



Photographic locations worth sweating for

Temple Basin, Arthur's Pass

Some of Aotearoa's most spectacular mountain views don't require reaching a summit, but they still take a little effort to earn. In this issue, Peter Laurenson takes us to Temple Basin near Arthur's Pass, where an hour's climb reveals dramatic views across the Southern Alps and the imposing slopes of Mt Rolleston. From the first light of dawn illuminating rugged ridgelines to adventures higher above the basin, Peter shares another memorable alpine journey and a location well worth the climb for photographers and mountain lovers alike.

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VIEW NORTH FROM MT CASSIDY
STITCH OF 2 LANDSCAPE IMAGES, F11, 1/400 SEC, ISO 100, 117MM

Just an hour's climb up a rugged but well-formed trail, there is a spectacular spot to view one of Aotearoa's famous peaks bathed in Mother Nature's dawn colour palette. The sunset view is well worth a look too.

Just off SH73, a little north of Arthur's Pass at 900 metres, is a car park at the base of Temple Basin Track, which leads to a ski field of the same name. Temple Basin is one of the oldest club-run ski fields in the country, founded in 1929. If you don't fancy making the climb pre-dawn under head-torch light, you can spend a night at one of two lodges located at about 1,360 metres. There is the more basic Canterbury University Student Lodge, completed in 1964, and the Ferrier Lodge, completed in 1976 and offering catered meals and a bar.

The famous peak is Mt Rolleston. From the valley floor, Rome Ridge snakes up nearly 1.5 vertical kilometres to Low Peak at 2,212 metres. High Peak sits a tad further northwest, 63 metres higher. As the kea flies, only five kilometres separate these summits from Temple Basin, and in the clear dawn alpine air they seem much closer. I've climbed Mt Rolleston via Rome Ridge. It was exhilarating and ranks as one of my favourite climbs. Viewing the route so directly from Temple Basin makes it look particularly formidable.

From the basin, it is not only Rolleston that commands attention. The ridges extending south to Avalanche Peak and north to Mt Philistine and beyond catch the first rays of the sun soon after Rolleston. It's a memorable, unfolding light show.



MT ROLLESTON VIEWED FROM ABOUT 1300M, BELOW TEMPLE BASIN SKI FIELD AT DAWN
F8, 1/50 SEC, ISO 100, 104MM



AN INQUISITIVE VISITOR JOINS US ON TEMPLE COL
F8, 1/500 SEC, ISO 100, 38MM

If staying overnight, the view east to Phipps Peak, Mt Temple, Blimit and Mt Cassidy offers another spectacular perspective. These peaks are all between one and two kilometres from, and some 600 metres above, the lodges. On my most recent visit in August, I climbed above the basin to Mt Cassidy, then

along the ridge top to Blimit. This requires some climbing gear and experience but is not technically challenging. In summer, reaching the ridge tops above the basin just requires some scrambling worth sweating for. Easier day walking in the basin also offers much to enjoy.



A VIEW TO MT ROLLESTON FROM 1700M, BENEATH BLIMIT
STITCH OF 4 LANDSCAPE IMAGES, F11, 1/400 SEC, ISO 100, 24MM