



Aspen Daily News & AspenDailyNews.com

June 7, 2013

Gear Up

Featuring: Aether 60

Daily Circulation: 15,000

Monthly Traffic: 11,700

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/occkazx>

GEAR UP

OSPREY AETHER 60 PACK

Now that the snow has finally melted from the Ridge of Bell on Aspen Mountain, our thoughts can turn from skiing to hiking in the backcountry.

In planning my first outing of the season I realized it was time to trade in my outdated pack from the last millennium and update to the latest technology. This was a much needed equipment upgrade, considering my old backpack by itself weighed almost as much as my new Osprey Aether 60 (4 lbs. 11 oz) does when it is full of gear.

When searching for a new pack, take plenty of time to do your homework and learn about the different models and what each has to offer. I originally was going to purchase the Osprey Atmos 65, which is even lighter than the Aether. However, after I explained to the helpful salesperson at the Ute Mountaineer that I typically hike with heavy camera gear, he recommended the more sturdy Aether model. Another tip he gave was to purchase the smallest pack necessary, because otherwise human nature kicks in and we tend to fill whatever space we



the pack can hold.

Beyond its great weight-to-space ratio, the pack is incredibly comfortable. Be sure to purchase the right sized pack, based on your height and torso. Then make use of the pack's many micro-adjustments to dial in the amply padded shoulder straps and hip belt.

When it comes to pockets and ease of access, the Aether does not disappoint. The main compartment is top-loading and you can also reach gear via a front zippered panel. At the base of the pack inside the main compartment is a separator which allows your sleeping bag to be stored separate from your gear, also accessed via a bottom panel. The sides of the pack come equipped with mesh pockets, great for carrying water bottles or a set of tent poles, and the front of the pack also has an open mesh pocket to store items such as food or a rain jacket. There is a built-in compartment for a water bladder at the rear of the pack, but it is cleverly separated from

have available, often with unnecessary items. In my case I settled on a size medium Aether 60, where the "60" refers to the approximate liters or volume

the back section so the bladder doesn't get compressed like a balloon. Finally, the top of the pack has a separate large pouch for storage, which can also be removed from the pack and used as a hip pack for short jaunts away from base camp.

Osprey is a Colorado-based company, and their products are clearly developed by folks who know the importance of quality gear and all the little things that can drastically improve something as simple as a backpack. For example, the Aether includes two strategically placed rubber coated bungee cords that can strap a pair of hiking poles to the side of the pack, and there are small pouches on the hip belt to store energy bars or other small items. The pack also makes use of a strap system with two different buckle positions that tightens your gear into place, similar to making a burrito - this simple but effective approach ensures your gear doesn't wobble and stays centered on your back.

Perhaps only second to good footwear, the right pack can either make or literally break you on a backpacking trip. I'm so impressed with the comfort and features of the Aether 60 that I've even considered wearing it over to City Market to haul my groceries now that we have a ban on plastic bags.

— Chris Council

GET YOUR OWN

Osprey Aether 60 Pack
Ute Mountaineer, \$249

