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Alpine Time Machine

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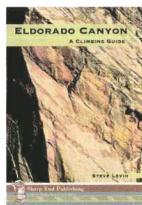
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REVIEWS



Eldo Opus

Masterpieces arrive fully realized, the creator's toil invisible in the final product. Eldorado Canyon, Colorado, now has its masterpiece with Steve Levin's intuitive, exhaustive, 450-page **Eldorado Canyon: A Climbing Guide** (\$39.95, sharpbooks.com). (See Players, p.26, for more on Levin.) This first-ever photo-topo guide comes stacked with action photos; clear (but not belabored) Beta for the climbs and, more crucially, the descents; loads of must-read historical essays; and a revamp of the climbs' seriousness grades (now G through X). The meticulous Levin, climbing here 33 years, has also resolved many an FA blank spot, a critical mission in this living stone museum.

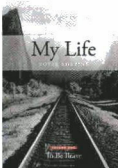
—Matt Samet



Progression Obsession

If a form of Tourette's exists in which you repeatedly yell, "Holy cannoli!", then I contracted it watching **Progression** (\$19.95 for HD download, \$29.95 for the DVD; bigupproductions.com). Big UP's latest. It spotlights, with expert cinematography, today's A-listers — Tommy Caldwell, Alex Honnold, Kevin Jorgeson, Matt Segal, Chris Sharma, Patxi Usobiaga, etc. — in the realms of sport, comp, big walls, highballs, head-points, and more. To say these trailblazers are "raising the bar" would be misleading — they're javelin-tossing it into the stratosphere. Take, for example, Sharma dynoing to mono pockets twice in a row on his 250-foot, 5.15b *Jumbo Love*; Patxi Usobiaga training for 30 days straight; or Tommy Caldwell oozing up 5.13+ El Cap corners. With a lively narrative that humanizes these heroes, **Progression** leaves you breathless as well as wondering: *what's next?*

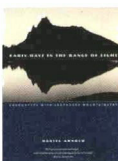
—Kristin Bjornsen



A Royal Life

Most people wouldn't need seven volumes to tell their life story — but then again, most people aren't Royal Robbins. In **My Life: To Be Brave** (\$19.95, royalrobbinsinthebook.com), the first in this autobiographical series, Robbins lays bare the driving forces — external and internal — that have shaped him. Chapter one dives straight into his landmark solo of the Leaning Tower: the insecure belays, the pumped arms, and the stubbornness it took to overcome the ominous wall. This insightful, 221-page book chronicles Robbins' life from birth, to his first glimpse of climbing — on a Boy Scout trip to the Valley, when his 14-year-old mind scoffed at the idea of climbing El Cap. In-between are myriad childhood adventures, from jumping trains, to Sierras escapades with the Scouts.

—Amanda Fris



Alpine Time Machine

Ever wish you could travel back to climbing's early days and follow the earliest first-ascent visionaries? This fantasy comes to life in Daniel Arnold's **Early Days in the Range of Light: Encounters with Legendary Mountaineers** (\$28, counterpointpress.com). Arnold, cleverly, chose 15 classic peaks in California's High Sierras and spent three years studying the lives of the peaks' pioneers, groundbreakers like John Muir, Clarence King, and Norman Clyde — he then climbed their routes using the same crude gear they'd used. In this elegant narrative, the author blends the predecessors' accounts with his own adventures, adding classic photos from the 1800s and early 1900s.

—Fred Bryant