



# WildSide

THE WILDERNESS SHOP NEWSLETTER  
Number 60, February 2019



*Jonno approaching Lake Tahune in Tasmania.*

Summer 2019 Edition

## NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW! NEW!

### LOWE ALPINE ALTUS, BY MAC

**T**HIS IS THE best pack that the Lowe Alpine brand has produced in recent years. It has an exceptionally well-designed harness that effectively transfers load onto the hipbelt. The hipbelt itself is structured, yet flexible enough to be comfortable. The result is a very balanced load with weight dispersed outstandingly.

The Lowe Alpine Altus comes in several versions. In-store currently—at the time of printing—we have the **Lowe Alpine Altus ND30** (women's), **ND40:45** (women's) and **42:47** (men's). With capacities in the 30 to 55L range, the Altus is ideal for hut-to-hut

trekking and supported hiking (e.g. trekking in Nepal). You could also use it as a large daypack, or small overnight pack.

The Altus has plenty of useful features, such as side zip entry (in addition to the regular top-loading entrance), two lid pockets (one inside, one outside), hidden daisy chains, zip pockets on the hipbelt, a raincover and means of carrying poles and ice axes.

What sets the Altus apart is the ability to adjust its back length, using the Velcro panel. The system is simple, but effective.

One of our staff members, Tamika, has already bought one of these packs! **W**

*For more specifications, see our website [www.wildernessshop.com.au](http://www.wildernessshop.com.au)*





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## TRIP REPORT: FRENCHMANS CAP HIKE ————— BY ASH

**M**Y PARTNER JONNO and I headed off to Tasmania for two weeks of adventure last year in September. It was the start of spring, so we were warned by everyone that we'd be freezing cold and soaking wet. Instead, we encountered unseasonably dry and sunny weather and were, as a result, often overdressed and much too hot! So, it was in shorts and T-shirts that we headed off on a hike up Frenchmans Cap.

I am fairly new to hiking, with only a handful of overnighters under my belt. This hike up Frenchmans Cap—the most common route, which is an out-and-back from Lyell Highway—at around 46km, was expected to be my longest and most challenging trip to date. There was much discussion over how many days we would plan to take. Most bushwalkers take somewhere between two and four days. Jonno wanted to take three days, and I wanted to take four. We settled on three days, but packed enough of our gourmet dehydrated meals for four.

Bright and early, we headed off. Our plan for day one was to reach Lake Vera, where there is a hut that sleeps about 20 (as well as many camping platforms). We planned to camp here on night one, but we reached the lake much earlier than expected—around 12.30pm. The going had been much easier than I expected. Much of the track was made up of boardwalk, installed to protect delicate vegetation. The track was also mostly flat or trending slightly downhill. Having arrived so early, we decided to push on to our next stop, Lake Tahune.

The section of trail between Lake Vera and Lake Tahune was much steeper. At times, we were not so much walking, as climbing(!) ladders of tree roots and branches. Through the most amazing rainforest, we passed mossy overhanging ledges and crystal clear, trickling creeks. When we reached Barron Pass, we left most of the climbing behind us for that day. From Barron Pass to Lake Tahune, the walking was pretty straightforward, with amazing views of the mountains all around. We finished off the first big day with a dip

*Frenchmans' snowy cap.*

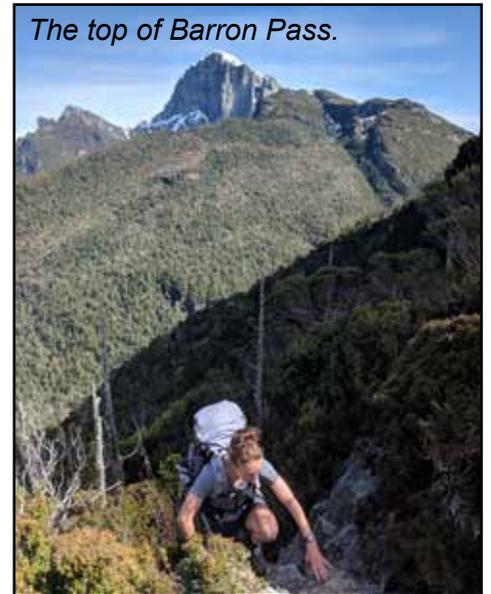


in the bracing waters of Lake Tahune, then went to bed in the most luxurious hut I've ever seen—it is brand new, sleeps 16, and has solar power, which means you can charge your phone if you need to. It even has heating! My favourite features, though, were the massive windows overlooking the valley. This is definitely not what I expected, but it was a welcome novelty.

