Book Review

Climbing the Seven Summits: A Comprehensive Guide to the Continents' Highest Peaks

Mike Hamill

Seattle, WA: The Mountaineers Books

US \$29.95, 320 pages, paperback

The Seven Summits are on nearly every outdoor enthusiast's sights. Here is the first comprehensive volume on all seven—or make that eight—peaks. The book has beautiful color images, all-inclusive maps, and detailed descriptions for the most common routes up these gargantuan mountains in far-flung lands. Hamill, a veteran seven-summit guide, not only lists resources, sample itineraries, and key safety considerations but also describes natural, cultural, and political background in each exotic locale.

Hamill appropriately describes all *eight* of the seven summits. Mount Kosciuszko in Australia was on the first seven-summit list that pioneers Dick Bass and Rick

Ridgeway bagged: it's the highest peak on the continent of Australia. However, legendary climbers Reinhold Messner and Pat Morrow postulated that Carstensz Pyramid is the highest peak in Australasia, which includes part of the islands of Oceania. Morrow and Messner solved this quandary the way climbers do: by conquering both. In the appendix of the 357 seven-summit climbers (either or both Kosciuszko or Carstensz), three wilderness physician colleagues are among the first to top these peaks.

Because of the beautiful layout, this makes a great book to peruse even if you have no plans for climbing any of these big mountains. Or start with what Hamill calls the most popular, the exotic Afromountain sky island of Kilimanjaro, clocking in at 5895 m (19,314 ft).

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