

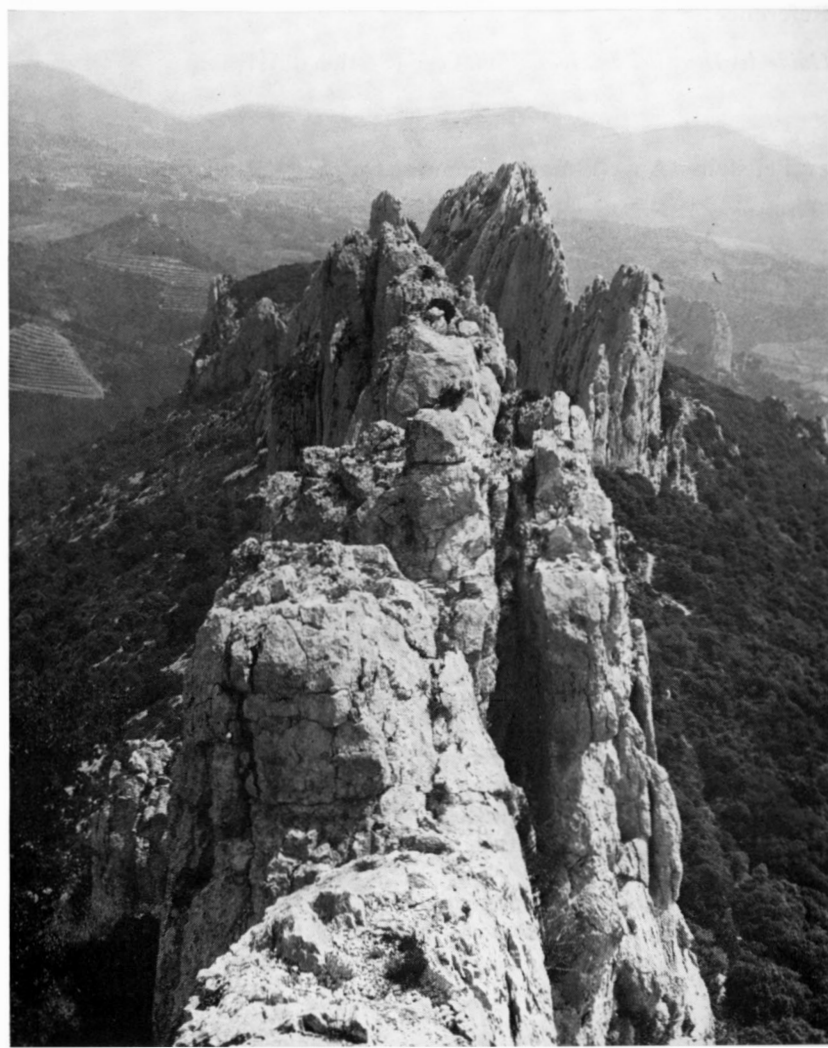
Climbers' playgrounds — Europe

10 The Dentelles de Montmirail

Edward Pyatt

This group is a jagged spine of large limestone pinnacles, running NE to SW, which is an outlier of Mont Ventoux in Vaucluse, France, around 60 miles from the Mediterranean. It lies close to Gigondas in the Rhone valley some twelve miles E of Orange, where there is a station on the main line to Marseilles and, close by, the southern motor-way. The crags are thus a suitable stop-over point when returning from the Calanques, the Maritime Alps or the Riviera.

77 *Dentelles de Montmirail summit ridge* Photo: Edward Pyatt



There is a motorable road and a camp site only twenty minutes from the foot of the rocks; ten minutes further away are a small hotel and a commodious hut of the CAF (Section d'Avignon) equipped, in addition to the usual facilities, with lizards and cacti.

The line of crag, which faces NW, is divided into three sections, from left to right—de la Pousterle, du Turc and des Florets. Shaded in the morning but getting sun after mid-afternoon, it is around 100 m high, steep and almost free of vegetation. Many routes are described in the guide-book, some of quite amiable standards.

The Roc du Turc (627 m), the highest point, is a fine belvedere even in the hottest weather, having a small adequately shady tree on the very top. Gigondas is a well-known wine producing area and provides splendid backing to climbing activities.

