



Washington Trails

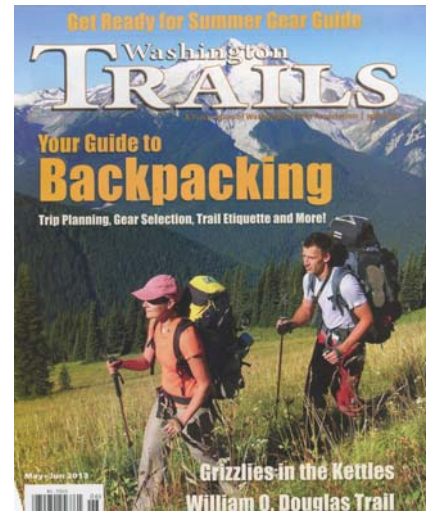
May/June 2013

2013 Gear Guide: Backpacks

Featuring: Viva 50

Circulation: 12,000

Readership: 36,000



2013 Gear Guide BACKPACKS

To help get you ready for the backpacking adventures, whether in the Cascades or the Kettles, or venturing into the Rockies, Sierras or wherever your wanderlust takes you, the WT gear team has been hard at work reviewing some of the latest selection of gear. They've put backpacks, tents, sleeping bags to the test, measuring durability, and they've endured sweaty days and long hikes to determine the best boots and outdoor wear to determine the most comfortable and the best for rigorous exercise for our new team of hikers with more than 12,000 trail miles of experience. They were up to the challenge. Here are some of the best gear to get you out there.

"If I had to choose one moderately priced weekend backpack to own, the **Osprey Viva 50** would be it. At the end of the day when your shoulders, hips and back are still feeling great, you know that this pack is going to help provide an enjoyable and predictable backcountry experience."

— Lynette Alber



▶ **RIGHT: Osprey Viva 50 - \$179**
Also available in 65 size.
ospreypacks.com

Your backpack is your house away from home, providing a place to store everything necessary to keep you comfortable and safe while hiking. The key to your comfort is assuring that your pack fits properly and its size and function match your intended use. When shopping, have your torso measured and match your backpack choice accordingly so it fits your body. In recent years, more brands have started producing women-specific packs, which are generally shorter in the torso and narrower than men's, with shoulder straps shaped for a woman's body. Youth packs offer smaller capacities and adjustable suspensions to accommodate a child's growth. When considering a new pack try on many, add weight and wander around the store before purchasing.

For all-around best performers, the WT team selected the **Gregory Contour 60** men's pack and **Osprey Viva 50** women's pack. Gear tester John found the Contour to excel on everything from easy walks in the woods to more aggressive alpine ascents. Employing

the Trail Smart Packing system, the Contour's contents across internal compartments keep gear for camp and on the trail easy. The lightweight Viva 50's shape, while the Responsive Suspension provided ample support in various conditions, John's gear pocket and integrated hydration bladder. Lynette found the Viva's exceptional fit to carry especially well, with the assist of easy torso length adjustments and the nicely padded, contoured Fit-on-the-Fly Hipbelt. Through various trials the rugged ripstop materials held up smartly (looking no worse for wear after some rugged testing), while the peripheral-hoop alloy frame easily transferred pack weight to the hipbelt. Crammed full of features—floating lid, zippered hipbelt pockets, trekking pole attachments, and emergency whistle—her favorite was the external hydration sleeve that protects the pack contents from accidental water spills.

pocket and integrated rain cover. On the women's side, backpacker Lynette found the Viva's exceptional fit to carry especially well, with the assist of easy torso length adjustments and the nicely padded, contoured Fit-on-the-Fly Hipbelt. Through various trials the rugged ripstop materials held up smartly (looking no worse for wear after some rugged testing), while the peripheral-hoop alloy frame easily transferred pack weight to the hipbelt. Crammed full of features—floating lid, zippered hipbelt pockets, trekking pole attachments, and emergency whistle—her favorite was the external hydration sleeve that protects the pack contents from accidental water spills.