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May 2015

Gear of the Year: Spring/Summer 2015

Featuring: Atmos AG and Aura AG Series

Monthly Traffic: 12,865,000

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/pqdr3d3>

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Top Gear Innovations

Outdoor gear doesn't just improve, it keeps getting dramatically better. For our biannual Gear of the Year awards, we celebrate the insights, breakthroughs, and leaps forward in new products that make our time in the outdoors safer, more comfortable, and more fun. Here are our picks for spring/summer 2015. —*Steve Casimiro*

Backpack

Photograph courtesy Osprey

Osprey Atmos AG and Aura AG

Osprey's new pack, the Atmos AG (men's) and Aura AG (women's), radically reinvents the backpacking experience. This "antigravity" backpack has one of the most unconventional and comfortable suspensions ever made. Starting at the top near the grab handle, the AG has a perforated mesh panel that runs the length and width of your back, all the way down to your hips and around the front of the waist via the hip belt. This creates smooth, even pressure against your shoulder blades down to the lumbar region—it's more like a gentle caress than the poking and prodding of a typical pack.

That suspension alone is worthy of an award, but to this achievement Osprey adds an über-belt (my term, not theirs): Rather than flip-floppy webbing, the AG belt consists of two seemingly spring-loaded, pre-curved wings that wrap around your hipbones with a meaty but soft embrace. Combined with the webbed suspension, these wings make the most comfortable hip belt I've ever used.

The Osprey packs come in two sizes, 50-liter and 65-liter, and are designed to carry up to 40 and 50 pounds, respectively. Until there's a true antigravity system, you won't find a more comfy way to carry your kit.

Get It: \$230 ; ospreypacks.com

