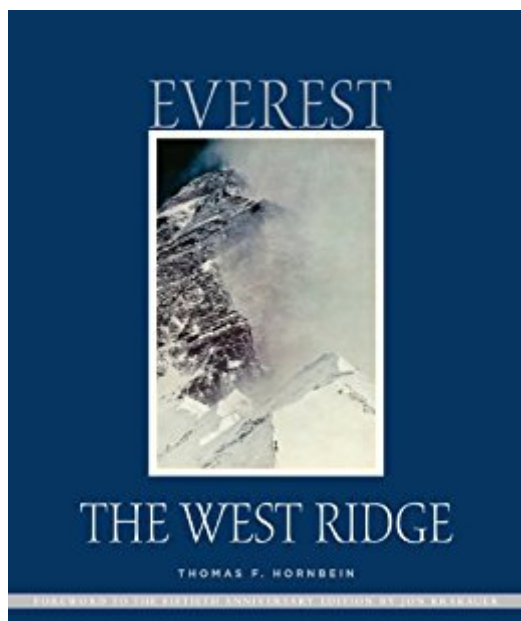


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Everest: The West Ridge



Synopsis

"Not only did Hornbein play a crucial role in one of the most extraordinary accomplishments in the history of mountaineering, his account of the feat is one of the finest things ever written about this peculiar, hazardous, and uncommonly engaging pursuit." —Jon Krakauer * Special anniversary edition to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first ascent of Mount Everest via the West Ridge * The West Ridge remains the least attempted and most deadly of recognized routes on Everest * In 2012 major media covered two failed expeditions on the West Ridge; both teams are planning to try again in 2013 In 1963, Jim Whittaker became the first American to summit Everest via the South Col route. Roughly two weeks after Whittaker's achievement, Tom Hornbein and Willi Unsoeld, fellow American mountaineers on the same expedition, became the first climbers ever to summit the world's highest peak via the dangerous and forbidding West Ridge—a route on which only a handful of climbers have since succeeded. This special 50th anniversary edition reintroduces the adventure in a larger format with full-color photographs by members of the expedition, including leader Norman G. Dyhrenfurth and team doctor Jim Lester. In addition to a new foreword by Jon Krakauer, this volume also features a new preface by Hornbein along with a series of prefaces he wrote for earlier editions, including the original from 1965, and a map by Dee Molenaar. Updated bios of all the American Mount Everest Expedition team members, written by climber Broughton Coburn, are now accompanied by contemporary portraits from the expedition.

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Customer Reviews

Tom Hornbein, M.D., a personal friend and one of a relatively small group of what I consider to be 'true mountaineers', wrote the first edition of this book in 1965. This latest edition contains many photos never seen in print as well as a new introduction and preface. Tom's understated, almost clinical writing style, may put off some readers but it's only when one realizes the true importance of this particular ascent of Everest that one begins to understand how totally Tom and Willi committed themselves on that day in May, 1963. After leaving their high camp they knew there would be no turning back, that they would either summit and traverse to the South Col or they would expire on the mountain. With this in mind, the one may find Tom's style more palatable, understanding that not only were he and Willi going for the summit, they were doing so in true alpine style that needs no flamboyant description to enthrall the reader.

This book is awesome. It describes a large and successful American expedition that gets up Everest by two different routes. Tom Hornbein and Willi Unsoeld lead a climb up the West Ridge of Everest. The West Ridge had never been attempted before and it has only been done a few times since. At one point they leave the ridge and Hornbein describes a reconnaissance where they walk for hours across the North Face of Everest, to reach the bottom opening of what is now known as the Hornbein Couloir. A true wilderness adventure. I would have loved to see more photos from inside the couloir but at that altitude just hiking is enough of an effort. Unsoeld manages to take many awesome photos anyway. That they did this with oxygen is even more impressive to me because the logistics of such an attempt are very difficult. They encounter a considerable amount of real rock climbing at an altitude that had certainly never been tried before. The point where they can no longer go back down is also described. They have to go up and over in a desperate bid for survival down the (to them) unknown South ridge route in the coming night. There they encounter teammates who were desperately freezing as they waited for them in the dark. They must survive an extremely cold night out in the thin air. A truly remarkable book. My introduction to Willi Unsoeld who seems to be a force in himself. Amazing.

This is the exciting account to this incredible achievement. It is highly personal dealing with the personal interactions that made this achievement possible. Rather than focusing on the climbing, the focus is on the personal interactions. One gets a clearer understanding of what takes place on this type of event which is much deeper than a superficial discussion of the accomplishment. I come away with a much better understanding of the people involved and what motivated them to take these chances to achieve this outstanding outcome. For one who did not understand the psychology behind those who do this extreme climbing, it was helpful and enlightening.

A great book detailing the American Everest expedition and its trials and tribulations. Also a great collection of full color pictures from the expedition!

This first hand rendering was both startling and eloquent. Delivered with such humility, it understates Willi and Tom's epic accomplishment. That alone sets it apart in a genre where aggrandisement is a common trait. Tom's account captures a lost place in history where American idealism took precedence over individualism and made me feel something I haven't felt in awhile - proud to be an American.

I really enjoy reading the stories by climbers who were able to claw their way up these incredibly difficult mountains decades ago before all of the equipment, satellite phones, radios, Sherpacams, etc, existed to help make the journey as safe as it can possibly be (which is, of course, none too safe anyway). Stories like this one give you some idea of what it was like when the guys who were the pioneers of these routes set out to see what they could accomplish.

This book of course is a telling of the first American ascent of Everest, and particularly the subsequent ascent of the more technical West Ridge by two members of the US team. I found the book interesting from a historical perspective, in today's world of a crowded and commercialized Everest it is easy to forget that not terribly long ago this mountain was very remote and still the pinnacle of mountaineering.

Even tho I've never climbed a mountain, I've read every mt climbing book available and attended lectures by men who almost died on Everest. This book was doubly fascinating since it was the first attack on the West Ridge with a successful summit. In spite of the "usual" frostbitten toes and

unfortunate one death by avalanche, I could not put it down. The photos in the Kindle edition did not do justice to the mountain.

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