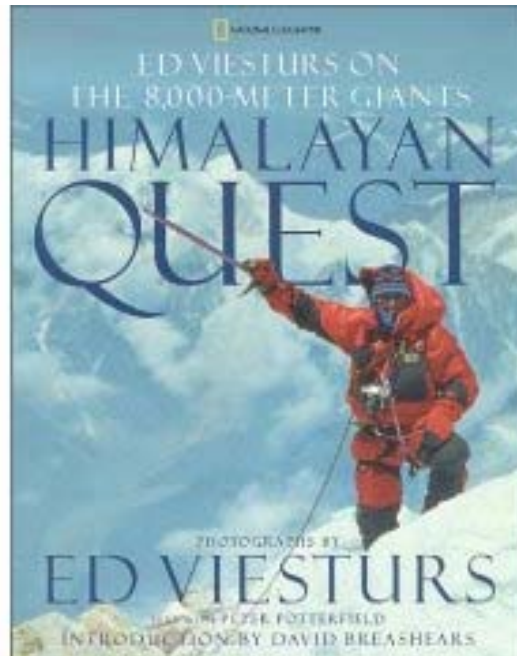


Himalayan Quest: Ed Viesturs on the 8,000-Meter Giants

Author: Ed Viesturs

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Review:

For mountaineers, the 14 peaks above 8,000 meters—all located in the Himalayan range near the border between China and India—have a special status. In 1986, Austrian Reinhold Messner became the first person to scale all of them without the use of supplemental oxygen. Viesturs is currently on a quest to become the first American to reproduce this astonishing feat. This book presents photographs from his expeditions on the 12 tallest mountains in the world. A world-class climber, Viesturs is blessed with an "unusual physiology"; his body's ability to process oxygen extraordinarily well allows him to remain unusually alert and vigorous even at oxygen-scarce altitudes. That clarity of mind is amply demonstrated in these stunning photographs. Viesturs emphasizes the difficulty of taking pictures at such heights and even charmingly includes imperfect shots (from a technical perspective) that have special meaning to him. Standout images include the vast, ridged, snowy valley framed by Everest, Lhotse and Nuptse; the "maze of crevasses" of the Khumbu Glacier in the Western Cwm; and the carpet of clouds draped across the several peaks of Makalu, Lhotse, Everest and Cho Oyu taken from the vantage point of Kanchenjunga. Replete with helpful maps, this book almost doubles as a travel guide; the lack of hotels doesn't make it any less informative for the tiny number of people eager to see these staggering vistas for themselves. No book consisting solely of prose could ever produce gasps like the pictures contained herein.