

All in a Day's Pack

Three packs roomy enough for the ten essentials and then some



BY ALLISON WOODS

With so many options for day packs on the market today, we thought we'd have a look at a few and tell you what we thought. We took three of the latest offerings out for a walk.

Cerro Torre Morat 22

Advertised Volume: 1342 ci
Advertised weight: 1 lb. 15 oz.
\$75

The Cerro Torre Morat 22 brings loads of cool features into one fancy little pack. The Morat is a "panel-loader" style, with the main compartment accessed by a long curved zipper. Inside the main compartment there's a pocket for an included hydration system. There is no pack lid, rather an outer compartment on the outside of the pack. It's accessed by a vertical waterproof zipper. Open the zipper and you'll find a couple of pockets for small odds and ends, and a clip for keys. On the outside of the Morat, myriad straps make hauling skis, water bottles, and whatever else you need a snap. A small compartment at the top of the pack body hides an included rain cover for wet days. Suspension duties are handled by

what Cerro Torre calls the "Air System" harness, known loosely in the outdoor industry as a "trampoline" system. This suspension concept has been around for a while, but is making big waves in this spring's daypack offerings. The pack's twin fiberglass



The Cerro Torre Morat 22 includes a removable rain cover, myriad straps for hanging gear, and a mesh back system that provides ventilation.

stays are very thin, formed into an "X" and secured at both ends. Then the stays are loaded until they curve, held in place by a mesh back. The mesh back is the "trampoline," and this is what sits against your back. The resulting air gap creates great ventilation, keeping you cool as you slog up the trail. Super-comfy curved straps filled with high-density foam and a thin waistbelt round out the Morat.

Granite Gear Arete

Advertised volume: 2500 ci
Advertised weight: 2 lb. 4 oz.
\$90

The ultra-simple Arete reminds us of days of yore. This pack is plain and brown, frameless, and a top-loader. The Arete's lightweight, holds a surprising amount of gear, and felt comfortable when loaded. For a pack so simple, it has all the features we need for day trips. The pack lid is roomy enough for all of our little odds and ends, and sports a waterproof zipper. A pair of compression straps atop the lid make a nice spot to stow your rope. The main body has a front compression panel for the big stuff.

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Functional simplicity: the Granite Gear Arete is a basic, lightweight pack.

GEAR WE'VE TRIED

Standard ice axe loops and water bottle holders round out the outside attachment points.

Gregory Halo

Advertised volume: 1800 ci

Advertised weight: 3 lb. 6 oz.

\$129

The Halo day pack is part of Gregory's new "All Terrain" series, built on the "Exo-Frame" suspension system. Sure, the Halo's a little heavy, but this pack's built for comfort. A single aluminum stay pairs up with a thermoformed plastic sheet and burly padding to make this the Cadillac of our test packs. The pack body is another story. It's well, odd. The main compartment is accessed by a pair of parallel zippers, attached to one other by a handle. Think about the top of your gym bag, and you have the idea. This entry system doesn't allow for overstuffing, and it makes it hard to get at anything without setting the back of the pack in the snow or dirt. The slender contour of the pack body



The Gregory Halo includes aluminum stays and plenty of padding, but the pack's zipper system is unweildy.

compounded the overstuffing problem. The ski loops looked like they were at a weird angle, but handled skis quite well. We also liked the fact that the water bottle holders were made of burly stretch fabric, as mesh tends to

get caught in the brush. The Halo does not have a pack lid, instead there is a small top pocket lined with soft fabric, perfect for sunglasses or goggles. ♦

NEAT STUFF!



Moonstone Hyperlight Windshirt \$85

Spring hikes often involve rain. Lots and lots of it. Next time it's wet, rather than bundling up in a waterproof-breathable jacket, consider wearing a windshirt. You can stay quite dry and comfortable hiking while wearing a lightweight top paired with a windshirt. Be sure to cover up with something more waterproof the moment you stop. How does this work? As you hike, your body gives off heat. When the heat reaches the windshirt layer, it evaporates the rain or snow. It's

wet out, but you stay dry. We wore the Moonstone Hyperlight Windshirt on a trip to Larch Lakes last fall with a lightweight long underwear top underneath. The hike in to the lakes started out in driving rain, turning to snow at about 5000'. We stayed dry and comfortable all the way to the destination, despite the weather never letting up. The Hyperlight's a sweet little piece, weighing in at a gossamer 4.5 ounces. It's constructed of 50 denier ripstop nylon. Features include a deep front zipper for maximum ventilation, a few reflective bits, and a small chest pocket. Some windshirts are not quite breathable for moderate to hard exertion, but the Hyperlight stood up to the task. —A.W.