



**Blue Ridge Outdoors &
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Gear of the Year

Featuring: Exos 58

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OUR ANNUAL PICKS FOR THE BEST GEAR OUT THERE.

by AARON H. BIBLE



1. OSPREY Exos 58

\$220; ospreypacks.com

Osprey set a new standard for ultra-lightweight packs in 2008 with the introduction of the Exos Series, which became a standard on the Appalachian Trail and with ultralight enthusiasts still in search of comfort; and the company redesigned the series this year integrating Osprey's Superlight AirSpeed suspension system and new Exoform harness and hipbelt. It is a minimalist pack still packed with features that make long trips enjoyable.

◆ **Why It Won.** Less than three pounds in a 60-liter pack for under \$250, with 40 years of innovation and quality standing behind it. When you've tried an Osprey pack, whether for climbing, backpacking, or biking, it's hard to go back to anything else.

◆ **Where We Took It.** Sections of the AT and-connector trails through Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia; the mountains around Asheville, N.C., and many peaks and trails west of the Mississippi as well.

