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Gear and Beer

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GEAR: OSPREY ZEALOT

The folks at Osprey just know how to construct a pack and really are producing some of the finest on the market. A new line for Osprey this year, the Zealot is billed as a mountain biking pack ... and with good reason. All your mountain biking gear, whether downhill or cross-country, has a home in this pack. Osprey has this great way of making the outside of the pack more functional so the interior doesn't have to be so large, thus saving weight while keeping things more accessible. A large open stuff pocket in back has room for all one's body armor, and is designed with a fastening system for a full face-shield helmet. If you're not into lift-serve terrain, there's also a trademarked bungee attachment, on the back of the pack, for regular helmets. The bottom of the pack unzips to reveal a roll-out tool pouch that you can detach from the pack and hang up for easier access during repair. There's even a diagram that guides you through some of your bike's schematics. Side pockets neatly hold your shoes, and a hydration system holds 3 liters of water (the reservoir is included in select markets only). The only small gripes: they probably could have left off the Velcro covering the tool pouch (it's just sort of annoying), and one tester felt that the magnet that holds the drinking tube's mouthpiece in place (along a chest strap) gathered and retained dirt easily, making the magnet less powerful. Of course, not being so adept at performing endos might prevent dirt from getting there in the first place. You can stash all your gear in this satchel after your ride and just pick it up and go when the itch to ride again strikes. Making your life more organized and simpler will assure that that itch comes soon!

