. No one conquered the Cap until the late 1950s, but Duane shows the evolution since of the rock's fabled routes "the Salathe, Pacific Ocean Wall, the Nose" and the change in emphasis from who will be first to whose ascent will be fastest or purest. Duane skillfully contrasts the spiritual fathers of modern rock climbing, from Warren Harding (whose 1958 effort wasn't the prettiest or shortest on record but was first) to the more aesthetic-minded climbers Royal Robbins and Yvon Chouinard, up until the recent free climb attempts of Scott Burk. Recommended for sports and outdoor collections. —Nathan Ward, *Library Journal* Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist From a San Francisco climber and journalist comes this interesting history of one of the world's most challenging rocks: El Capitan, nestled in California's Yosemite Valley, a sheer granite wall 3,000 feet high that has captured the imaginations of mountaineers since its discovery in 1851. One man climbed El Cap 52 times in 12 years. In 1958, Warren Harding spent 45 days on the rock; nowadays really hardy mountaineers can get from bottom to top in about five hours. Duane, who has spent some time on El Cap himself (in 1991, he made three unsuccessful attempts to get to the top), tells the rock's story by introducing us to the men who dedicated their lives to conquering it. This is a dramatic book, full of derring-do, near misses, and thrills and chills, ideal for readers of real-life adventures (like *The Perfect Storm* or *Into Thin Air*) and armchair mountaineers. David Pitt Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Los Angeles Times Daniel Duane does for the nature of California what John Muir did, no question. He captures the thrill and the enzymatic connection between our evolution (physical, conscious, you name it) and our environment. He makes a reader feel the majesty of California, no less so than on the face of El Capitan. As he did with surfing, Duane captures the aesthetic of climbing as well as its unique spiritual challenge. He distinguishes between routes: "The Salathe Wall...meanders all over El Capitan's southwest face because [previous climbers] were determined to reduce the use of bolts...[T]heir route, as a result, really does express a belief about an ideal way of being in the world." And then there are the men who have climbed El Capitan: Royal Robbins, Warren Harding, Yvon Chouinard, Tom Frost to name a few, Duane captures these men at the point when their souls intersect with the rock, even in his description of a handshake: "His fingers," he writes of Jim Bridwell, "claw-like forms that grip yours with an odd kind of passivity, as if this spring-loaded steel trap just can't bring itself to engage for anything short of a hammer." Finally, there's Duane himself on El Cap, describing his third failure: "My partner at that time, Russ McBride, was so unafraid at belays that even as we dangled in the Stoveleg Cracks, he kept right on reading 'One Hundred and One No Down Payment Formulas: How to Get Rich Quick in the Real Estate Market.' I was, however, utterly and desperately terrified once again. (I actually wept with fear, babbling incoherently about how I loved my mother and wanted to live to get married and have babies of my own someday.)" All the greatest adventure writers must describe their fears to us, and Duane is generous, funny and honest about his fear and his awe.