



# WILD SIDE

THE WILDERNESS SHOP NEWSLETTER

## Trip Review: **Mount St Gwinear Skiing,** *by Nick*



*Snow gums on one of the many clearings on the Baw Baw Plateau*

Mount St Gwinear is located on the Baw Baw Plateau in Gippsland, approximately 2.5 hours drive from Melbourne. Mount St Gwinear is part of the Baw Baw Plateau in Gippsland, which undulates between 1250m and 1560m. The plateau receives high rainfall and is the only place in Victoria I know of where Myrtle Beech rainforest merges into sub-alpine vegetation. To cover snow clearing costs, Parks Victoria charge a \$10.50 entry fee (this fee may be removed as of July 2010), with no trail fees. There is a nice country pub 30 minutes from St Gwinear, in Erica, for a drink or meal at the end of the day. This is probably my favourite day trip destination from Melbourne.

The place is stunning and makes for great cross-country skiing for beginners through to experienced groups who would like to snow camp. Mount St Gwinear does not offer the same amount of groomed trails as Lake Mountain, but rather a couple of trails leading to a mini-wilderness of snow plains. Alternatively you can ski to the Mt Baw Baw ski village and back, as either a very long day or book a night accommodation and return the next day. The dense vegetation of the plateau makes for sheltered skiing, and in my experience is just as amazing when the fog rolls in compared to a day of perfect winter sunshine. There are two or three places to view immense vistas across the ranges to Mount Buller and Mount Reynard.

First time skiers will find a short trip to

Jeep Track Flat enjoyable, with a nice downhill schush at the end of the day. Experienced skiers could aim for a challenging return trip to Mount Erica, requiring good tree-skiing skills!



*The Main Trail Is Groomed and Perfect For Beginners*

Mount St Gwinear is operated by Parks Victoria; they provide a day shelter with toilets, a toboggan slope and regular grooming of the main ski trail. There are no shops or ski hire at Mt St Gwinear, so it is a good idea to bring a small stove to make hot drinks. The Wilderness Shop offers ski hire starting at \$30 for a day and \$45 for a weekend. Let's hope 2010 is a good season!

## Welcome to Elke



Our latest staff member Elke has a background in not just bushwalking, but a varied combination of overseas travel and work with disadvantaged youth.

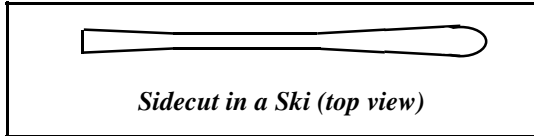
Hailing from north-of-the-border, she has ventured to walking destinations including the Blue Mountains, Hinchinbrook Island, Northern NSW, S.E. Queensland, and the Northern Territory. She has also rockclimbed in the Blueies.

Outdoor education work has involved guiding in the above areas, and working with disadvantaged youth in the remote Queensland towns of Mt Isa and Cloncurry. She has been involved with the same type of work in Thailand, including the rather different activity black water rafting. This is the rather outlandish practice of rafting through caves!

Elke has a broad range of overseas travel destinations under her belt. She has travelled through Indonesia and lived in Jakarta. Walking destinations in New Zealand include the Able Tasman, Mt Cook areas and the Lake Waikaremoana circuit. Over to the Americas, where Elke has walked and skied in the U.S. and travelled through Costa Rica.

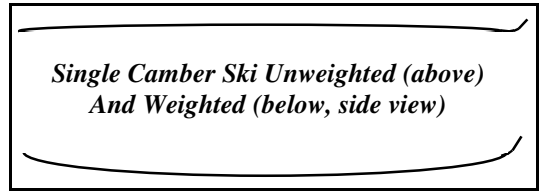
In her spare time Elke has done some flat water kayaking! Clearly she has a wealth of information to pass onto you!

Simply by edging a ski (achieved by rolling your ankles) and putting pressure with your foot on the skis' centre, the ski forms a gentle arc and hence turns. However there are different ski designs that allow a ski to turn well, or may compromise the skis turning ability in order for it to glide well.

