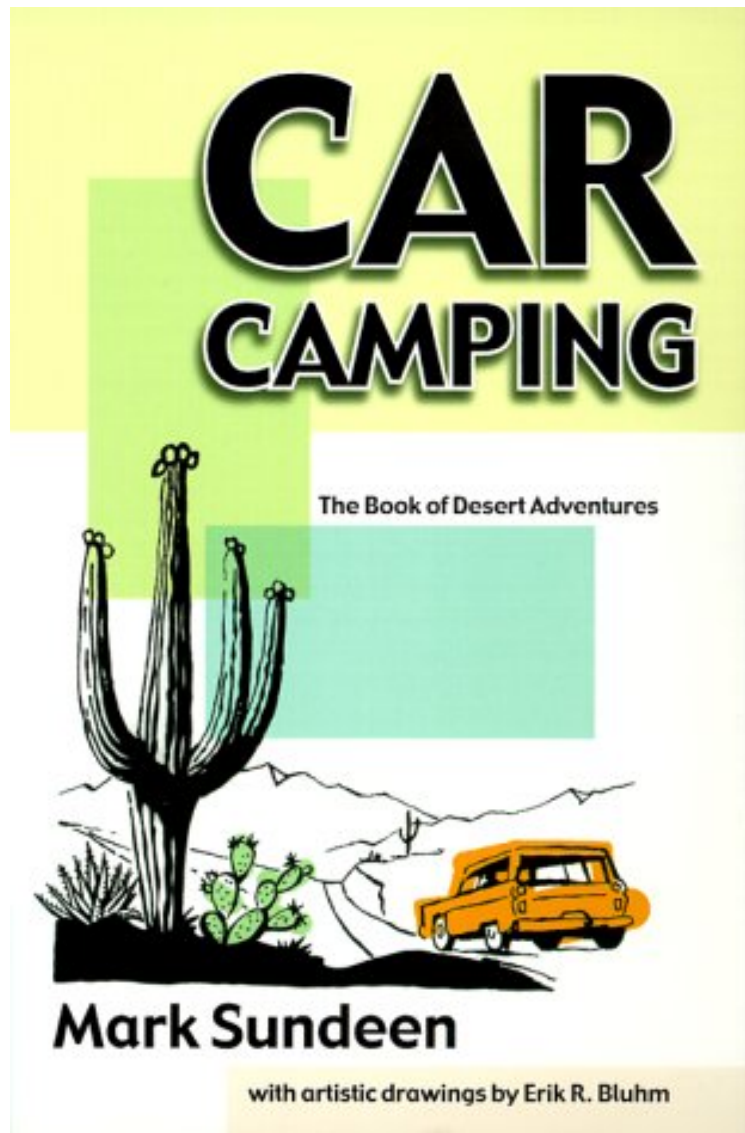


[Download pdf] Car Camping: The Book of Desert Adventures

Car Camping: The Book of Desert Adventures

Mark Sundeen

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Mark Sundeen : Car Camping: The Book of Desert Adventures before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Car Camping: The Book of Desert Adventures:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. "I wanted to get back to the desert. Then it would all be all right."By Matt BeattyI picked this up on a whim, by reading some random recommendation based on similar road books. Its title is misleading, sounding like a guidebook. Don't be fooled. This is a semiautobiographical novel, based in the southwest, centered around young Mark Sundeen, a painter who is aimless and usually up for heading to wherever his