Reference:

Guide des Dentelles de Montmirail. CAF (Section d'Avignon)

11 Peilstein—A well-known Viennese training mountain

(Translation: E. N. Bowman)

Hubert Peterka

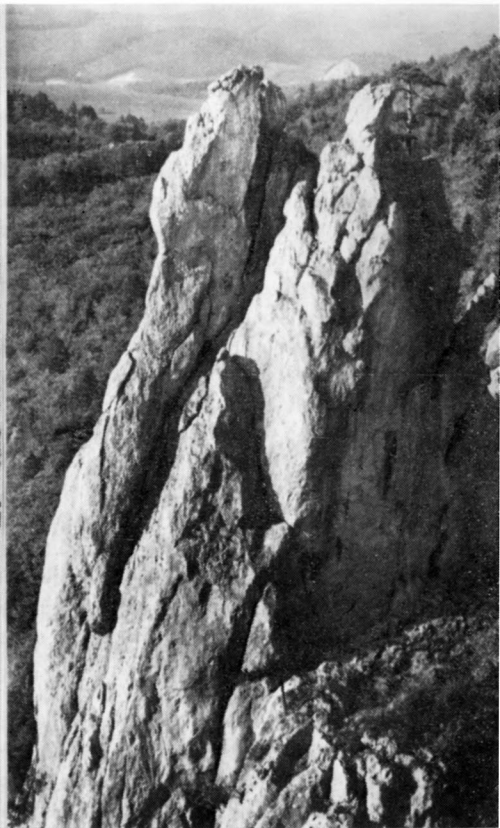
Just where the southern Wienerwald begins to expand into higher formations stands the Peilstein, amid more elevated summits which extend towards the Triesting valley. On the one side the Peilstein is the prototype of a rambler's paradise, whereas the other side proffers a variety of routes up steep rock, making it a much-esteemed objective. The precipitous W face presents rock walls of up to 100 m in height and there are plenty of opportunities for rambles to enjoy the pleasures of lonely wood paths.

It is many decades since the Peilstein was first used as a training mountain by climbers and now it has become one of the best-loved Viennese local mountains. Climbing on the Peilstein first started in about 1880. Apart from the 'Cimone', a detached rock tower, named after the well-known Cimone della Pala in the Dolomites, the Peilstein also boasts of a 'Kleine Zinne' and a 'Matterhorn'. All these rock formations are only accessible by climbing. Ramblers can see them from the edge of the plateau and even this spectacle requires complete freedom from vertigo. As is the case elsewhere, the climbs on the Peilstein are all graded from I to VI, according to difficulty, VI being the most difficult. Nevertheless most accidents occur on the easier routes rather than on the more difficult ones. This constitutes a perpetual warning to those who decide to 'have a go at climbing' on the Peilstein rocks, without knowledge and adequate equipment. Nothing is easier than to slip on the smooth and well-worn rocks.

Schwarzensee is a small unpretentious village set in meadows and woods which reach out eastwards towards the crest of the Hoher Lindkogel. The

Peilstein rises to the w of the village towards which it extends its lowest elevation.

The ascent from Schwarzensee is much frequented on Sundays but entirely deserted during the week. On the way up, the Triesting valley is frequently visible and just before reaching the Peilstein hut Berndorf can be seen. A fine specimen of the black pine (*pinus nigra*) with wide-spread foliage is situated in a corner of the summit meadow. This is the queen of the Peilstein woods. This magnificent tree, allied to the pontian flora, is only one of the many treasures of nature which abound on the Peilstein. The flora even extends to the rugged w face where healthy examples of the black pine and the thin-stemmed delicate umbrella pine stimulate the artistic impression of the landscape. When the falcons wheel around the lofty towers in the summer time, sweet-smelling flowers bloom on the small patches of grass in the steep walls and the light-coloured rocks and green woods form an eternal contrast, then is the Peilstein at its most beautiful. The variety of the landscape and of the flora continually reward the friends of the Peilstein. Although it is a pre-eminent training mountain, it is also a worth-while objective for the rambler.



78. Peilstein—Hahnenkamm This and next photo: Richard Pletsch & Co

79 Peilstein—Cimone Sud-West

How to get there:

From Schwarzensee, 537 m, the highest point on the main road between Raisenmarkt and Neuhaus (bus from Vienna), via the sunken road to the start of the wood and the ascent to the Peilstein hut, 718 m (45 min: follow green markings to the OAV hut, guardian all the year round). From the Peilstein hut, five min descent along the ridge towards Raisenmarkt and Holzschlag where there is an inn (30 min: follow yellow then red markings). Now take the valley road to the N (red markings) and then turn off left before the Heiderberg ridge (blue markings) and make for Groissbach, 402 m, and along the main road direct to Alland, 320 m (bus to Vienna or Baden). If there is time in hand the stalactite caves on the Grosser Buchberg are well worth a visit.

Cars can be parked in Schwarzensee. Another wood path leads back to the village via the Friends of Nature hut, 620 m (guardian all the year round). (30 min: green markings.) In order to preserve the natural amenities, tourists are requested to keep to the paths. Ramblers congregating on the edge of the plateau must refrain from throwing anything over the edge as this could well endanger climbers.

