



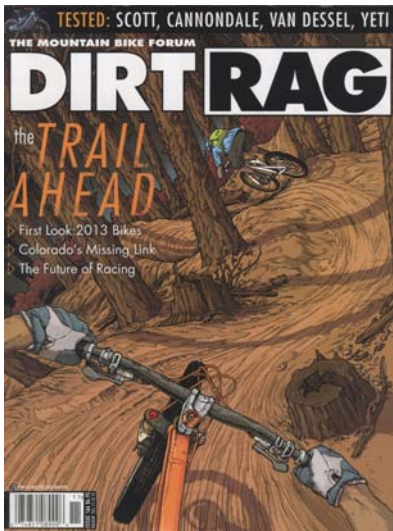
Dirt Rag

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Featuring: Zealot 16

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OSPREY ZEALOT 16

TESTED BY JUSTIN STEINER

Osprey's Zealot series represents a growing number of packs designed with gravity riders in mind—both the earn-your-turns crowd and lift-assist shredders. For the former, this pack features three large external pockets for shuttling armor as well as mounting points for your full-face or trail helmet. For the latter, the slim profile is less bulky for the lift ride up, while keeping weight close to your back—lowering the pack's center of gravity—for the trip down.

My small/medium Zealot offers 14 liters of storage, while the medium/large offers 16 liters. The main storage compartment opens clam-shell-style via one long double zipper running length of the pack. The 3-liter reservoir slips into a sleeve inside the main pocket. This bladder does an admirable job of hauling water without taking up too much space inside the pack thanks to a baffle that helps to maintain a flat profile.

The shoulder straps are vented and well padded. There's a smart-phone-sized pocket on the left shoulder strap. The back panel allows air to flow in and around the pads to help keep things cool. And waist belt has removable pockets large enough for a couple of energy bars, or a point-and-shoot camera.

Initially, I was seduced by the pack's integrated tool pouch. In use, I never found the tool pouch as convenient as I had hoped; the shielded zipper requires some fiddling to open and close, while securing the tool roll seemed tedious.

The \$149 Zealot 16 has held up well after months of abuse and still looks great. A note on fit; my stocky, barrel-chested 5'7" frame is smack between Osprey sizes. The S/M left me wishing for longer shoulder straps while the M/L was simply too long for my short torso. Made in Vietnam www.ospreypacks.com

