Hot Gear

by Tom Richardson

This month, our gear editor reviews nine great new products that are either available now or will be hitting the shelves over the coming months. Getting yourself into gear for winter 2013 – 14 begins here

1 Bamboo Clothing

Yes, it is made from real bamboo fibres (which is actually a type of grass) with a bit of organic cotton. At the performance end of things check out the Bamboo brand. The fibre does the wicking and the whole thing is comfortable and sustainable both in terms of the planet and the wearer, and doesn't get smelly as with synthetic base layers. On the other hand, if you want to look cool and be cool at the wall or crag, check out **Sue Me's** range of bamboo based climber motif t-shirts.

bambooclothes.co.uk

2 Berghaus Ulvetanna

This is a sleeping bag designed for really cold, snowy conditions. It was designed for Leo Houlding's trip to the mountain of the same name in Antarctica, so enough said really. It has 1200 gms of top quality durable finish hydrophobic down in a very sophisticated shell that distributes the down using body-mapping. For this type of bag, the bar has now been raised in my opinion.

£600

berghaus.com

6 The North Face Thermo Ball Jacket

This jacket looks like down, feels like down, and keeps you warm like down but it has all the moisture-resistant properties of synthetic insulation, because it is made from it. Inside this jacket the clusters of synthetic fibre look exactly like a cluster of down. Wrap it in a classic square-quilted high performance outer, and you have brilliant all-round insulation for a wide range of uses.

£170 **thenorthface.com**

7 Arc'teryx New Alpha FL 30-45

Ever-innovative Arc'teryx have produced an excellent new alpine-specific climbing pack, the New Alpha FL 30/ 45. It is made with very tough materials and laminated joints for durability and waterproofness. It doesn't have a traditional top flap, but a unique combination of an extension collar plus drawcord waterproof roll top closure. It has an expandable 30-45 litre capacity.

£150

arc'teryx.com

3 Evolv Nexxo

This is the latest down-turned toe high performance shoe from Evolv's Chris Sharma signature series. New methods of constructing the shoe and cleverly altering the tension through the sole unit have allowed Evolv to create a soft yet powerful shoe. It's ideal for hard bouldering and steep sport climbing.

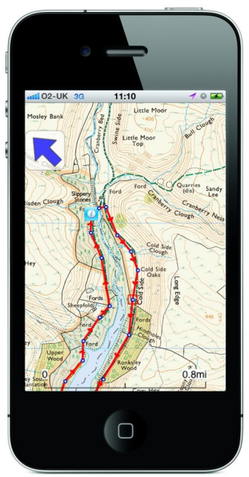
£120

evolv.com

4 View Ranger App

View Ranger, the outdoor GPS app, has just launched a new version for Apple iPhone and iPad optimised to make planning, navigating, tracking and sharing outdoor adventures easier and more intuitive. It's definitely worth checking out.

viewranger.com



5 Millet Absolute TRX 9mm

Millet is one of the biggest high quality rock and alpine brands on mainland Europe and until now has rarely been seen in the UK. They make some really great gear too, like the new Absolute TRX 9mm rope, features a Triaxiale core (three strand braided) and is triple-rated (single, half or twin) which produces a slim, tough, lightweight half rope for mountaineering and trad rock (the model shown is the hydrophobic or 'dry' treated version). With the relative slimness of modern lightweight half ropes like this one, it is a good idea to wear gloves when belaying. Look out for it.

millet.fr

9 Rab Continuum Jacket

Rab have been making great down gear since 1981. 2014 will be a milestone in their history as their entire down range will use a Nikwax based hydrophobic (water-resistant) down. In practice it means that melting snow that collects on or inside your jacket's hood doesn't render the down into a soggy lump and a sleeping bag can better resist damp and condensation. The model shown is a benchmark of this superb range.

£200

rab.co.uk

10 Edelrid Shark Crampons

As is often the case with Edelrid, these new crampons include a lot of new thinking and innovation. They are very adaptable and can be made to fit on a wide range of boots for use on a wide range of mountain activity from general mountaineering to Scottish grade V terrain. Check out James Thacker's site at jamesthackermountaineering.co.uk for a detailed review of development testing during winter 2013.

£140

edelrid.de