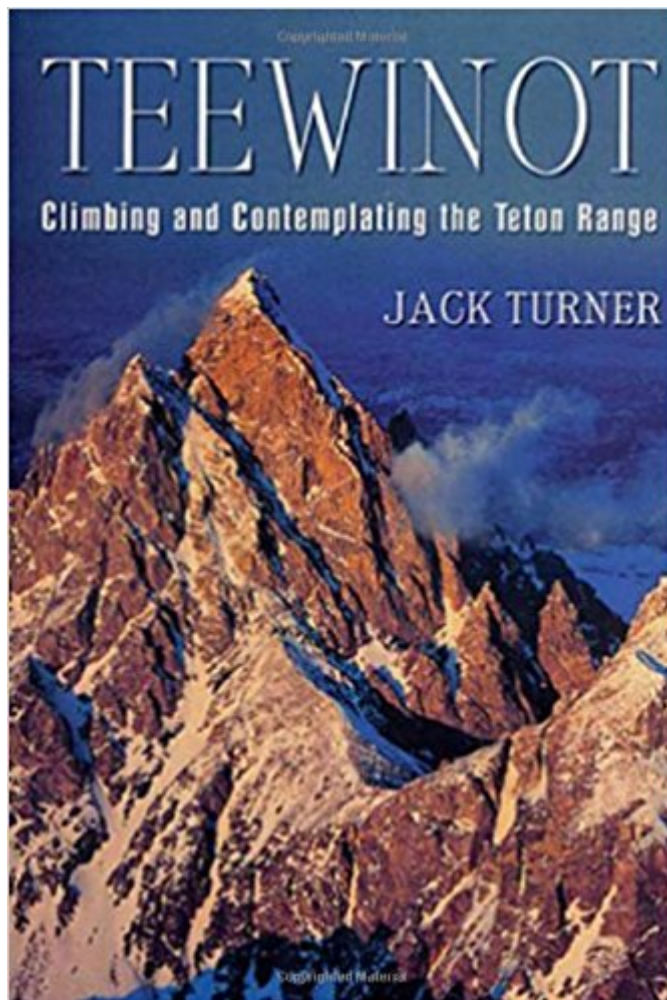


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Teewinot: A Year In The Teton Range



Synopsis

Jack Turner grew up with an image of the Tetons engraved in his mind. As a young man, he climbed the peaks of this singular range with basic climbing gear friends. Later in life, he led treks in India, Pakistan, Nepal, China, Tibet, and Peru, but he always returned to the mountains of his youth. He continues to climb the Tetons as a guide for Exum Mountain, Guides, the oldest and most prestigious guide service in America. *Teewinot* is his ode to forty years in the mountains that he loves. Like Thoreau and Muir, Turner has contemplated the essential nature of a landscape. *Teewinot* is a book about a mountain range, its austere temper, its seasons, its flora and fauna, a few of its climbs, its weather, and the glory of the wildness. It is also about a small group of guides and rangers, nomads who inhabit the range each summer and know the mountains as intimately as they will ever be known. It is also a remarkable account of what it is like to live and work in a national park. *Teewinot* has something for everyone: spellbinding accounts of classic climbs, awe at the beauty of nature, and passion for some of the environmental issues facing America today. In this series of recollections, one of America's most beautiful national parks comes alive with beauty, mystery, and power. The beauty, mystery, and power of the Grand Tetons come alive in Jack Turner's memoir of a year on America's most beautiful mountain range.

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Customer Reviews

Skillfully blending history, memory, and observation, philosopher-cum-mountain guide Jack Turner's *Teewinot* is a year in the life of Wyoming's Teton Range, as told by a true believer. Certainly he captures a sense of the mountains--not only their jagged rock, hidden valleys, and beaten trails, but

the flora, fauna, and folks who inhabit them. He navigates this territory with the poise and purpose of a skilled climber--feeling for holds, finding one, adjusting balance, reaching out again in a different direction, pausing on those features whose nuances fit best, but never lingering too long. His narrative meanders between peaks, seasons, communities, periods of history, and moments in time. While lacking much of the intensity in tone and the invitation to controversy of his previous work, *The Abstract Wild*, Teewinot is still underscored by a deep environmental consciousness and concern for the future of the wild. Turner notes, for instance, the numerous and varied ways *Homo sapiens* have scarred his beloved wilderness: the trash left behind by campers, the wildlife pushed out of their usual haunts, the rash of development in Jackson Hole. But he also manages to skirt the role played by guide companies like Exum (his employer), noting only that "Exum, of course, is a part of the problem--a small part." Maybe this is denial, a practice he labels "the first line of defense." Or perhaps he relies on the climber's "prizewinning talent for dissociating emotion" to shield him. Whatever, he is content to leave these questions unanswered. Many readers will also be content to leave them as such--a worthwhile trade for a glimpse into a climber's soul. --Rene Henery

