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Gear Pick

Featuring: Tempest 20

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It seems to me that the world of backpacks can be an especially overwhelming one at times. Upon entering a gear store you are typically confronted with a wall of packs differing in color, size and price. In all honesty, there have been several occasions when I've just resorted to choosing the cutest looking pack in my price range hoping it would match my needs.



Ten years ago I bought a 20-liter Camelbak that had been my go-to daypack ever since. However, after lugging it along on a 15-day Grand Canyon rafting trip it has turned from a lovely aqua blue to the chocolate milk color of the wonderful Colorado River. Between the unfortunate color and finding sand in my peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich during a later use, I decided it was time for a new daypack.

After some asking around and research, I decided to go with the Osprey Tempest series (men's series is named the Talon.) The series includes versions for 40, 30, 20, 16 and 9 liters. I thought for sure I would want the 30-liter version, but mistakenly ordered the 20 liter. I'm pleasantly glad I did since the 20 liter has proven to be the perfect size.

The Tempest 20 has smart organization, and its light weight and adjustable suspension make it stand out from the competition. I've stuffed it full for hikes up fourteeners, day hikes to waterfalls in Havasupai canyon and jaunts into the desert on fall weekends. On one cold day hike, I easily stuffed my rain gear, a puffy, an extra fleece, lunch and snacks, a fleece for my dog and 3 liters of water with room to spare.



The pack easily fits my 2-liter hydration bladder in an external compartment on the underside of a mesh backpanel that allows for efficient airflow. There are also convenient stretchy mesh side-pockets that make it easy to throw in an extra liter-sized Nalgene for the dog, or for that essential cup of coffee you are finishing after your 5 a.m. start time at the trailhead. That same mesh material is used on the outside stuff pocket. It has proven to be the best outside stuff pocket system I've encountered in a pack. I have securely stuffed everything from rain gear to river-crossing shoes in that pocket with no worry of losing anything.

On top of the pack is a deep, zippered stuff pocket with protective heat-embossed fabric for scratch-free storage of sunnies, camera and/or phone. However, I find the little pockets on the front shoulder straps make the most convenient place for my phone. The little pockets on the hip-belt are perfect for stashing Cliff bars and dog treats, and there is a really inventive Stow-On-The-Go trekking pole attachment loop for those annoying times when you are trying to ditch your poles. The pack also includes ice tool attachment loops that get me excited to use this pack for upcoming ice climbing adventures this winter.

I couldn't be more pleased with this day pack. By having just the right amount of features without being overloaded means Osprey wins my blue ribbon of approval and I can't wait to try more of their packs!