



Trip Review: Cathedrals Rockclimbing by Kerry



Kerry on Cherry's Flake

No doubt if you've ever visited the shop and chatted to me about climbing, I would have raved on about how much I love this place. The Cathedral Ranges holds a special place in my heart; it's where it all started for me a few years ago. Keen to impress my boyfriend, who is an experienced climber & mountaineer, I agreed to give it a go and have never looked back!!

The Cathedral Ranges are a very easy drive up Maroondah Highway, approximately 100km from Melbourne via the very scenic Black Spur and through the town of Buxton. Here you must stop after a hard day's climbing at the Igloo Roadhouse for their famous "Buxton Burger".

The majority of the climbs are multi-pitch trad routes on beautiful sandstone. The highest peak is Mt Sugarloaf, at 923 metres. Next are the more angled slabs of the North Jawbone. Other cliffs include Neds Peak, Ten Fathom Ridge, Sunset Strip and the vegetated South Jawbone.

The North Jawbone is the large east facing slab which is definitely the most popular, with many classic starred and well graded routes. These range from 6, for beginners, to 18 for the more seasoned climbers. Some of the climbs I've enjoyed on various trips are *Speigal's Overhang*, 120m, grade 10, 2 stars, *Northern Ramble*, 85m grade 6, 1 star and my special

favourite, *Junglescope* 149m, grade 13, 2 stars.

Access to the North Jawbone is a little vague if you are on your first trip. Follow the steep & winding Jawbone Creek Track until you start to notice large rock slabs off to your right. Look for a rock cairn here and follow a trodden path directly up. The cliff will start to appear through the trees halfway up this path and bring you to the base of the climbs. There is an easy decent route from the top of the climbs around the north end of the crag, behind the *Xanthere* buttress.

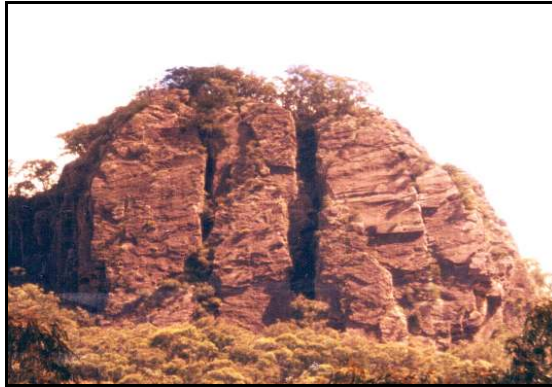
The stunning Sugarloaf Peak has the most invigorating walks from the saddle car park, straight up the Wells Cave Track with a stop off at *Flypaper Wall* for beginners. The main face also has some nice easy routes; *Big Day Out*, 123m grade 4, was my initiation to the world of climbing. The dramatically exposed rock scramble up Canyon Track to the top of the Sugarloaf gives you a spectacular panoramic view of the entire park.

Another spot to investigate is Ten Fathom Ridge, near Neds Peak. I've only completed one climb in this area, but I'm keen to check out *Flight of the Brumby*, 24m grade 14.

An interesting walk for climbers to explore is the Razorback Ridge, which links the Sugarloaf and the Jawbones.

You can experience the abundant bird life and the distinctive smells of the native mint which sprouts amongst the rocky outcrops.

The *Cathedral Ranges Outdoor Leisure Map* has accurate information, and you will need *Eastern Victoria A Rockclimbing Guide*, RRP \$49.95, for route and access descriptions. Both are available from The Wilderness Shop! Feel free to chat with our staff for further information, they are a great source of information!



View of the North Jawbones