

THE STYLE & DESIGN ISSUE

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Men's Journal

97 Perfect

THE WORLD'S BEST GEAR,
TECH, TOOLS & TOYS

Things

#1 THE SPYKER
C8 SPYDER



\$4.95

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SPECIAL REPORT

GRIDIRON CASUALTIES

HOW THE NFL DESTROYS AND ABANDONS ITS HEROES

+ Bode Miller's Hometown Tragedy / The Truth Behind *Into the Wild*

Summer Camp

The season's best tents, backpacks, and sleeping bags for every kind of expedition and budget



THE GREAT OUTDOORS ISN'T SO GREAT IF YOUR TENT FEELS like a sauna or your backpack is gouging deep tracks into your shoulders. To ensure that your next walk in the woods is a success, we tested the latest backpacking gear in the rain, wind, and sun of Inyo National Forest in central California over a long, hard month. Then we picked our favorite tents, packs, and sleeping bags in three categories:

hardcore (the most durable and weatherproof stuff), lightweight (good performance with minimal bulk), and budget (reliable equipment at affordable prices). Although there are innovations across the board, the greatest strides are in making lightweight gear more durable and better-performing. So whether you're bagging 14ers in Colorado or camping on the beach along the Oregon coast, you'll find gear that allows you to escape into the wilderness with confidence. —MARK ANDERS

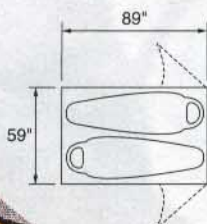
BEST BUDGET

EUREKA! | APEX 2

This no-nonsense dome is as much tent as the average weekend warrior will ever need. Weighing in at 5 pounds and 4 ounces, it's lightweight enough for backpacking — and its mesh ceiling and walls allow for ventilation during summer camping. Although the Apex is sold as a two-person tent, its 36.5 square feet of floor space and low ceiling mean it's a squeeze. [[\\$125; eurekatent.com](http://$125; eurekatent.com)]



SLEEPING CAPACITY
----- FLY SHEET



REI POLAR | POD +20°

Unlike most budget bags, the 3-lb, 8-oz mummy-style Pod +20° features a built-in pillow pocket, an exterior chest stash pocket, and sleeping-pad loops that prevent you from rolling off your pad during the night. For just \$20 more you can upgrade to the Polar Pod 0°, which is rated for colder temperatures. [[\\$80; rei.com](http://$80; rei.com)]

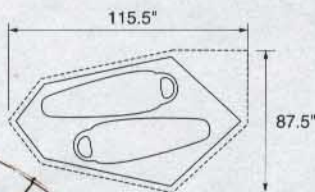
BEST LIGHTWEIGHT

SIERRA DESIGNS | HYPERLIGHT AST

Ounce for ounce, the 4-lb, 8-oz Hyperlight AST provides more living space than any other backpacking tent on the market. With only two main clip-in poles, this freestanding dome is simple to set up and offers 37 square feet of floor space — plenty for two six-footers to sleep comfortably head to toe. [[\\$270; sierradesigns.com](http://$270; sierradesigns.com)]



SLEEPING CAPACITY
----- FLY SHEET



L.L. BEAN | MOUNTAIN GUIDE

We searched and searched, but there's no better backpack for the money than Bean's Mountain Guide. This 4-lb, 12-oz pack has a capacity of 3,500 cubic inches (up to 45 pounds) and scores points for luxe features such as a thermomolded back panel, hydration bladder sleeve, quick-access exterior pockets, and a removable rain cover. [[\\$130; llbean.com](http://$130; llbean.com)]



BIG AGNES | CRYSTAL

Thanks to a water-resistant shell and innovative use of both 650-fill down and synthetic PrimaLoft insulation, this 2-lb, 10-oz, 30°-rated bag retains its warmth even when wet. A spacious rectangle design provides extra space for your head and feet, and the slip-in sleeping pad sleeve keeps your pad where it belongs. Plus, it still packs down to the size of a bread loaf. [[\\$150; bigagnes.com](http://$150; bigagnes.com)]