beatup Subaru can take him so long as it's free and there's a road. Sundeen builds up many characters, most notably Beach Philips and September, and you'll laugh at his cynicism, his take on open spaces, the desert as "nowhere," and the kind of trouble people find themselves in. Read this. Especially if you're familiar with Utah (Moab particularly) and the southwest. It's a quick read with some downright philosophical elements and the right balance of questioning and happiness. This book and author could use some more attention! (I'm definitely going to pick up *The Making of Toro*, another of Sundeen's.)--- ---"I wanted ... life to rush through me as fast as it arrived, not caught up on thoughts or thinking." (13)"You only get a certain amount of space in this life, ... and most people just fill it up with fancy junk and clever ideas" (23)"Everyone thinks they want to be free. ... But they don't know what freedom is, and if they had it, they'd be terrified. They just want everyone else to think they're free." (41)"I wanted to get back to the desert. Then it would all be all right." (150)"You can never be nowhere. No matter how hard you try. Not even in the middle of the desert. The further you get from one place the closer you are to someplace else, and when you try to drop out of the world altogether you'll find that wherever you land is still a part of it. There will be people there who make things just as complicated as the things you were trying to get away from." (205)2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. the most underrated book I've read in recent memory...By Ben KeefeI was recommended this book by a person who had the author as one of his guides on an Outward Bound wilderness adventure in Alaska. I was engrossed and delighted immediately, and must admit to laughing out loud more than once. Sundeen has a perfectly honed voice that is at once energetic, sarcastic, world-weary and full of life. Sound corny? It's not, by any stretch of the imagination. These stories of do it yourself adventure and an insatiable lust for life are almost perfectly wrought, bringing to mind Aaron Cometbus if he wasn't hung up on punk rock juvenalia or perhaps Kerouac if humor had played a more central role in his "narratives". While Sundeen's second book, "*The Making of Toro*", seems to have received more press, and is a noteworthy endeavor in its own right, "*Car Camping*" is the greater achievement of the two. It left me with an inexplicable sadness at the absence of adventure in most of our lives, but also a sense of tremendous excitement toward the enormous reservoir of possibility beneath the seemingly mundane details of the spaces we inhabit. I'll go overboard a bit and risk sounding like a fool when I say Sundeen strikes me as being, perhaps, a visionary. Read this book!3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. This is an amazing book!By TonySundeen's writing style is engrossing, and after two pages, I was sucked into his world, and could not put it down. I loved the descriptive way he characterizes nature and people, at the same time. He shows us many similarities between the two, offering his amazing and amusing insight. My favorite part was the last few chapters, when he was living in an old bunker that an old Nazi built. It was the funniest part, but most of all, I loved the common theme that was woven throughout the book - how some of us strive to be alone, but we never truly are. At times, we are engrossed and repulsed by human actions every day, and Sundeen paints an accurate picture of that feeling. I can't believe some people that reviewed this book didn't like it because they thought it was a travel book like Fodor's Guide to the Desert or something like that. How did they get that idea? Just read the back flap and you know what the book is about. If you want a Fodor's guide, go somewhere else. But if you want a great novel in the vein of *On the Road* or *Travel's With Charley*, buy this book!

Hunter Thompson meets Bill Bryson in this hilarious narrative of travels throughout the Southwest. He's like Huckleberry Finn Sort of. He's a twenty-two-year-old housepainter living at his parents' house in Southern California, across a four-lane street from a gated subdivision. Now this suburban innocent is striking out on the only type of adventure he can afford: he's getting into his station wagon and going camping in the desert. Join Mark Sundeen on his rumble-tumble journey across the Southwest, and find that the mystical home of Butch Cassidy, Chief Cochise, and Major John Wesley Powell has been transformed into something entirely strange yet unexpectedly familiar. It's a new West of low-rent trailer parks and high-dollar houseboats, of hot-springs singles scenes and homeless river guides and hapless soul-searchers, for sun-beat old-timers chewing the cud of the land and survivalist teenagers hiding out from the Man. It's a place far from the America you thought you lived in, but close enough to drive to in your car. *Car Camping* is a modern-day western adventure in the spirit of Mark Twain and Jack London, and you're invited to come along.

.com Warning: Mark Sundeen's collection of desert adventures is not a guidebook. In fact, you're better off not trying to follow his lead in rafting Colorado's Arkansas River, camping in Rio Grande Gorge's no-camping area, or defecating over the rim of the Grand Canyon. But those hankering to get a handle on the New West will be intrigued by these episodic tales that unfold like the varying yet connected pitches on a colorful redrock climb. The narrator is a young itinerant house painter trying to figure out what is--and what is not--important in the world. His cousin and mentor Donny Brown confuses matters by preaching that the only important thing is the Right Now. Together they take off to see the splendors of the Southwest because in the desert "things are enormous and you can get on them." But soon the realities of Donny Brown's failing marriage interrupt the trip, and the narrator continues on alone, meeting odd pilgrims and misfits as he drifts from place to place. He reasons that it's easy to live in the Right Now if you're a rock star or independently wealthy; otherwise people think you're a poseur trying on hats. If you don't have enough money to buy whatever you want, it's hard to prove that you are Yourself. And if you don't get money from

your parents or a trust fund then you have to get a job, and then everyone can see that you're not really Yourself but some conformist instead. Sundeen's voice, a sort of wise-kernel-of-truth-wrapped-in-a-shell-of-young-naivete, can be a bit cloying, especially amidst all the winking and nodding, but the evocation of youthful discovery is touching and even poetic at times as he meanders through a desiccated land of hobos, river guides, and spiritual seekers. Along the way the absurdities of the American West (the impoundment on the Colorado River named after John Wesley Powell, for instance) pile up like so much cow dung on a campfire. "A lot of people from big cities are moving into spiritual towns like Sedona and Telluride," the narrator observes, where they can be Themselves and get in touch with the Earth. A good spiritual town should have some Indians within 100 miles and good skiing or mountain biking within ten. The stores should sell turquoise bracelets and cappuccino, and there has to be a place to hook up a modem. By the end of the journey through such scattered settlements you've learned a lot about the people who conquered the West and even more about their unlikely heirs. --Langdon Cook

About the Author
Mark Sundeen was born in 1970 in Harbor City, CA. He is co-founder, contributor, and managing editor of the zine Great God Pan. This is his first book. He now lives in Utah.