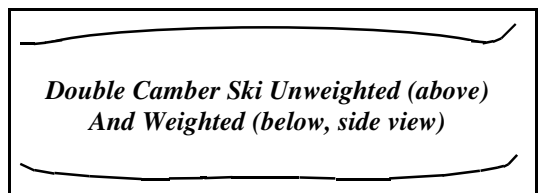


Touring skis have sidecut, which is one factor that determines how well a ski turns. Sidecut is the difference in width between the ski tip, centre and tail. For example the *Fischer Outtabounds* is 88mm wide at the tip, 68mm in the centre and 78mm at the tail, giving it 20mm of sidecut (88 minus 68 equals 20). This moderate sidecut allows the *Outtabounds* to form a moderate arc when edging, therefore turning better than the *Karhu Solstice XT*, that has 10mm sidecut, and thus is aimed at people wishing to maximise day touring qualities. Compare this to the *10TH Mountain*, with a massive 31mm sidecut. While offering excellent turning capabilities, this ski will be less suitable for straight-line touring, wanting to turn at every opportunity!

Single camber skis turn best, but as the diagram shows, will allow the pattern base of touring skis to drag in the snow, reducing glide, and slow you down. Traditional double camber



touring skis offered fantastic glide, but were very difficult to turn. As a generalisation, the modern pattern-based cross country ski is somewhere in-between. A ski designed for touring will be close to double camber; this will maximise glide, and offer some basic turning control. One designed for turning will be close to single camber; just a touch of camber to reduce pattern drag to some degree but primarily designed for turning. Many skiers prefer to take the middle line selecting a ski with camber somewhere in-between; good glide and good turns!



Confused? Hopefully not! The Wilderness Shop staff are always ready to help you select the best ski to suit each and every skier. In addition, you are now better informed to help with your purchase this winter, with a greater understanding of how your skis turn!

## Product Review: OR Furio and Enigma,

by Anthony



OR Furio Jacket

*Outdoor Research* have produced clothing items, such as the *Mithril* jacket or the *Option* top, which told us that our highly technical outdoor clothing can actually look as cutting edge as any current fashion wear. This is without sacrificing performance, and without the overcharging that fashion garments are often subject to. The *Furio* continues of this trend.

The *Furio* and womens *Enigma* jackets, and *Furio* pants are designed for people who want to be active and want gear that performs brilliantly and lasts well.

OK, I admit it, I actually picked up this jacket at first because it looks cool. This gear is cut for you to move, and look good while you do it.

On the technical side, the *Furio*, and its near identical female counterpart, the *Enigma*, are fully seam taped extremely breathable 70D *Gore-Tex® Paclite®* two layer jackets. Reinforced shoulders of three layer 70D *Gore-Tex® Pro Shell®* on wear zones such as shoulders and hips. *OR* has built an extremely resilient jacket for its weight: 550 grams medium size.

Even better for those of us prone to overheating under exertion, the *Furio* and *Enigma* come with a massive pair of ventilation zips running from the hemline all the way up into your pits. The zip is tough, water resistant and opens from either end, allowing for a huge range of venting options.

They come with a pair of zippered front pockets and a pair of internal napoleon style pockets including one with a headphone port for your phone or ipod. The peaked hood is comfortable and fully adjustable even whilst wearing a helmet, making this jacket a great choice for climbers or anyone with headgear.



Furio Overpants

Also available are the matching *Furio* overpants. Ideal for skiing, they feature full length zips to make putting them on and taking them off less of a chore, and a set of removable snow gaiters to stop snow from ruining your day by edging up your legs and into your boots.

With a similar build of *Gore-Tex® 70D Paclite®* and *70D Pro Shell®*, you can be sure that they will wear well, but just to be sure, *OR* has added an extra reinforcing patch onto the major wear zone at the inside ankle.

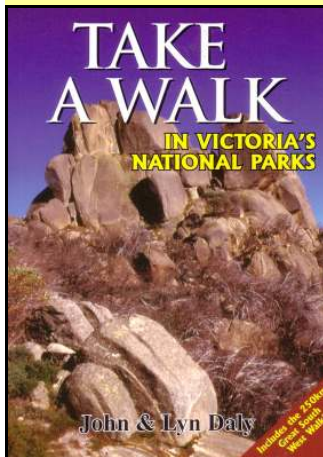
Practical and comfortable, *OR* has produced a great piece of kit with the *Furio* and *Enigma*. We recommend this combination as possibly the best available.

*Enigma Jacket* RRP \$499, *Furio Jacket* \$529, *Furio Pants* \$495

## Book Review:

# Take A Walk Series,

by Mac



The *Take A Walk* series of bushwalking books covers a wide selection of walks in Australia's National Parks. The walks vary from simple thirty minute walks close to the car park to long multi-day affairs in more remote areas.

