

American Alpine Institute^{Ltd.}

Guide's Choice Field Testing Notes

AAI's Guide's Choice is an independent, international gear evaluation program started by the American Alpine Institute in 1989. Our professional climbing and ski guides are continually field-testing equipment and clothing in a variety of mountain environments and conditions throughout the world. Guides Choice awards are given to the top item of gear in each product category based on excellence in design, performance, and durability. Each year new Guides Choice awards are presented to manufacturers at the Outdoor Retailer Summer Market trade show in Salt Lake City, Utah.

All of AAI's equipment testing takes place in rugged mountain environments as part of their guided climbing and mountaineering trips. All tests are conducted by professional mountain guides

Tester for this review: Kurt Hicks: Guide

Item Tested: Cilogear 60L Worksack

Description: Lightweight alpine climbing backpack

Testing Areas: Red Rocks, Nevada
Lee Vining, California
North Conway, New Hampshire
Cascade Mountains, Washington
Indian Creek, Utah
Bugaboos, British Columbia
Little Switzerland, Alaska

Guides Notes: The Cilogear 60L Worksack has become the "go-to" pack for all of my guiding and personal climbing. I've put over 150 days of hard use on this pack and found it to pack well, climbed comfortably, and be ultra-configurable. I've bushwacked around the Cascades, suffered through freezing temperatures in the Alaska Range, hauled it up desert towers, and the Worksack has



performed exceedingly well throughout. I'm confident in it wherever I go regardless of the objective.

The pack is full of features that are ingenious and simple. The external strap system, once understood, has almost endless configuration options and allows unwieldy items to be easily secured to the pack. Additionally, ice clipper slots sewn into the waist belt can eliminate the need to carry gear on the harness, making it much more comfortable on long expeditions. The internal compression strap that helps hold the load closer to my back, making it carry even better. The ice tool slots are speedy and work with my traditional and leashless tools equally well.

This pack is an excellent choice for both the weekend warrior looking for a quality pack and the serious alpinist doing routes of extreme difficulty. Therefore, I am recommending the Cilogear Packs for the Guide's Choice Award for 2009.

Additional Specific Feedback:

1. **Fabrics:** The gray silnylon that forms the snow collar/extension seems to be the weakest part of the pack. It punctures easily and has been torn on every single Cilogear pack that I've seen this year. Although it does help to reduce the overall weight of the pack, I'd like to see a heavier fabric that will last a little longer.
2. **Stitching:** I blew out a couple of seams near the interface of the silnylon collar and the body of the pack. Perhaps doubling or tripling over the fabric before stitching will prevent this. I also ripped out the load lifter on the right shoulder strap. I believe this to be due to the fact that I always lift the pack off the ground with that shoulder strap.

Suggested Changes:

Add a sliplock to the top of the daisy chains on the outside of the pack. I've ripped out the sliplocks that are on the seams (S3 and S4) when I tighten the lid down snugly; this wouldn't happen if the sliplock was oriented parallel to the pull, not perpendicular as it currently is.

A key clip would be a nice addition.

Competing Products: Wild Things Andinista, Mountain Hardwear South Col

Photos:





Photo 1: Worn spots on waist belt



Photo 2: Ripped out load lifter strap