GREGORY | G PACK

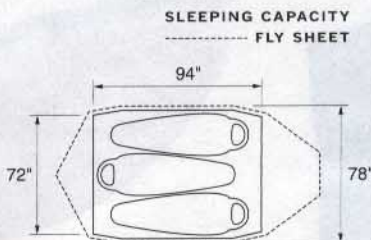
Designed for weekend trips and quick peak assaults, the G Pack is a 2-lb, 10-oz hauler. It holds 2,700 cubic inches — or up to 30 pounds — of gear, distributing the load evenly between your hips and lumbar, thanks to a unique stabilizer system that brings the pack closer to your lower back. The result: less pack bounce and sway as you climb up — and later descend — the trail. [[\\$140; gregorypacks.com](http://$140; gregorypacks.com)]

BEST HARDCORE

THE NORTH FACE | EXPEDITION 36

A mountaineer's fortress, the Expedition 36 is a 6-pole, 3-man dome designed to withstand high winds and snowy alpine conditions. Once pitched (it's surprisingly easy with its slide-in sleeve-pole design), you get a high-ceiling structure with 48 square feet of floor space and dual vestibules to store your backpacks and those ripe hiking boots. Although it weighs close to 12 pounds, shared with a few friends, the weight is negligible.

[\$580; thenorthface.com]



ARC'TERYX | BORA 80

Swallowing almost 5,000 cubic inches of gear (enough for a week-long trek), the 6-lb, 13-oz Bora is the expedition pack of choice for the U.S. Marines. The beefy thermoformed belt and shoulder straps are comfortable, and it's made with 100-percent waterproof urethane fabric.

[\$370; arcteryx.com]



MARMOT | COULOIR

With luxurious 800-fill goose down, the 3-lb, 6-oz Couloir is a featherbed for the outdoors. Its modified mummy cut gives you extra space to roll around, and features such as the down-filled collar and draft tube keep you toasty warm even when temps hover around zero.

[\$420; marmot.com]

BEST TRAIL ACCESSORIES



SOLIO | SOLAR CHARGER

Open the scalloping design and the Solio fans into three palm-size waterproof solar panels ready to harvest the sun. The 5.8-oz unit can recharge your iPod in two hours (adapters are required for a GPS device) and stores 10 hours of power. [\$100; solio.com]



HI-TEC | V-LITE FASTPACK

For a mere \$75, these sturdy leather-and-nylon 1-lb, 8-oz hikers provide enough support for you to carry a 20-lb pack and conquer burly trails. Best of all, they're comfortable straight out of the box. [\$75; hi-tec.com]



GERBER | MANTIS CLAMP LAMP

Remember kerosene lanterns? Yeah, didn't think so. About the size of a deck of playing cards, this water- and heat-resistant LED has a sturdy rubber clamp — perfect on a cooking pot's rim or a book's cover — plus a 10-in foldable arm. [\$25; gerbergear.com]



BEN COURT

Ask the Gear Guy

Q. My buddies and I have backpacked together since we were teenagers, always dragging along beer to drink around the campfire. It started out easy, just a six-pack or two. But lately it's gotten crazy. Last year, I schlepped a 36-pack for a three-nighter. This summer I want something easy to carry — any ideas? *Bret Sigler, Brooklyn, NY*

A. In the spirit of fast-and-light, try this backcountry cocktail: Bacardi 151 mixed with powdered Kool-Aid Fruit Punch (it tastes better than Tang or Crystal Light), made with water cleansed by MSR's 8-oz Miox water-purifier (\$120; msrscorp.com). Dilute to taste.

Win REI's Ultralight Setup

Send any gear questions to Ben Court at gearguy@mensjournal.com for a chance to win prizes. This month's letter received REI's 8-lb, 5-oz camping kit, including a Sub Kilo bag (+20"), UL 30L pack (2,135 cubic in), and Quarter Dome UL two-man tent (value \$520).



Pamper Yourself

Car camping just got even cushier, thanks to these extras

GSI JAVA PRESS

Instead of forcing skanky camp coffee down your throat, brew a barista-quality cup of joe with the JavaPress, an unbreakable Lexan French press. [\$23; gsioutdoors.com]



MOUNTAINSMITH ROAD TRIPPIN' ZIP-TOP TOTE

Container Store logic for car campers: This waterproof tote holds 5,500 cubic inches of stuff — enough space for a pair of sleeping bags, pads, tent, stove, and cookware — and attaches to your roof with durable loops. [\$60; mountainsmith.com]