The large area covered by each book allows the reader to flick through and discover new areas to walk which may have been overlooked for years.

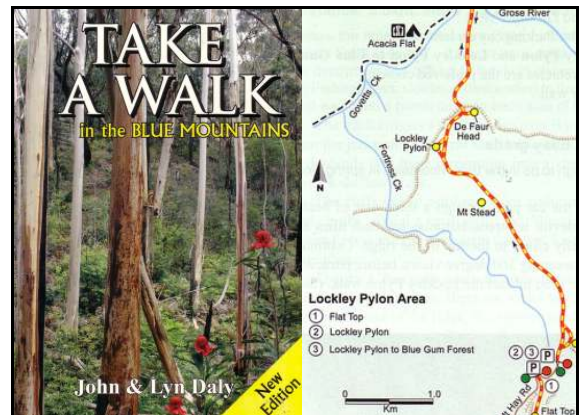
Each book is laid out by region and then by National Park. There is a brief history of the park and points of interest in the area. Access notes are detailed and show distances between landmarks and include names of roads and whether tracks are 4WD only.

The walks themselves have a basic map and a set of detailed track notes although a more detailed topographic map is required for navigation. At the beginning of the description each walk has the total distance recorded and an estimation of the total time needed to complete the walk. A grade is also given here of easy, moderate or hard. Track notes include much detail including things like the type and condition of the track, availability of water, the vegetation to be expected, things of interest along the way with any historical significance they might have and most importantly a description of the route.

At the end of the section map references are listed as well as facilities in the area including campsites, picnic areas, toilets and phone numbers for relevant national parks offices.

Titles in this series include *Victoria's*

*National Parks, New South Wales National Parks, Northern Territory's National Parks, South-East Queensland, Blue Mountains, Kosciuszko National Park, Sydney to Port Macquarie and Port Macquarie to Brisbane.*



The broad range of destinations within each title sets this series apart. For example, *Take A Walk in Victoria's National Parks* covers a gentle afternoon stroll in the Dandenongs or Mornington Peninsula National Parks as well as many other day walking destinations close to home. In addition to this there are also many more strenuous multi day walks to destinations such as the Victorian Alps or Grampians National Park and even a fourteen day adventure in the Lower Glenelg National Park doing the Great South West Walk.

### WIN A BOOK !!!

Be the first into *The Wilderness Shop* with your copy of *WildSide*, and you win one of the *Take A Walk* books that we stock!

## Tips:

# Keeping Your Gear Dry,

by Elke

I've spent years guiding in some of Australia's highest rainfall areas. This meant week-in week-out packing for days in the rain and learning from being caught out with a sodden sleeping bag, clothes or matches. When I got sick of packing my gear in plastic shopping bags that ripped and leaked, I upgraded to some proper outdoor waterproofing equipment. Everyone has their preferred method and tricks for keeping things dry, but mostly it depends on selecting the right gear for what you are doing.

not to let them rub on sharp items in your pack as they will wear through. You can also go for the pack cover. Some packs, including many from *Lowe Alpine* and *Deuter*, come with one built in. Pack covers keep your gear dry in most weather but obviously won't help if your pack gets submerged in water. Get a heavy duty one for hiking through dense bush.

If canoeing or cycling is your passion, *Ortleib* makes great durable waterproof bags and panniers. These are heavier and very durable.



Pack Cover

Fold-top Dry Bags

ORTLEIB WATERPROOF Rack Pack

If you are using a backpack one option is to use a pack liner. *Sea to Summit* and *Exped* make the fold-top style in 30 to 80 litre sizes. Some people prefer this because it is only one bag to open which goes inside your pack, and they are light, waterproof and colourful. I tend to have several smaller drybags with different colours for sleeping gear, first aid kit, clothes and a tiny 1 litre bag for all the odd items; matches, phone, lighter, paper etc. These bags will survive immersion in rivers and days of rain on the backpack. However you have to take some care

They will last for ages and definitely keep your gear dry. Some have a see-through panel which saves you hauling out your jocks and sox and sweatshirts just to find your camera at the bottom. Anthony swears by the *Ortleib RackPack* for the back of the motorbike as they are dustproof, waterproof and bombproof. They also make nifty little pouches for cameras, phones and maps.

Thanks to all these gadgets it's a lot easier to keep things dry without adding much weight to your pack, so get out there regardless of the weather and enjoy our beautiful wild country.