The next morning, just after sunrise, we headed off for the summit. There was still a decent amount of snow around. As a result, we lost the trail for some time and ended up battling our way straight up. The weather was magical and, once again, I was overdressed and overheating in my waterproof pants and jacket. It took us about an hour and a half to reach the summit, where we were rewarded with fantastic views and a welcome breeze. The descent was much faster, because we made the most of the snow—sliding down on our butts much of the way, before finding and using the much easier path back to the hut.

Back at the hut, we decided to abandon our original three- to four-day plan, because we had been making great time. We didn't even stay another night. Instead, we pushed on, going back the way we came, all the way back to the car. In the late afternoon,

*The top of Barron Pass.*



with 10km to go, I was seriously regretting this decision. The hike was amazing—my favourite by far, and although easier than expected (largely due to the perfect weather we had), I recommend at least the three-day version, because it would have been nice to spend some more time soaking it all in! **W**

*Ash is the partner-in-crime of our staff member Jonno. Ash contributed this article. Do you have a story you'd like to share? Email [marketing@wildernessshop.com.au](mailto:marketing@wildernessshop.com.au)*

# WHAT OUR STAFF WEAR: LIGHTWEIGHT HIKING SHIRTS



**I**N PREVIOUS ISSUES of *WildSide*, we wrote about what staff at The Wilderness Shop wear and use on their own personal trips. We're bringing back that tradition! This issue, we asked staff to name their favourite lightweight hiking shirt. Yes, a shirt's a shirt—but, not all shirts are equal. Materials, cut, construction and nifty features vary greatly between all the lightweight shirts we stock.

## **BERNADETTE: MONT LIFESTYLE VENTED MEN'S SHIRT, \$119.95**

“It's a loose fit and easy to dry. There is a women's style, but I wear the men's, because I prefer a looser fit. There are vents in the back, which makes for good flow-through breathability. The collar is extended, to protect your neck. You can roll up the sleeves or pull them down to protect your arms from the sun.”

## **MAC: OUTDOOR RESEARCH ASTROMAN MEN'S SHIRT, \$109.95 (SS) / \$139.95 (LS)**

“My favourite is the OR Astroman, by far. It's not designed for hiking with a pack, because it's so light that it'll get ruined. But as a summer shirt, it's perfect. It's stretchy, synthetic and incredibly light. It also dries super fast.”

*The Outdoor Research Astroman comes in both long-sleeve and short-sleeve versions.*

## **CHELSEA: ARC'TERYX FERNIE LONG-SLEEVED WOMEN'S SHIRT, \$139.95**

“This is the best synthetic shirt I've ever owned. The cut is flattering. It looks sharp (and not like you're going on safari). It has all the features you need—roll-up sleeves, chest pockets, quick-drying fabric. It's quite a simple shirt, but breathable, and the material feels smooth and cool on the skin. I've worn it several days in a row happily.”

## **JONNO: MONT ECHO MEN'S TEE, \$59.95**

“I used to wear Merino, but I get a rash from it now. So now I have Mont and Outdoor Research running shirts. Mostly because they dry quick!” **W**

*Top to bottom: Jonno modelling the Mont Lifestyle Vented Men's Shirt, collecting water on Mount Clear; Mac in the Outdoor Research Astroman Short-sleeved Men's Shirt, camped at Mount Arapiles; Chelsea in the Arc'teryx Fernie Long-sleeved Women's Shirt, at Cape Conran on the East Gippsland coast; Jonno again, in the Outdoor Research Echo Men's Tee, on his recent hike up Frenchmans Cap in Tasmania.*

## COMPETITION!

The good people at Campers Pantry in Tasmania are giving us some free dehydrated hiking meals, which we'd like to pass on to you! To enter, here's what you need to do:

**1. GO TO FACEBOOK AND 'LIKE' BOTH THE WILDERNESS SHOP AND CAMPERS PANTRY FACEBOOK PAGES.**

**2. 'LIKE' OUR #CAMPERSPANTRYCOMPETITION POST.**

**3. COMMENT TO LET US KNOW WHICH CAMPERS PANTRY MEAL IS EITHER YOUR FAVOURITE, OR ONE YOU'D LIKE TO TRY. TAG A FRIEND IN YOUR COMMENT.**

As a thank-you for being loyal subscriber to our *WildSide* newsletter, we're giving you **DOUBLE** the chance to win.

The prize: \$50 worth of Campers Pantry dehydrated hiking meals!