THERM-A-REST DREAMTIME

Backpacking meets the Ritz with this 8-lb, 3-layer sleeping pad, which features a self-inflating air mattress, a cushy pillow top, and a soft fleece cover. What's next? A backcountry water bed? [\$200; thermarest.com]



HIGH PERFORMANCE



FISHING Armed with the Action Optics Fishbone and its polarized brown glass lenses (which lighten or darken depending on conditions), you can cut through the surface glare and see farther underwater. LTL: 18-28% (\$150; actionoptics.com) Rx: NO



RUNNING Sweat all you want, the Nike Odeon won't fog up or slide off your nose. These ultralight sunglasses with reflective blue lenses have an aerodynamic design to maximize airflow while you run. LTL: 14% (\$109; nike.com) Rx: NO



GOLF Featuring high-end polarized gray lenses, the Kaenon Rhino enables golfers to read slight undulations in the greens more easily, and its wrap frames eliminate pesky stray rays that vex you midswing. LTL: 28% (\$170; kaenon.com) Rx: YES



MULTISPORT Whether you're bombing down singletrack or playing on the beach, the Smith District has you covered. The frames come with a yellow lens and two polarized lenses, brown and copper. LTL: 15-68% (\$160; smithsport.com) Rx: NO



CYCLING With its 1-oz titanium-alloy frames, adjustable nosepiece, and swappable red and smoke lenses, the Rudy Project Ketyum (the real slim shady) keeps the road in clear view whatever the conditions. LTL: 22-28% (\$255; rudyprojectusa.com) Rx: YES



WATERSPORTS Perfect for kayaking, surfing, and kiteboarding, the Oakley Waterjacket's copper lenses are vented to reduce fogging, and the frames are secured with a neck leash. Also available with gray lenses. LTL: 14-30% (\$190; oakley.com) Rx: YES

Game Faces

To sharpen your performance, choose the right sport-specific sunglasses.

FIELD TEST

GENERIC SHADES FROM A pharmacy may seem like a bargain, but specialized sunglasses, like other high-performance sports gear, will last longer and can improve your game. There are sturdy wraparound models with polarized lenses for fishermen who spend hours on the water, and ultralight frames with

rose lenses for cyclists darting in and out of shadows. We rounded up the 20 best new models for these and other sports and tested them on land and sea around San Diego. Six made the cut. When choosing yours, check out the light transmission level (LTL), the amount of light that gets through the lens. The lower the LTL, the darker the lens: Midteens is best for activities in strong light, mid-20s for variable conditions. —Mark Anders

Lens Finder

Gray: Best for bright sun, is easy on the eyes, and maintains natural colors. Good for sailing and kayaking.

Brown: Reduces glare while increasing contrast and depth perception. Good for most sports, especially fishing, when polarized.

Red: Increases image definition in flat light and poor visibility. Ideal for cycling and skiing on hazy days.

Yellow: Improves depth perception and boosts contrast in very low light, but distorts colors. Good for hunting, cycling, and skiing.



Sharp Choices

Seven **PERFECT KNIVES** for every situation a man might encounter

FIELD TEST

CUTTING TANGLED FISHING line, whittling skewers, filleting trout — these tasks call for one tool: a simple knife. But not too simple. With major advances, notably lightweight

titanium, ultrahard steel, liner locks, and assisted opening mechanisms, those crummy blades with faux-wood handles may finally disappear. We named seven categories and tested until we had clear-cut victors.

—MARK ANDERS

EDITORS' PICK



SPYDERCO Poliwog

If you carry a knife every day, you want a lightweight and compact choice that looks as sharp as it cuts. Spyderco's Poliwog — which weighs 4.1 oz, measures 5 1/4 inches open, and clips to your cash or

your pocket — earns special distinction for its shape, a graceful ergonomic arc, and its ball-bearing lock, one of the company's signature designs. [\$150; spyderco.com]

ASSISTED-OPENING



BUCK Sirius

Release the Sirius's 3.25-in blade instantly by touching a small knob, which is actually an extension of the blade. Then push the integrated liner lock aside to fold it into its aluminum handle, which designers decorated with laser-etching flames to echo hot rod design. [\$90; buckknives.com]

FISHING



ABEL Abelblade

Don't let this 2.3-oz keeper slip off the dock: The patterned handle, camouflaged like a trout, means it'll be tough to find. Luckily, weight-saving holes in the handle also provide traction for wet fingers. In addition to beauty you get a 2.9-in high-carbon stainless steel blade. [from \$160; abelreels.com]

