

£90 JACK WOLFSKIN GOSSAMER

TRAILRATING *****



It's good Essentially a large hooped bivy bag, it has many regular tent features and some of its own that make it stand out. Pitching is straightforward with two short poles attached using the secure ring and pin system, and there are lots of guy and peg points available to get it stable. Inside there's plenty of space for the biggest of sleeping mats, all your gear, and maybe even a skinny friend if you're an adventure racer. The outer and inner are attached at the front pole, so it pitches as one. But the outer skin can be rolled up completely, giving you a cool mesh cover to sleep under on hot summer nights. The groundsheet and flysheet are tough and very waterproof, which should make it reliable for extended trips into the wilds.

But The porch space is almost non-existent, so cooking is awkward unless you start unpeging the floor and rolling it back. Your wet gear has to come in beside you, which is

okay for a night, but on longer trips it can start to be a problem. Not being able to sit up can become annoying if you're weathering a storm.

Verdict Extra space and comfort for those who like to bivvy, but a bit restrictive for comfort-seekers compared to others here.

VITAL STATS

Design two-pole tunnel
Poles shock-corded alloy
Inner 75D polyester
Flysheet PU-coated 75D polyester, 4000mm hydrostatic head
Groundsheet Hydrolin 70D polyester, 5000mm hydrostatic head
Internal dimensions length 230cm; width 95cm; height 70cm
Packed size 65x17cm
Weight 1550g
Made in Vietnam
Stores in UK 50

£140 WILD COUNTRY SOLOLITE

TRAILRATING ****



It's good It pulls out of its stuffsack and rolls out on the ground, the poles clip into the outer quickly and easily, and you've got an instant shelter from the worst of weather. It's got a strong design and uses tough materials. Terra Nova is Wild Country's parent company, and you can see the quality genes have been passed down. The porch is very small, but can be rolled back for cooking out of the rain. The two-way door zip gives you venting options, there's a mesh vent at the foot and the inner door has a mesh panel that zips over to keep the heat in. It's a cosy tent, and suits use at this time of year when you want to feel that there's a barrier between you and the elements.

But It's small inside and gear storage can be a problem if you're got a large pack or wet gear, and I can just sit upright at the door. It's very heavy for the space it provides (but for this price it offers a good compromise).

Verdict An easy-to-use and tough tent for poor conditions. Its great price is due to the use of heavier fabrics, which should mean stability and durability are good.

VITAL STATS

Design ridge
Poles pre-assembled shock-corded alloy
Inner ripstop polyester
Flysheet ripstop polyester, 4500mm hydrostatic head
Groundsheet polyester, 5500mm hydrostatic head
Internal dimensions length 220cm; width 90cm; height 88cm
Packed size 65x17cm
Packed weight 1915g
Made in Far East
Stores in UK 20

£150 BLACKS OCTANE 1

TRAILRATING *****



It's good A great package for the price. The stuffsack has the instructions sewn in, and there's a spares pack with a pole repair sleeve, various fabric patches, seam sealer and a coil of spare guy cord. Many of the tents in the test have a similar set up, but none is so comprehensive. The tent itself is a single-pole design that pitches outer-first to keep your sleeping compartment dry. The pole is one-ended, which is great for solo pitching. There are plenty of pegging points, and the guy lines came already attached. Inside there are mesh pockets for keeping your bits and pieces to hand, and the porch is big enough for gear storage, cooking and still being able to get in and out. When pitched and tensioned, it's stable. The door has a zipped flap that gives you a mesh ventilation panel.

But Inside, it's very small (when I lay down my head went in the mesh pocket at the end!). For its internal dimensions the weight looks a

little high. Some of the tension adjustment webbing was put through the buckles the wrong way so it wouldn't tighten. Easily fixed, but it might mean a trip back to the shop. The outer door lacks double zips.

Verdict A great budget package if you're not six feet tall. Silly quality control issues with the webbing let it down, and more venting control would have been good.

VITAL STATS

Design single-pole dome
Poles shock-corded alloy
Inner breathable nylon ripstop
Flysheet nylon ripstop silicon-coated, 3000mm hydrostatic head
Groundsheet nylon Hypalon-coated, 10,000mm hydrostatic head
Internal dimensions length 210cm; width 100cm; height 90cm
Packed size 48x13cm
Packed weight 1665g
Made in China
Stores in UK 60