

field notes

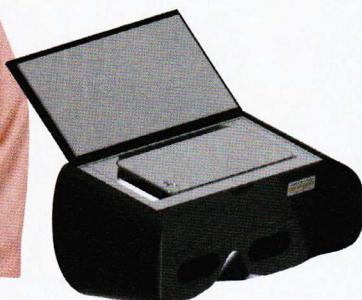
The latest word from our testers



Lightweight Sun Shirt

Mountain Khakis Passport EC Long Sleeve Shirt

Fall brings temperature swings that can seriously test your clothing's versatility. On an overnight backpacking trip to the Garnet Mountain Fire Lookout in Montana's Custer Gallatin National Forest, the Passport EC was fast-drying and feather-light as a UPF 30+ sun shirt. When temperatures dropped to the mid-40s at night, it made for a silky next-to-skin layer underneath a fleece. Best of all, the classy, gingham-patterned, poly-twill fabric was comfier than most tech shirts and a snap to keep neat. "This shirt never seemed to wrinkle no matter how badly I balled it up in the bottom of my pack," our tester says. "I even wore it to work the day after I got back from my trip." The shirt's discreet, passport-size chest zip pocket makes it a handy travel piece, too. Ding: Extra-thin synthetic fabric means that this shirt builds up serious static cling on dry days. \$95; 2.1 oz.; mountainkhakis.com



Star Gazers

Universe2go

Imagine if an astronomer showed up on your next camping trip to give you a better appreciation of the stars. Here's the next best thing: a pair of goggles that can identify constellations as you gaze at the night sky. Download the app and place your smartphone in the top of the goggles' plastic frame, then look up. A pair of mirrors reflects the outline of the constellation from your phone so the image lays directly on top of your view of the stars, clearly distinguishing Aries from Aquila. Deep Sky mode highlights galaxies not visible to the naked eye, Quiz Mode tests your constellation ID skills to prep you for campfire entertainment hour, and Mythology Mode (our favorite) tells the ancient Greek and Roman stories that inspired each constellation. Pro tip: Dim the brightness on your phone screen to help preserve your night vision. \$99; 14 oz.; universe2go.com



Big-Mouthed Pack

Black Diamond Cirque 45

Problem: pawing for pack zippers while wearing gloves as wind hammers you on the side of a mountain. Solution: the wide-mouth, 37-inch-around drawcord opening on this ultralight winter pack. It was exceptionally easy for testers to access ski and mountaineering gear inside the pack, which is built to carry skis (A-frame or diagonal), ropes, helmets, and ice axes on the exterior. Don't worry about overstuffing the tough Dynex fabric: "I stumbled when I was taking off my harness and stomped on it with my crampons several times, but didn't punch a hole in the material," one tester said after ski touring in the Oregon Cascades. It's compatible with AvalLung (\$100 extra), Black Diamond's snorkel-like avalanche safety system, and the foam backpanel can be removed to save a few ounces or to use as an emergency sleeping pad. \$220; 2 lbs. 5 oz.; blackdiamondequipment.com



User-Friendly Headlamp

NiteRider Adventure 180

Not into headlamps that are more complicated than your phone? The USB-rechargeable Adventure 180 is for the manual crowd, combining smooth, consistent light quality with a wide range of smart features. First, the headlamp always turns on in red mode, which preserves hard-won night vision and won't wake your tent mate. "All headlamps should do that," noted our tester after a week of camping on snow in British Columbia. Second, there's the number of modes: five "on" modes (max output in white mode is a retina-scorching 180 lumens) and four blinking modes (which seems a little excessive). "It gives you enough options to maximize battery life without causing frustration as you cycle from one to the next," our tester says. The 180 gently lights the periphery with a very good diffused setting, eliminating headlamp tunnel vision and lighting the entire tent when hung. Bonus: It has a super-comfy strap with a terry cloth-like backing. \$80; 3 oz.; niterider.com