OUTDOORS



SOG Seal Pup Elite

Carrying a Ramboesque fixed blade eliminates the chance of a midcut collapse, a potential danger with a folding knife. Use this 4.85-in partially serrated blade to shape makeshift tent pegs, then tap them into the ground with the injection-molded handle. [\$118; sogknives.com]

DELUXE



WILLIAM HENRY Signature B15

A master bladesmith grinds the B15's uncommonly sharp 3.25-in blade from a new ultrahardened steel. And because of its hand-finished titanium handle, the B15 weighs a bantam 1.6 oz — even with blue topaz gemstones decorating the lock release and thumb peg. [\$550; williamhenryknives.com]

TECH



SWISS ARMY Swiss Memory USB 1GB

Next to the ballpoint pen, scissors, and LED light you'll find this knife's hidden gem: a removable 1GB USB stick. Pack it with music and snaps, or, if you have to, work-related files, then slip out the office's back door for an extended weekend. [\$197; swissarmy.com]

MULTITOOL



GERBER Diesel Multi-Plier

The 8-oz Diesel stands out in the overcrowded multitool marketplace because you can deploy the pliers one-handed, with a flick of the wrist. No matter which of the 12 stainless steel components you choose to use, each locks automatically. [\$90; gerbergear.com]

Fully Loaded

The best carriers in our favorite categories

FIELD TEST

SPECIALIZATION IN LUGGAGE DESIGN IS NOTHING new, but the latest models take the concept and roll with it. Wheeled carry-ons include backpack straps so comfortable that you can hit the trailhead straight from the airport, gym bags feature ventilated shoe kennels to let sneakers breathe, and daypacks have waterproof zippers to repel rain. We sought out dozens of packs and bags, tested all of them, and brought you our five favorites. These all-stars are the best in their categories and are expressly built to make carrying your burden, whatever it is, easier. —MARK ANDERS



ROLLING CARRY-ON

BACKPACK

SPORTBAG

OSPREY | MERIDIAN 22

The love child of a wheeled carry-on and a backpack, the Meridian 22 is ideal for adventure travel. Osprey's hybrid features interior mesh organizer pockets, a zip-off mini-daypack, and a hideaway harness system that transforms the bag into a trail-worthy pack. And while hybrids can be chintzy, the 8-lb, 9-oz Meridian is a rare double: It's easy to control as a roller, yet comfortable on your back. [\$280; ospreypacks.com]

SPECS: 22" x 14" x 9"; 3,700 cu ins



PRODUCTS: MICHAEL PIRROCCO

**WEEKEND****FILSON | SPORTSMAN'S BAG**

Made with durable twill treated with a water-repellent wax, thick bridle-leather straps, and rustproof brass zippers, the Sportsman's Bag is designed for rugged outdoorsmen. Snap-in dividers keep your stuff organized on the inside, and six pockets on the outside provide quick access to snacks and reading material. [**\$250; filson.com**]

SPECS: 18" x 11" x 12"; 2,400 cu ins

**DAY****ARC'TERYX | RT25**

Some daypacks are glorified book bags. The RT25, however, has outdoor-lifestyle functionality, including a drybag-style roll-top, watertight zippers, and a sleeve and hose clip for a hydration bladder. Most important, it features a thermo-formed shoulder harness and belt, which keep the load on your hips. [**\$125; arcteryx.com**]

SPECS: 23" x 12" x 10"; 1,300 cu ins

**DUFFEL****THE NORTH FACE | BASE CAMP DUFFEL XL**

Heavy-duty, waterproof PVC tarpaulin fabric coupled with twin end-haul handles and shoulder straps have made this hockey-bag-size hauler a staple on hard-core expeditions. No wonder: Its cavernous capacity can swallow an entire closet of gear. [**\$135; thenorthface.com**]

SPECS: 32" x 19" x 19"; 9,070 cu ins

**GYM****TUMI | FLOW SPORT BAG**

Gym bags have evolved light-years from the old canvas sack you lugged in high school. Tumi's Sport Bag scores points with a zippered organization pocket for your wallet and keys, an easy-access holster for a water bottle, and a built-in sneaker slot with vents so you can quarantine your sweaty stuff. [**\$155; tumi.com**]

SPECS: 24" x 12" x 9"; 2,400 cu ins