



First Impressions



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Twenty Nine Inches is looking at three new hydration packs that we feel fall into that "sweet spot" of 10 liters or so in capacity. I have the Osprey Raptor 10, which I introduced here. Here are my thoughts so far....

The new version of the Raptor 10 packed up with my gear easily. I did really like the Tool Roll idea going in. I was able to organize my stuff in there well, and I even put in a few emergency items like zip ties and some tape, along with my needle nose Vice Grip pliers. Up on top, the lined eyewear pouch is great for a set of shades with different lenses ready to go, and in the inner pocket up there I placed my compass. The main compartment is easier to load, since it flops open widely allowing you easier access. I got my two pumps- a shock pump and a mini-pump- in there, along with a spare tube, rag, some tire levers, and some lube. I also stuffed a windbreaker in there with room to spare. The bladder sleeve now opens much easier, and allows the bladder to come out much easier. I was able to stuff the full compliment of 3 liters of water into the bladder without any trouble. The hip pockets, now useful since they have zippers for secure carrying of articles, got a couple gel packets on one side and my multi-tool and cell phone into the other side.

The harness adjusts easily and stays secure where you set it. The harness sits nicely on the body with no hot spots or uncomfortable pressure points, even with a full compliment of water and gear on-board. On days where it was warm, I felt the improved harness straps felt cooler. The AirScape back panel does ventilate better now, which helps keep me cooler. The thing that has really impressed me at this point has been those hip pockets. I can fetch things out on the fly, and zip the pocket back up one handed. Nice! The other thing is the hydration hose and new, more powerful magnet that secures the drink tube to the upper harness strap. It sits lower than the older version of this pack's did, and I find that it is less obtrusive while riding due to this. The Raptor 10 is stable while riding, and I haven't hardly noticed it while navigating the twisties out in the woods. It sits nicely on the back, and along with that improved harness, is actually quite comfortable to wear while riding so far into this test. I'll be riding with this pack some more and will have a bit more to say in a few weeks.



Below these compartments and to the very bottom of the pack we have a clever idea that Grannygear has been pitching for- the removable tool pouch. There's nothing worse than having to dig through a bunch of other stuff to get to your tools when a mechanical comes a calling. Osprey answered Grannygear's, (and I suppose a lot of others folk's), prayers with this tool pouch idea. Unzip the tool pouch compartment, take out the tool roll and get cozy with your rig. No need to drag that heavy pack over. Un-roll the tool roll and there are a couple of zippered compartments for tool organizing with a little "skirt" at the bottom which makes an excellent spot to set down small items so you won't lose them as you work. Nice! What is more, you can take that tool roll and pack it in any other pack, a jersey pocket, or whatever you want. No need for multiple sets of tools for multiple packs. Doubly nice!

Okay, here is something that has Grannygear and myself saying "Hallelujah!" The old Raptor 10 had waistbelt pockets, but they were Velcro closure pockets and very unsafe for anything of value. Put something in there and before you knew it, it would be gone. Now Osprey has seen fit to put zippers on these pockets and they are bellowed so you can stick bulkier items in there like cell phones, small cameras, energy bars, or a multi-tool. Basically, anything you want access to while you are riding. This is definitely a nice feature that was sorely missing with the older pack.

Osprey went to work on the straps and the rest of the harness by improving comfort and airflow. The straps themselves are similar in function to the older pack, but are also easier to adjust. Finally, the AirScape™ backpanel has also been re-worked to be more comfortable and cooler.

Osprey radically changed the hydration sleeve compartment opening. Now it has no buckles, like the older design, and instead features an angled zipper that terminates up into the right shoulder harness area. This allows for a larger opening, and therefore an easier to remove hydration bladder. The zipper also retains the first section of hydration hose which routes over the right shoulder and down the right harness on the chest. The hose then crosses over your chest and the bite valve still features the Magnetic Sternum Buckle which holds the end of the hose by a magnet. By the way, Osprey also is using a more powerful magnet for this job now.

The pack also features a stash pocket that is covered with a stretchy fabric and secured with a buckle on the very back of the pack. This might be useful for wet items, dirty rags, or anything you want to quickly stash on board the pack. There is also a blinkie light attachment, which resides just above the Tool Pouch. The pack has reflective graphics and still sports the LidLock™ clip to quickly attach your helmet.