Bursting with a sense of place, Turner's earnest journal of a year spent in Grand Teton National Park, where he works as a mountain guide, is a rewarding reading experience replete with ravishing observations of nature. From his Wyoming cabin, he looks out on majestic Mount Teewinot (the name comes from a Shoshone word meaning "many pinnacles"). He counts among his "Thoreauvian neighbors" deer, ospreys, great blue herons and porcupines, as well as moose that occasionally sleep on his porch. "We are a guild, our labor a craft," he declares, referring to fellow guides and park rangers who come together three or four months each year, united by a love of mountains and the West. Turner, a seasoned mountaineer who has led expeditions to India, Tibet and China, and has taught philosophy, takes us on exhilarating climbs, including one to the summit of the Grand Teton, as he casually drops apt references to Sartre, Rilke, Wittgenstein, Matthew Arnold, Chinese painting, Buddhist chants, Zen poems. But this is no Shangri-La. Illegal snowmobilers and poachers abound; "extreme skiers" and "extreme snowboarders" keep rescuers and medics busy. Turner himself lives on the edgeAjust half a mile from an active geologic fault capable of triggering a 7.5-magnitude earthquake tomorrow. A passionate conservationist, he bemoans the frazzled state of this "most compromised park in the national park system," a sanctuary littered with hunters, a major airport, motorboats with no speed limits. Highlighting the fate of the vanishing grizzly bear, he makes a compelling plea for preservation of "wild forms of being," and envisions a respectful covenant between people and wild animals such as mountain lions and

wolves. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

As a lover of the Grand Tetons I couldn't wait to read a book written by a guide who has spent much of his life in the Teton range. Jack Turner has guided many clients to the Grand Teton summit as well as climbed a majority of other peaks in the Teton range. If you are expecting a spell binding thriller about mountain climbing, you will be disappointed. However, if you want to get a feel for the experience of simply being in the Teton range during the 4 seasons, then this book is for you.

Turner's knowledge of wildlife and plantlife in the Teton range is amazing, as is his ability to describe the ever changing seasons in the mountains. His Zen religious influences are also referenced but never heavy handed as he manages to weave the Zen philosophy with the seasons and changing climate. Turner does get to be a bit preachy on the subject of man encroaching upon natural habitats and the destruction of our wild eco system; but his love for the natural beauty of the Tetons allowed me to forgive this minor annoyance. Turner takes us through the seasons of the Teton range in a smooth flowing narrative that is satisfying and enlightening. I would recommend this book for those who enjoy the Tetons as well as others who are simply interested in one person's perception of one of our finest wildlife areas.

Jack Turner has yet again produced a book with a sense of place and sometimes even an aura of the Tetons where he has climbed and guided for 40 years. Although this book is more relaxed and less intense than his powerful "Abstract Wild" it nevertheless provides a mature outlook on life in the Tetons. Turner is not afraid to reveal himself in this book and yet does not fall into sentimentality, the accounts of climbing and the experiences with friends are especially moving such as the tragic consequences of a fall for his friend Kim Schmitz who suffered in incredible agony after breaking just about everything or the death of Leigh Ortenburger, and yet there are great times too like the remarkable skiing of Mark Newcombe and Turner's love of Rilke and Haiku which also appeals very much to me. Surrounding these images of lost friends and at times extreme experiences is the national park itself which never leaves the scene always providing the glue which binds the whole together. Turner has a remarkable grasp of both the scientific aspects of the park such as the geology and the biology/ecology which is added to the feel of it at the same time, I mean the sense of being experienced when the mind is stilled, something which is always enhanced in a wild area where existence is forced upon you no longer escapable such as in a big city. Through the stories of the park, the people and his own very human outlook you can't help but feel Turner loves where he is and lives for it wholeheartedly, his own journey into philosophy, Zen show how deeply he thinks

about his life and the natural environment. I also feel that he loves what he does and where he is so much that he not willing to give it up to go that extra distance needed in really deep meditation. My own experiences in this mean that joy can be found everywhere whether it is a city or in natural surroundings. Jack Turner is a man that I would like to meet, his energy, his dynamic outlook, his interest in just about everything is not that common nowadays. A wonderful book of a man and his love.

This beautifully crafted narrative presents a month-by-month, May through April, description of a 58 year old mountain climbing guide's recollections and reflections on living and working Grand Teton National park. Teewinot is the nearest peak visible from the author's seasonal cabin in the park. Each chapter is an essay about climbing, wildlife, plants, environmental management or personality profiles related to events that happened during that month. The book begins in May because that's when spring begins to overtake winter, covers the intense summer climbing season, describes autumn wildlife viewing treks to remote corners of the park and tells about winter ski treks. The lifestyle and habits of climbing guides, rangers and other professional outdoors people are profiled throughout. One of the best aspects of the book is that while it's written by a technical climbing guide and has interesting stories about both guided and highly challenging climbs, the book goes beyond that to reflect the author's wide-ranging, eclectic interest and knowledge about everything related to the Tetons. Highly recommended to anyone interested in mountaineering, national parks, wildlife and the contemporary American West. There are 11 unexceptional color photographs, two maps with sufficient detail to follow the ground covered in the essays, and a six-page bibliography of reference sources for the Tetons and other topics covered, although many books cited are probably available only in large reference libraries.

As I read, Turner took me on an alpine guided trip that allowed me to vicariously absorb the intimacies of nature and "sit" with him as he basked, observed and recorded the essence of nature and the Tetons. I felt like I was with him for every step and hold. This is a very sensual account of his year in the Tetons. The intimacies of his account are to be relished. He was generous to share his otherworldly view and "heightened" sense of what it is like to humbly share the earth with other beings.

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