

UK EXCLUSIVE

LIGHTER, BRIGHTER, BETTER TERRA NOVA SUPERLITE SOLAR 2.2

Two things prevented the old Solar 2 becoming a favourite of mine:

access and weight. Yet, personal reservations aside, the original part-dome, part-tunnel Solar 2 was a popular tent.

Its transverse design was unusual – it opened along the side and you slept along the lines of the poles rather than across them, as you would in a tunnel. Two poles crossed at either end to form a stable wedge shape with steep inner walls and good headroom.

My issues centred partly on the fact that the tent had only one door, so the person on the inside had to crawl over their companion. I preferred it as a solo tent but it was a bit heavy for that.

Thankfully the Superlite Solar 2.2 solves both problems. Both sides have doors and porches and, at a touch over 2kg, it's light enough for one. Yet the inner is just as spacious as the original Solar 2's.

Terra Nova has created a lighter tent,

be thrown over, attached to the pole end and pegged out. Thankfully, there's no need to mess about with Velcro tabs under the flysheet. One person can pitch the Solar 2.2 in a few minutes.

The asymmetric design means that one side of the Solar 2.2 is lower than the other with a slightly smaller porch and less headroom. Both porches are roomy, however, with masses of space for gear storage, though it's easiest to cook in the larger one. If more room is needed for cooking the front of the inner can be unpegged and rolled back a little. Being able to open the whole side is great for ventilation and spacious views. Open both sides and there is a feeling of freedom and airiness that's rare in a tent.

The flysheet door zips are two-way and there are large flaps over the top of the doors, so you can leave the tops of the zips undone for ventilation in all but the worst weather. The inner tent has mesh and solid

It's not a high mountain winter tent – if it was Terra Nova wouldn't produce the Quasar – but it's certainly usable year-round. During the test period no more than light snow fell. I would guess that in heavy snow the flat roof would need clearing regularly. Torrential rain did fall and there was no leakage into the inner, just the odd drip through the zips. Condensation does occur when all the doors are closed, of course, but this was never a big problem and it didn't drip into the inner.

The Solar 2.2 comes with ultralight titanium skewer-type pegs which held well in stony ground. Wider angled pegs would be a good idea for soft ground.

The Solar 2.2 is an excellent tent that gives new life to an established design. Anyone looking for a two-person backpacking tent should seriously consider it – as well as those who find solo tents a little cramped.

Chris Townsend



bigger flysheet and extra doors by using the same ultralight fabrics, poles and pegs as seen on its Laser tents. These are proven to be durable and tough and I can see no reason why the Solar 2.2 shouldn't be long-lasting. The extra porch and door makes the Solar 2.2 a superb tent for two, with a weight per person little more than 1kg.

The Solar 2.2 is easy to pitch. The two poles are different lengths and different colours – as are the pole loops on the corners of the inner – and attach to the inner with clips. Once the inner is up, the flysheet can

doors, so you can have some airflow on hot, humid days when the midges are biting. There's plenty of room for two in the inner, especially as gear can be stored in the porches and each person has their own door.

Terra Nova designates the Solar 2.2 a four-season backpacking tent. The review tent was tested in late December and January and stood up well to the gales of that period. Six guylines anchor the tent well. The large flysheet does flap, and moves in strong gusts, but the inner stays fairly still and I never had any fear of the tent collapsing.

SPEC

£350

Design: two-pole transverse hybrid dome/tunnel with two porches

Flysheet: silicone nylon

Size: inner – 216 x 125 x 98cm (high point); porches –70 & 80cm deep, 105cm wide at narrowest point

Weight: 2.044kg

TRADER INFO

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