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OSPREY MUTANT 38

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Featuring: Mutant 38

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When I was getting ready to head off to my first week-long Boy Scout camp at the age of 12 my dad surprised me with a new frame pack. It was so much lighter and compact than the old Army frame pack that I had been using. Using that pack made me seem faster and more efficient on my backpacking trips and hikes. However, it was not a pack that worked well for day long hikes, or short jaunts into the hills and mountains. Every climber knows that she/he needs more than one backpack. I can think of at least 5 specific genres of packs that I need to head out on various endeavors. One of these types of packs is a single-day Alpine Climbing pack. The sweet spot is 30-40 liters. You need more room than a summer day-pack because you need extra layers, crampons, harness and maybe a rope.

This is where the Osprey Mutant 38 thrives; the single day alpine climb. Right off you can see that it has the obligatory features of a winter pack. There are two ice axe/tool attachment points with a simple combination of plastic latch and elastic cord to attach each tool to the pack. A very nice way to save weight over other systems. The extra durable nylon fabric on the back of the pack keeps sharp axe points from ripping through the pack. The waist belt has three racking loops (for ice clippers or carabiners) and one gear loop on each side. This works great when you need to remove the clippers from your harness to use the waist belt, but still want that functionality of racking screws or clipping ice tools while belaying. The waist belt reverse wraps so that you can flip it around onto the pack to stay out of the way of your harness and gear. Wand pockets are located on at the base of the pack on each side so that you can securely carry bamboo wands or snow pickets. The z-compression straps on the side did a great job of keeping the bag compressed when needed as well as keeping pickets secured until needed.

Other nice features are the reinforced haul loops. Great to have when you need to hang the bag on a haul line to get up through a tight chimney or delicate section where you want to get rid of some weight. The Mutant 38 is designed to drop a lot of weight for when you need to really go light and fast on summit day. The lid floats, giving you an extra 15 liters or so of room, making it possible to turn this into an overnight pack. The lid also detaches completely, along with the framesheet. There is a folded bivy pad that can either be removed to cut weight or brought along for unplanned or extreme bivies where you need to cut every possible ounce. It's also a nice to have pad when you just need to sit for a few minutes without getting a cold rear end. The Mutant 38 weighs in at just under 3 lbs for size medium and weighs only 2.1 lbs when stripped down as a summit pack.

The Osprey Mutant 38 fits that Alpine Climbing Pack niche quite nicely. It's the perfect size for a one or two day trek. It also works well for summertime cragging as well. It's the perfect size for a rope, shoes and rack. MSRP is currently \$159. The pack comes in one color option - Evergreen.

More info at www.ospreypacks.com

