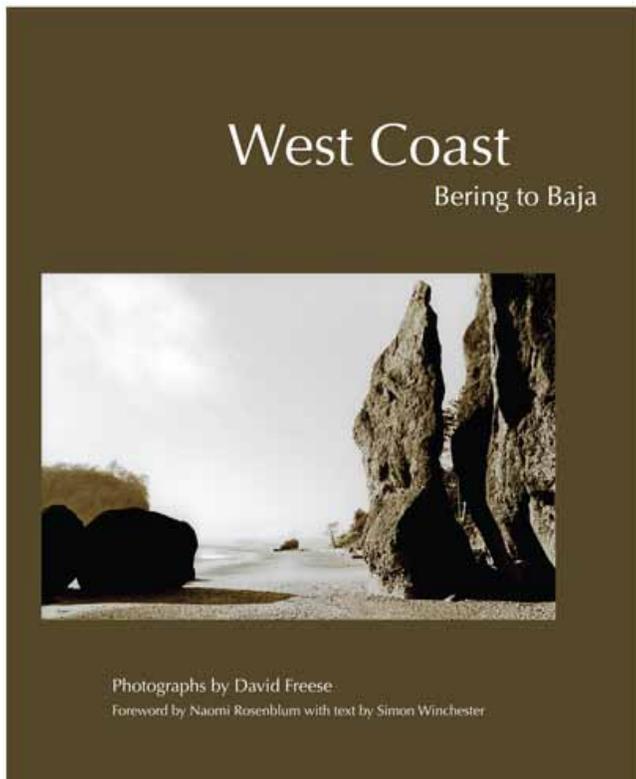


West Coast: Bering to Baja

by David Freese

Foreword by Naomi Rosenblum

and text by Simon Winchester



There is no more beautiful or alluring coast in the world than the West Coast of North America: a 5,000-mile-long region that extends from the Aleutian Islands of Alaska to Canada's British Columbia, south to Washington, Oregon, and California, and then to Baja California in Mexico. No photographer until David Freese has explored the various and wondrous landscapes along the Pacific Ocean in such depth, making this the first book to look comprehensively at what makes the natural beauty of this particular coast so memorable.

Behind the scenery, of course, lie the geologic forces that have created the West Coast landscapes that we now admire, explore, and praise. The engaging and informative text by renowned author Simon Winchester grounds us in understanding the deep relationship between geology and scenery. And Naomi Rosenblum, the esteemed photographic historian, writer, curator, and art critic, firmly establishes David Freese's place among the great landscape photographers of the past and present. In every photograph, his unique vision of nature and of place comes shining through.

West Coast: Bering to Baja is a major publishing enterprise that will appeal to book-lovers of photography, nature, and those who dream of North America's West Coast. For here we see the vital connection between art and science merge in ways previously unseen for this special region of the world.

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“Photography professor David Freese created this visual travelogue of 115 black-and-white plates depicting the varied 5,000-mile coastline of North America, from the Aleutian Islands of Alaska to the Baja Peninsula of Mexico. Also included is a foreword by photography historian Naomi Rosenblum, as well as explanatory observations of a more scientific nature by Simon Winchester. Their text supports the images, giving a comprehensive account of the geological forces that have shaped the landscape.

What elevates *West Coast: Bering to Baja* above the level of a mere coffee-table book is the consciousness behind it. This deftly balanced combination of ecology, geology,

geography, and history is presented through a photographic vision in which its environmental message comes through as clear as the natural imagery. While areas of the Pacific Rim have been captured visually many times before, it’s rare to find them presented sequentially in one volume. Though the reproductions are not as large as one might expect from a hardcover, the quality of the presentation compensates by offering very educational contents. Ultimately, this book instills within us an awareness of both the fragility of the landscape and the majesty of the vast geological forces over which we have little control.”

—Richard Mandrachio, *The San Francisco Book Review*

“This black-and-white photography book has an unusual format in that some photos are rather small, about 4 x 6 inches framed by a large amount of white space surrounding them on each page. Mr. Freese is the first to make a book of photographs documenting the entire west coastline of North America from the Bering Strait in Alaska to the tip of the Baja peninsula at Cabo San Lucas. The photographs are presented as if you are traveling from north to south in the order in which a driver would see the sights. Each photo emphasizes nature, omitting almost entirely the impact of man, so that the resulting images could have been made in the 19th century. However, the skilled photographer that David is, he has combined film photography with digital and has manipulated the photos in the computer to their best presentation. The accompanying text is beautifully written and deeply enhances each image, as well as explaining what is depicted. A lovely book, but I wish the smaller pictures were much larger.”

—Bonnie Neely, owner of Real Travel Adventures and book reviewer for Amazon



“David Freese’s unforgettable images are part of a larger effort to respect, draw attention to, and preserve the magnificent natural landscapes of North America’s West Coast. Freese’s photographs do a great deal more than provide information, for he offers us the opportunity to marvel at both the grandeur and beauty of the natural formations and the elegance of their photographic representation. And it is noteworthy that Freese combines photographic techniques from the past with digital capabilities. This blending of old and new techniques, coupled with his discriminating eye, results in a book of exceptional photographic images.”

—Naomi Rosenblum, photographic historian, curator, and author of *A World History of Photography* and *A History of Women Photographers*



“Experienced freelance photographer David Freese and writer Simon Winchester have gotten together to change the way readers see the West Coast. They do it through a book of photographs of wild landscapes from the northwest tip of Alaska to Baja California. The photos are in black-and-white, beautifully printed with plenty of white space, and owe a great deal to Alfred Steiglitz and Ansel Adams. As simply a book of landscape photographs, they owe too much to Adams and Steiglitz, though they are often breathtakingly lovely. This is where the book’s idea comes in. By combining digital sepia and black-and-white toning effects from the Photoshop tradition with skilled 35mm camerawork from the Adams/Steiglitz tradition, Freese’s images get readers to notice that the iconic images of pioneer photographers are the same territory as contemporary California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. In its careful balancing of deep honesty and sleight of hand (in Los Angeles, the wilderness of the Santa Monica mountains is now a portrait of the sky), the book inspires us to ask where we have come from, where we are now, and where we may be going. It’s an equally good question about art, the environment, and culture. The book’s foreword is by photographic historian and critic Naomi Rosenblum. Winchester’s text is a spare, restrained partner in the project. He focuses the reader’s attention on geology, the fluid tectonic nature of landscapes that, on the scale of a human lifespan, seem poised between changelessness and catastrophe. The book offers a postmodern turn with old-fashioned care for skillful, serious craft. For any general reader, it can be simply a quietly beautiful coffee-table book. For readers tuned to its key, interested in photography, wildlands, West Coast history, or contemporary art, it may also inspire wonder on another level.”

—Eithne O’Leyne, Editor, *Reference & Research Books News* of Book News, Inc.



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