

CLIMB TASMANIA (3rd Edition) by Gerry Narkowicz

Review by Simon Mentz

For an old jaded climber like me, seeing the latest edition of Climb Tasmania was the shot in the arm that I needed. This isn't just a reprint of the former excellent guide with a few extra titbits thrown in, but a complete re-working of the book... new layout, new topos, new maps, new photos, new crags.

Unfortunately, Hillwood has gone due to access problems, but at least low to mid-end climbers can enjoy the inclusion of Sand River, a friendly sport climbing area not too far from Hobart. Among the other more significant areas to debut in this edition is Cloudy Bay down on Bruny Island which hosts a bunch of moderate sport routes in a seaside setting. I was glad to see the inclusion of Fruehauf, which despite being a chipped quarry is still a worthwhile place to spend a few hours when the weather is crap on 'the Pipes' above Hobart. Boulderers haven't been forgotten either with 14 pages dedicated to various pockets of bouldering scattered around the state (but you will need to do a bit more research if bouldering is all that you do).

The new layout and graphics are pleasing to the eye and also make this guide both user-friendly and appealing to read. And there is plenty to read! Gerry's love of the history of Tassie climbing shines through with not only a History Timeline at the start of the book, but a history chapter for each area and finally 'Star Wars'... a piss-take of the characters, the development, the ethics and the feuds that have dominated the Tassie climbing scene over the last few decades.

Visually the guide is well served by a variety of photographers, but in particular the work of Simon Bischoff lifts the book to world-class level with his cliff photos and action shots. The designer Boris Petrack has matched the cliff photos with topo graphics to convey all the necessary information in a clean and attractive way. Print quality is superb and many enjoyable hours can be spent pouring over the cliff photos and excellent maps to familiarise yourself with each area.

There is an abundance of updated and re-worked information in this book, much of which is far more detailed than what appeared in earlier editions. Gerry has called on a host of people to write and update different regions and this will be particularly appreciated by climbers launching onto those cliffs where route descriptions and topos were seriously lacking. Climbs such as the Candlestick and the Geryon Traverse now have far more detail for those wishing to tackle them. These climbs however remain very serious adventures (despite their relatively low grades) and shouldn't be underestimated.

I suspect there are a bunch of other more-subtle elements to this book which I have failed to mention, but which I will come to appreciate over time. One element that did jump out was the

inclusion of yellow boxes which tell a bit more story behind iconic Tasmanian climbs, which was a nice way of injecting a bit of character into those pages dominated by dry route descriptions.

While I might question the allocation of stars occasionally, particularly by a handful of first ascentionists getting carried away with their latest creations, such gripes are not really worth mentioning in a book of this magnitude. There is little doubt that Gerry has done Tassie climbing proud, along with everyone else who has contributed to it.

Fortunately, the book is out just in time for the upcoming Tassie climbing season, so treat yourself and/or a friend by buying a copy and start planning your next climbing holiday to the magic island state.

You can order Climb Tasmania online from climbtasmania.com.au \$64.95 plus \$10 postage.