



Gear Pick: Osprey Manta 30 Hydration Pack

AspenDailyNews.com

August 16, 2012

Featuring: Manta 30

Monthly Traffic: 14,500

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/9a2dfox>



When I first decided to purchase the Osprey Manta 30 hydration pack, I was skeptical on the worth of all its gadgetry. The salesmen swore by its features and versatility, but I was used to something simpler. My North Face Hot Shot served me well since I first moved to Aspen four years ago. During my last hike to Cathedral Lake, I realized a power bar had melted inside my beloved pack creating a thick chocolate membrane in the corners. I decided it was time to retire the old thing and invest in something new. That led me to the Osprey Manta 30 hydration pack. It caught my eye in the store because of its small size and water system, a feature my old pack notably lacked. Still, its hefty price of \$149 was less than enticing. Easily \$50 more than its nearest competitor, I wondered, "As a day pack, what could it really offer that was worth the price?" As it turns out, plenty.

While it's not the lightest pack out there — coming in at 3 pounds, 2 ounces without water — its strength is in the added amenities elegantly designed into the pack. They serve as a bonus, once you realize they're there. Its main feature is the water storage bladder, which is trademarked as the "Osprey Hydraulics" system. It's designed to conform the reservoir to your back even when it's full, so much so that you almost forget your carrying 6.5 pounds of water on your back when you rest against a rock or tree. The reservoir is also designed well enough to warrant a trademark, which is dubbed the HydraForm. With a handle, it is built so that the bag slides in and out of the pack easily, even when it's full of water, making cleaning and refilling a breeze. Inside the reservoir, Osprey used the antimicrobial technology called AquaGuard. AquaGuard is a medical company known for using moisture barriers to protect surgical incisions from dangerous bacteria. The clever designers over at Osprey decided to use the same technology that keeps wounds clean to keep bacteria and mold out of your drinking pack. Genius. For neat design features you can actually see, the water valve has a 180-degree on/off switch and a magnetic piece on the back of the bite valve that buckles easily to your left strap for easy access.

And then there are all the pockets and cleverly placed straps. There's a main compartment for a small amount of food, clothing and gear; a small pocket lined with soft material for fragile items like sunglasses; large and small pockets on the outside for quick access and pockets on either side with zippers. There's also a bonus raincover hidden in a pocket at the bottom of the pack. There's even a spot for a blinker — although it's not included. One other important feature of the Osprey Manta that other packs don't have is a lightweight alloy frame with struts and a tensioned mesh back panel for better support and flexibility on long hikes.

At the end of the day, the pack's bevy of trademarks and design features remind you that the extra money your spending on the pack is for the time and thought put into the pack by Osprey's design team.