



Mountain Bike Action
 January 2012
 MBA Field Test
 Featuring: Viper 7
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MBA FIELD TEST RATING

★★★★★ Perfection
 ★★★★★ Delivers above-average value and performance
 ★★★★★ Recommended for intended application
 ★★★★★ Shows potential but has drawbacks
 ★★★★★ Save your hard-earned bucks

OSPREY VIPER 7 HYDRATION PACK
 ★★★★★

...ideal shape and size for... rides

The problem with hydration packs is that there are so many to choose from. You might think that's a good problem, but choose a pack that is too small and, sure enough, you will be one tube short on a future ride. Choose one that is too big and you end up pedaling around dead weight. The \$74 Viper 7 hydration pack from Osprey is a pack that has finally nailed a size that will work for 95 percent of riders who wear hydration packs.

Tech features: The Viper 7 measures 17 x 8 x 4 inches for a total claimed volume of 400 cubic inches. The pack is loaded with features, including the Lidlock helmet clip, NoScratch top stash pocket, an elastic sternum strap with magnetic bite-valve attachment, a cell-phone pocket on the shoulder strap (yes, an iPhone fits), reflective graphics, BioStretch harness, ventilated spacer-mesh back panel, detachable webbing hip belt, Viper

bungee lacing system and Viper front mesh pocket comes in Electric Sky (blue), Thunder Cloud (gray) or Supernova (shown). The Viper pack with reservoir weighed 1 pound 10 ounces. You can reach Osprey at (866) 284-7830.

Field test results: The bag's size allowed us to pack everything we needed for a long ride (see "Mountain Biking Hoarders" in our December issue) and nothing else. Literally. There was just enough room left over to stuff a set of arm warmers and a vest or wind shell into the pack after warming up on a morning ride. Too small? If you really need to carry something extra back from your ride, the outer-bungee lacing system would allow you to do it. The point is that this pack is the perfect size for trail rides of any length short of epic ("epic" being defined as a ride where staying overnight is a definite possibility).

The lockable Nalgene bite valve is easy to use and flows plenty of fluid. The magnetic clip on the sternum

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should add that it is a great-looking pack, empty or full.

The Viper 7 made us realize we have been lugging too much stuff around on our rides; it is just big enough. Of course, if you need to carry more stuff, Osprey makes a pack for you too. For the majority of riders, however, this is all the pack they will ever need. □



Hat rack: A built-in helmet holder.



Magnetic attraction: The bite valve is held in place by a powerful magnet.



Lean and mean: Just the right size for 90 percent of your rides.

