



## The Adventure Blog

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Gear Closet

Featuring: Zealot 16

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/cx7d4bv>

Backpacks are a lot like tools. You definitely want the right one for job at hand. It used to be that you would simply buy a pack or two in the sizes that you needed and then you'd make them work for what ever outdoor pursuits that interested you. Now however you can buy a pack specifically designed for the sport you need it for, and like having the the right tool for the job, it can make all the difference.

Take for example the new Zealot 16 from Osprey, a pack designed from the ground up for mountain bikers. With its ample storage, well padded shoulder straps and belt, integrated AirScape suspension and built-in media pocket it has just about everything a rider could ask for when hitting the trail. Throw in a 3-liter hydration bladder and a Lidlock helmet attachment, and you have a pack that can match just about anything else on the market in terms of features.

Fortunately the Zealot performs well in the real world and puts all of those great features to good use. The main compartment is practically cavernous, and zippers that run the length of either side of the bag make it easy to gain access to everything inside. Smaller pockets help to keep your gear well organized as well, including one in the bottom that features an integrated pouch for storing tools. Small, yet still useful, pockets on the hipbelt and shoulder straps round out the package.

As a big fan of Osprey packs, I had high expectations of the Zealot before I ever put it to the test on the trail. I was impressed with the heavy, durable materials from which this pack is made. That same high quality construction is applied to the belts and straps as well, which when secured properly, lock into place and keep the pack from moving around too much. It only took one ride to discover that it is the perfect trail companion however, particularly if you're going on a longer ride. Its large hydration reservoir is perfect for those hot days and the AirScape suspension does an admirable job of keeping air flowing between your body and the pack itself. These suspension systems continue to improve and I'm impressed with how well they work, particularly on these smaller packs. I was also impressed with how comfortable the pack is to wear, easily carrying a large load without impeding movement.

The Zealot is easily the best dedicated mountain biking pack that I have ever used and I consider it a real steal for \$149. It is clear that the designers are riders themselves as the bag has plenty of nice touches that you'll appreciate the more you use it.



**If you're in the market for a new backpack for your spring and summer rides, do yourself a favor and grab this pack. You'll be glad you did and you can thank me later.**

