



Outside – Buyer's Guide

Summer 2013

Hike – Packs

Featuring: Xenith 88 - **Gear of the Year**

Circulation: 686,623

Readership: 2,059,869

GEAR OF THE YEAR

Osprey Xenith 88 \$349

With bigger packs, it's all about suspension and fit. Testers raved about how easy it was to tailor the Xenith to their bodies: the pack comes in three sizes, and you can choose between four shoulder-harness and heat-moldable-hipbelt options. The result is downright clingy—in a good way. “She held on to my hips and didn’t let go,” raved a (lonely) tester. Little details like a removable top lid, to save weight on day jaunts out of camp, were smart and svelte additions, as were side zips for easy access, roomy hipbelt pockets, and an external hydration sleeve, so you don’t have to wrestle a bladder into a crammed pack. Add it all up and it somehow doesn’t balloon quite as much as you’d think: despite the huge capacity and full array of features, the Xenith still weighs a few pounds less than some of its competitors. 5.5 lbs; ospreypacks.com
HAULING COMFORT: 5
VERSATILITY: 3

hike PACKS

1 After a decade that celebrated the fast-and-light backpacking ethos with ever more minimalist suspension systems, fabrics, and designs, something funny happened in the world of backpacks—big haulers made a comeback. And while that may not impress the fast-packers who value only sneakers, tarps, and grim fortitude, it's a boon for those of us who need to haul ski-mountaineering gear, camera equipment, deboned elk meat, full-size pillows for the kids, and true survival essentials like hoppy beverages. Big haulers are also vital for Himalayan treks and extended multisport trips—for instance, we've found that climbing and fly-fishing go together like whiskey and a glass. Fine, you say, but you're planning on lots of day hikes this summer. We've got you covered there, too: all the innovation and smart design you find in larger packs have trickled down to smaller ones, and this year's crop are some of the best we've ever carried. BY DOUG SCHNITZSPAHN

GEAR OF THE YEAR
Osprey Xenith 88 \$349
With bigger packs, it's all about suspension and fit. Testers raved about how easy it was to tailor the Xenith to their bodies: the pack comes in three sizes, and you can choose between four shoulder-harness and heat-moldable-hipbelt options. The result is downright clingy—in a good way. “She held on to my hips and didn’t let go,” raved a (lonely) tester. Little details like a removable top lid, to save weight on day jaunts out of camp, were smart and svelte additions, as were side zips for easy access, roomy hipbelt pockets, and an external hydration sleeve, so you don’t have to wrestle a bladder into a crammed pack. Add it all up and it somehow doesn’t balloon quite as much as you’d think: despite the huge capacity and full array of features, the Xenith still weighs a few pounds less than some of its competitors. 5.5 lbs; ospreypacks.com
HAULING COMFORT: 5
VERSATILITY: 3

2013 Outside GEAR OF THE YEAR

Too rushed to mold the Osprey's hipbelt in the store's oven? Worry not. The dial-density foam conforms to your hips with use. And it can be remolded up to three times if you want to lend the pack to a friend.

62
OUTSIDE BUYER'S GUIDE 2013

