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Bells and Whistles in Sweet Harmony

Featuring: Verve Series

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Not all hydration packs are created equal. I've had the same hydration pack for more than five years, and haven't thought much about it beyond the momentary annoyance of filling it up and deciding what to cram into its pockets for the day. With my new Osprey Women's Verve Hydration Pack, I've found that my hydration routine has now been elevated into an enjoyable experience, thanks to a bevy of thoughtful features packed into a svelte, women's-specific pack. (Osprey also makes men's hydration packs.)

The Verve's Hydraform reservoir system is tangle-free and super easy to use. All I have to do is unsnap the separate compartment that it lives in, loosen the side straps, and easily slide out the semi-rigid reservoir. Then I grab on to the handle, unscrew the lid with ease, and fill 'er up. If you've lost track for the reassembly, the reservoir tells you, "this side faces the user's back". The best part of the hydration bladder is something I can't even see; the Nalgene-brand hydration reservoir is BPA- and PVC-free. So I can sip liter after liter knowing that my water won't be tainted with toxins.

I took the 10-liter version of the Osprey Verve Hydration Pack with me on a cross-country ski outing last week. It was the perfect size for a half-day outing, with special compartments in the main body for tools and spare parts, plenty of room for a few extra layers, hat, energy bars, and a soft front pouch for sunglasses and my cell phone. I barely noticed that I was wearing a pack at all, even with three liters of water inside, and when I wanted to shed a layer, the stretchy front pouch and straps gave me plenty of options to stow it away. The ventilated mesh back stayed nice and dry even when I started to heat up. Once the snow thaws, I'll be taking the Verve pack mountain biking this spring; it has neat helmet and bike light attachments.

The Verve hydration pack is available in 4-, 7- 10- and 13-liter sizes, in Lava and Seasquall (a sage green color). For men, the new Osprey Viper Series Hydration Packs will also be available in 4-, 7-, 10-, and 13- liters, in Thunder Cloud, Electric Sky, and Supernova.

Bottom Line: Hydration is a breeze with the Verve pack, and so is neatly carrying your odds and ends!. www.ospreypacks.com

