

Black Diamond Covert 32L/22L with AvaLung

Contributed by Jonah Cantor
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As I strapped into an early production Black Diamond AvaLung pack last December, I contemplated gizmo madness, a human factor documented in avalanche accidents. With the accordion mouthpiece hovering before my lips, was I safer or more prone to the big "A"; due to some misjudged sense of security in the gizmo?<

\$199.95/\$189.95

Anarchist 42L/32L with AvaLung \$269.95/\$259.95

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What is this gizmo? Well, for those of you who've been living in a cave since 1999, the Avalung is essentially a breathing tube designed to prolong the amount of time an avalanche victim can stay buried, by allowing fresh air to be drawn from the snowpack. Via one-way valves, exhaled CO₂ is vented away from where fresh air is taken in delaying asphyxiation. During simulated burials, I've watched BD testers chill for a couple hours before depleting O₂ in the snowpack.

But for all its utility the original AvaLung was yet another—some would say awkward—gizmo. But now it's just part of your backcountry pack.

"So why not wear a pack that can save your life?" asks Nathan Kuder, BD's soft goods manager. Based upon initial sales—"unprecedented for a winter pack"—that's a question many of us are responding to.

I found that the integration of pack and AvaLung never once left me questioning when to don the device or how to manage layering—two hassles with the vest and sling version. Simply put, the smaller panel-style Covert and top-loading Anarchist are competent carriers of everything I take into the backcountry, from quick excursions to overnight forays. It's always on, just like my beacon, and it's still up to me to travel safe and smart.

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