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Featuring: Karve 6

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Earlier this season, venerable pack company Osprey sent over a new Karve series pack, the Karve 6. I've been skiing with it fairly regularly this winter, and I have really grown to like using it. This is a very well-built and designed pack, simple, yet with refined features that set it apart from most other offerings in this category.

Designed for skiers and snowboarders, the Karve 6 boasts a very slim, compact package, approx. 3-4 inches thick on your back, 12 inches wide and 19 inches tall. This pack is small, but is perfect for the right projects/use. You can wear this pack on a chairlift, without feeling like you're going to fall off. The pack easily carries a water bladder, a standard probe, shovel handle, and blade (I have found it best to use a very small shovel along the lines of the Voile XLM and a smaller probe as well for best packability), skins, some food, and a layer. Avy tools are accessed via the side tube sleeves (probe and handle) and inside the main compartment (blade). All-in-all, it's very easy to get your avy setup deployed with this simple, easy-access design. The pack has a very nice ski/board carrying system that stows away nicely when you don't need it.

I think the ideal use for this pack is as 1. An inbounds powder pack, for use on deep days when you want to make sure you have your avy gear with you. 2. A side-country pack, for use zipping in and out of bounds at your favorite resort when conditions merit. 3. A spring tour pack - weather's perfect, not going far, just need the very basics. 4. A cruise around pack for inbounds or short backcountry excursions, sans avy gear, given it's low profile and water capacity.

Other highlights: great simple, comfortable waist strap; nice small accessory pocket on top panel; padded outside panel; great, comfortable shoulder straps; good water bladder pouch and sleeve system; excellent craftsmanship/stitching/fabrics - this pack is going to last a long time. Bottom-line: another great pack design from Osprey - they know how to design and build great packs. If you're looking for a small, basic, slim-profile, avy/ski focused pack, this is it. For resort-focused use, I definitely recommend the Karve 6 over the other larger sizes (Karve 11 and Karve 16), both great packs as well, but if you're going to get one for the resort/sidecountry, go slim as can be. Retail price: \$79.00

