



TOP OF THE LINE

THE VERY BEST TACTICAL BACKPACKS

► STORY PHOTOS BY GUS ALONZO

WE'RE ALL A LITTLE LIKE PAVLOV'S DOGS. SHOW US A TACTICAL BACKPACK, WE START TO SALIVATE, WE SLIDE IT ON AND WE TRY TO CLAIM IT AS OUR OWN ... BEFORE THE NEXT GUY LAYS DIBS ON IT.

So imagine what's it's like in the editorial halls of Beckett Media when five hot packs get delivered within the span of a week. Somehow, we managed to test these without getting into an MMA-like brawl. The results of the tests are below.

Excuse me while we wipe the spit away from my mouth. — Editor



EDITOR'S
CHOICE



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TASMANIAN TACTICAL

www.tasmaniantactical.com

Model: Tasmanian Tiger X1 Pack
Suspension System
MSRP: \$399.99

Key Facts

- Specifically made for the military, police and law enforcement
- Designed for heavy loads
- Enhanced comfort, good for long trips

Description

This is a high-end carrying system for heavy loads. It features two ergonomically arched, crossed aluminum bars in frame channels that transmit part of the

carrying load laterally to the hip strap, distributing the load from the back to the hips. A rubberized lumbar pad in the middle of the hip strap prevents the rucksack from slipping. The soft ergonomically shaped shoulder straps with height adjustments enhance the level of comfort. The detachable lid is subdivided into five pockets.

Our Evaluation:

Despite the huge capacity, the results were downright impressive. We liked the balance and tight fit once it was fully strapped on. It doesn't get any better than this.



VOODOO TACTICAL

www.voodoo-tactical.net

Model: Matrix Assault Pack
MSRP: \$129

Key Facts

- Military, law enforcement and multiple federal agencies provided input into the design and helped field test the backpack
- Super-comfortable, feature-rich pack
- Holds ample gear

Description

The Matrix pack is designed for comfort with an adjustable, padded shoulder harness and an integral compartment for a hydration bladder, which is sold separately. It has a zippered laptop compartment and various pockets and pouches for radios, GPS and other electronic instruments. It has a large main compartment and multiple pockets on the sides and rear.

Our Evaluation:

Voodoo Tactical's Matrix could be one of the best-designed backpacks around. The

main compartment of Matrix is spacious enough to pack jackets, rain gear or anything essential for your needs. There are several small pockets inside to secure ID, wallet, spare AR magazines, etc.

The built-in hydration bladder compartment with port is well designed, and there's a padded pocket to fit a laptop, which is a nice feature. Who leaves home without his laptop?

There are numerous MOLLE/PALS straps on the outer bag. These straps allow you to carry items such as first-aid kits and water bottles, and to attach additional MOLLE-compatible pouches that meet your specific needs.

What's really cool are the eight pockets/compartments on the outer bag, which provide room enough for your quick jaunts. And finally, it has a removable waist belt, and that makes it very versatile. We like the tight comfortable fit, and it feels secure even in the event of a full sprint.



5.11 TACTICAL

Model: All Hazards Prime Backpack
MSRP: \$209

Key Facts

- Hydration compartment
- Padded laptop/tablet sleeves
- Overall exterior dimensions are 11.5 by 9 by 20.5

Description

MACTAC instructors provided design input. This is a fully functional tactical bag, as it features a padded laptop and tablet sleeves, hydration compartment, compression straps and tear-out medical pouches. The main compartment has a ton of space and will hold two fully loaded ammo mule bags containing 20 AR ammo magazines. You'll be able to carry a baton, helmet, ammunition, goggles and a whole lot more.

Our Evaluation:

This is a stable, practical and a well thought-out pack that caters to a wide range of



www.511tactical.com

uses. It's a very versatile pack, and the author uses it every day. It can be used for my "survival essentials," computer, or to carry notebooks, camera, flashlight, extra lenses, wallet, glasses, etc.

It's structured very well to keep things organized and quickly accessible, and it's comfortable to carry. It's great that it can be extended with pouches, and the front compressible compartment is great to store jackets when not needed.



SOURCE TACTICAL GEAR

www.source-military.com

Model: Double D 45L
MSRP: \$129

Key Facts

- Specifically designed for ballistic vest integration
- Handles heavy loads
- Features contoured shoulder straps

Description

The adjustable, reinforced sternum strap is for heavy loads and prevents the shoulder straps from digging into your armpits and evens the load distribution. The slim design allows for easy body armor integration without interference to body movement. It's also equipped with front MOLLE/PALS for mounting pouches.

Other features include radio and antenna slots, transporter flap with pockets so you can store items such as a rain jacket or helmet. It also has an internal water reservoir compartment that's separated from the cargo and is easily accessible, as it allows tube routing to the right or left shoulder. A 2L top lid pouch zippered pocket at the top of the bag

provides quick over-arm access to small essentials while on the move.

Our Evaluation:

Source's head designer and much of its key personnel are ex-officers in the IDF elite forces. Hundreds of thousands of Source systems are in use, with many field tested in the most extreme conditions.

What's not to like?





MYSTERY RANCH

www.mysteryranch.com

Model: Nice Overload
3Zip BVS
MSRP: \$635-\$759

Key Facts

- Secure a rifle between the pack and the frame
- Integrated load platform is ideal for carrying, stabilizing odd-sized items like game quarters
- 21 inches by 11.6 inches by 6 inches

Description

The Overload 3Zip is a smaller, 3,000-cubic-inch version of the Overload Alpha.

What's it got? Like the Alpha Overload, it carries weapons securely with room

for mission essentials or sustenance gear.

Our Evaluation:

This is chill.

The Mystery Ranch 3Zip Overload was designed specifically to accommodate a weapon, which fits vertically in between the frame and pack. There are open topside pockets toward the bottom for water bottles or other items you need quick access to.

The waist belt can also be upgraded to a model with pockets. The pack is available in coyote, foliage or "multicam," and you can carry up to 120 pounds. Comfortably.





Consumer Tips Buy Right, Buy Smart

Ryan Krueger, Mystery Ranch's community outreach sales/coordinator provides a little insight into making a tactical purchase for a tactical backpack.

Q: When entering the market for a tactical backpack, what should a new consumer look for?

A: Use, specifically what are your needs and

how will you be using the pack. This is by far the most important question we ask because we're then able to direct new customers according to their responses.

Q: Should the beginner keep a price range in mind and then upgrade later?

A: Yes and no. Everyone has a bottom line, but if you're able to purchase a Mystery Ranch pack from the get-go you can ensure you're getting a pack that will

last a lifetime. Plus, you're getting decades of experience built into every product that ensures optimum load carrying and comfort.

Q: What else should the consumer keep in mind?

A: Packs are an essential piece of gear, and it's helpful to talk to the experts as you begin your search. Our customer service team is very experienced assisting new customers. Give us a call.