**O**VER THE COURSE of my years in the retail outdoor industry, I've encountered scenarios where people have purchased boots for a trip, then put them away in a cupboard for years. When the boots are taken out, "hardly used", the midsole suddenly disintegrates.

This is an example of midsole material becoming subject to a chemical reaction called hydrolysis. It occurs between polyurethane (PU) and moisture. Over time, it causes a physical breakdown of the PU material, until it crumbles away.

**Many bushwalking boots and shoes are made with composite soles that contain layers of various shock-absorbing materials, such as EVA or PU.**

**PU is a superb material for shock absorption, and this is why it's so widely used.**

The good news is that this problem can be easily mitigated. What you need to do is ensure that the material in the sole is 'worked' from time to time. You do this by wearing the footwear. This keeps the material 'active' and prevents the

progression of deterioration. (A good comparison is what happens to bicycle tyres if you hang your bike up in the garage and come back a couple of years later to find the rubber perished.)

The deterioration of boot soles due to hydrolysis after a number of years is not a warranty issue. This is an isolated problem that can be mitigated by proper care and maintenance. Here are some tips on how to care for your new footwear properly:

### 1. CLEAN AND DRY YOUR FOOTWEAR.

After every trip, clean mud off. In a warm, well-ventilated area, allow your footwear to dry completely. NB: Do not apply direct heat from fires or heaters—this will damage your boots.

### 2. STORE IN A DRY PLACE.

If you live in a high humidity or tropical area, consider storing your footwear with silica gel to keep the humidity down. Factors that increase the likelihood of hydrolysis are humidity and warmth. Therefore, it is a more common problem in tropical environments, or if boots are put away in enclosed spaces without being completely dry first.

### 3. WEAR YOUR BOOTS REGULARLY...

...even if it's simply for a walk down to the shops to activate the soles. We recommend at least once every six months. **W**

*Below: A boot showing signs of hydrolysis. Pic © Bushwalking Fool*



# CLIMBING TIPS: SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DOS & DON'TS,

# BY CHELSEA

**I**N JANUARY 2017, a bolt was placed within one metre of an Aboriginal handprint at a crag called Black Ians Rocks, near the Grampians. This act wasn't the catalyst of tensions between the Grampians' Traditional Owners and climbers, but it has certainly escalated the situation. On 14 February 2019, Parks Victoria banned climbing in 8 areas in the Grampians. This, of course, is devastating for climbers. However, it's imperative for climbers to respect the bans, because not doing so may result in more closures. It's important, now more than ever, for climbers and boulderers to minimise impact on this incredible national park. Here's how:

**Stay in the loop.** Get up to speed. For a summary, pick up a copy of *Argus* (December 2018), the Victorian Climbing Club's magazine. It contains several articles that explain the timeline of events and what's currently being done to address the situation. This information is also on CliffCare's website, [cliffcare.org.au](http://cliffcare.org.au)

**Look up information before you go.** Before you head out to a crag, check for closures. The best resources are [cliffcare.org.au](http://cliffcare.org.au),

Parks Victoria's website and Australian climbing magazine *Vertical Life's* website [verticallifemag.com.au](http://verticallifemag.com.au). It's important for climbers to demonstrate the ability to adhere to rules put in place to protect the environment.

**Don't treat the crag like a gym.** Rubbish, improper toileting habits—e.g. 'Euro turds' (an actual term for poos hidden under rocks, popular at crags in Europe), toilet paper or waste left on walking tracks—are not acceptable. Music—do you really need beats blasting out of portable speakers? Think about the experience for other park users. Trampling native vegetation to create landing zones around boulders is frowned upon. Instead, you should adequately protect your landing zone with proper pad placement and skilled spotters. Critically, the tactic of 'ticking' holds (drawing lines of chalk on rock to make holds more visible or guide your trajectory) is something that should be done sparingly, if at all. Part of the challenge of climbing outdoors is learning to identify and 'deadpoint' hard-to-see holds. All tick marks must be scrubbed off entirely (with a proper non-wire bouldering brush) when you're done. Also,

throwing food waste into the bush is a no-no. A single banana peel can take up to two years to decompose.

**Don't create new tracks.** It may seem tempting to explore 'off track', hunt for new boulders or routes and get your name written in a book. But, forming new tracks to new places—and, likewise, taking 'shortcuts' through bush—has various negative impacts, such as fast-tracking erosion, disturbing wildlife, spreading disease (eg *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, which infects plants) and creating an unsightly sprawl of unnecessary 'spiderweb' tracks.

If climbers demonstrate a capacity to respect the environment and co-operate with other users, it ups our chances of continuing to enjoy this incredible place. **W**