12 Montserrat**Charles Mont**

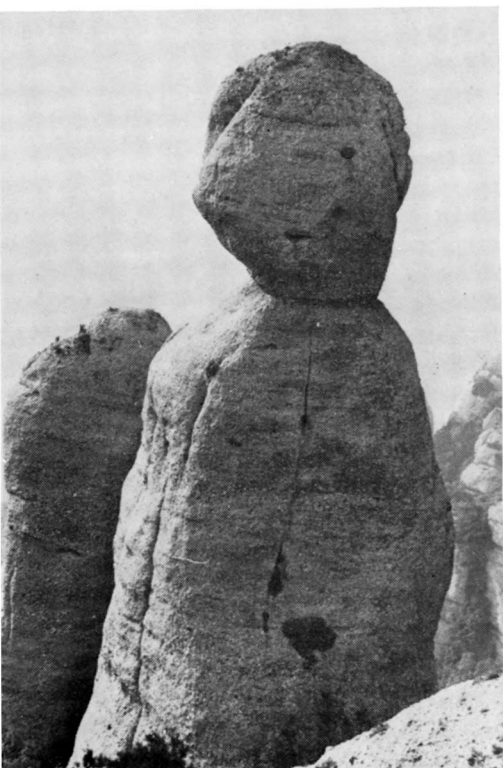
This striking block of mountains rises some 35 miles NW of Barcelona and is readily accessible from the popular Costa Brava and Costa Dorada. The mass, some six miles by three, reaches 1235 metres at the Turo de San Jeronimo. The rock, which is conglomerate, has been eroded into deep ravines with huge buttresses up to 1000 ft high and large numbers of isolated rock pinnacles of rounded outline liberally fitted out with impressive overhangs. On the SE side of the massif high above the Valle Malo is a famous monastery, which houses an image of the Virgin carved by St Luke and brought to Barcelona in AD 30. This is a highly popular goal for pilgrims and is well provided with facilities for their entertainment—cafés, restaurants, shops, bars, cable railways and good road access. These serve admirably to confine most of the visitors to a comparatively small area.

But it is the magnificent crags rising above the monastery and all over the adjacent mountainsides which will attract the mountaineer. There is a club hut—Vincenç Barbé—some distance W of the monastery; there is an official camp-site and there are good sleeping-out possibilities. This is sufficiently far S for the weather to be acceptably warm for most of the year, perhaps sometimes even too warm.

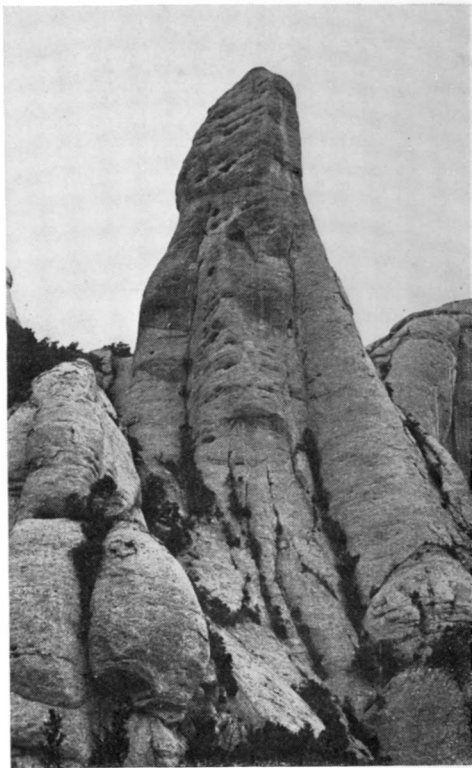
Among the very large number of climbs, the following are some of the most outstanding. At the monastery end of the group the Cavall Bernat is a popular pinnacle giving a number of routes of 600 ft. In the central part the Pared de San Jeronimo gives some 1000 ft face climbs. Further W is the 700 ft face of the Bisbe and a forest of pinnacles, among which La Roca de la Partió, La Roca Gran de la Portello and La Cadrietta d'Agulles are particularly noteworthy.

To sum up, Montserrat offers a wealth of unusual rock scenery and of climbing in a location which is readily accessible, yet by no means over-run, and which enjoys highly pleasant weather.

A guide-book (in Catalan) can be purchased at the monastery. In the Club Library there is a copy of Vol 1 of *Roques, parets i agulles de Montserrat* entitled *Regio d'Agulles*, which deals with the area of great pinnacles on the west side of the massif. Other volumes in the series can be presumed to be coming along. See also *Alpine Climbing*, 1972.



80 Montserrat—*La Bola de la Partió*
This and next photo: J. Montfort



81 Montserrat—*Cavall Bernat*