

WIRED

WIRED MAGAZINE: 16.09

Tech Biz · Media 515th Anniversary: Peak Performance
From New Climbing TechBy Damon Tabor 08.18.08

Photo: Todd Tankersley

Start

Previous: [Ace Quantum Mechanics—the Reality TV Way!](#)Next: [15th Anniversary: O. J. Simpson and Wired's Photoshop Experiment](#)15 Years of *Wired*: A Look Back*Wired* Issue 8.09: High Trek

The last time *Wired* reviewed equipment designed to survive the highest mountain in the world (May 2000), climbers were schlepping 9-pound, \$11,000 sat phones on the trek to Everest's 29,000 feet. Climbing tech these days is ultralight, cheaper, and practically Everest-proof. Any season now, mountaineers will be Twittering from the summit ("OMG my toz R bLk!"). Here's some of the latest gear to leave us breathless.

1) Zeal Optics SPP Goggles

Besides 100-mph winds, Everest is legendary for causing snow blindness. In 2003, Zeal Optics was one of the first to offer photochromatic polarized lenses in goggles. The new SPP adds a spherical lens design for better peripheral vision. The combo equals near-perfect acuity in all conditions, preventing scorched corneas and errant steps on cliff edges. **\$200**

2) Spot Messenger

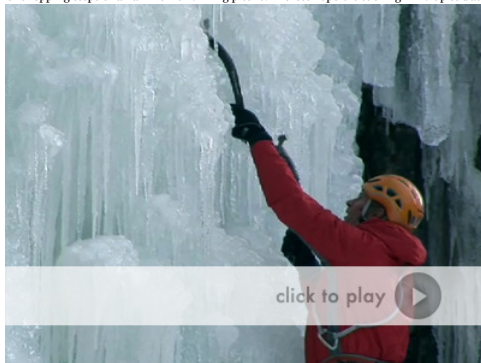
At the touch of a button, the Spot Messenger grabs coordinates from GPS satellites and sends them to your Spot Web site so Mom can track you on Google Maps. Hanging from an ice wall? Hit the 911 button to ping the International Emergency Response Center. (But try to avoid drama above 21,000 feet, where Spot's accuracy can stray.) **\$170**

3) Roper SwitchBack UltraMobile PC

Back in 2000, even mountain-ready laptops weren't up for Everest: "You can actually hear the hard drives screaming," one documentarian said. Standard drive heads ride on a cushion of air, which thins out as you climb. The rugged SwitchBack is available with a solid-state drive that works up to the brain-scrambling height of 20,000 feet. **\$6,000**

4) Black Diamond Cobra Ice Tool

The carbon-fiber Cobra features a sawtooth pick on the business end (for ice penetration) and a modular head design that lets climbers attach an adze for chopping steps or a hammer for driving pitons. Everest hopefuls sucking wind up to base camp will barely notice its 600 grams. **\$300**



click to play

Full Page

Comments

1. [Artist Builds Temple of Science](#)
2. [SpaceX Did It -- Falcon 1 Made it to Space](#)
3. [Meet the Stars of *LittleBigPlanet*: Sackboy and Sackgirl](#)
4. [Retired Drugs: Failed Blockbusters, Homicidal Tampering, Fatal Oversights](#)
5. [Tech Stocks Will Keep Tanking; Buy 'Em Cheap ... Except Apple](#)
6. [Charles Ferguson: Beware of New, Easy-to-Make Nukes](#)
7. [Space Visionaries Prove Naysayers Wrong—Again](#)
8. [Apple, Tech Stocks Get Creamed Amid Massive Selloff](#)
9. [Leaked Sketches Reveal Lamborghini's 'New World'](#)
10. [Private Rockets Could Boost Military, Too](#)

Subscribe to WIRED magazine

Subscribe now for **FREE GIFT****Climbing School**"Best Teachers in the Business" Outside Magazine - www.alpineascents.com**Virtualization**Choose Parallels Virtuozzo and get 3x the consolidation ratio! - www.parallels.com**Guided Ice Climbing**Instruction and private guiding in Ouray, Silverton, and Durango, CO. - www.swaguides.com**Can't Nap?**NAP26 teaches you how to nap again, just like when you were a kid. - www.nap26.com

Ads by Google

Subscription: [Subscribe](#) | [Give a Gift](#) | [Renew](#) | [International](#) | [Questions](#) | [Change Address](#)

Quick Links: [Contact Us](#) | [Login/Register](#) | [Newsletter](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [Tech Jobs](#) | [Wired Mobile](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Site Map](#)



submit



Digg submit

Yahoo! Buzz 5U

[Stumble](#)
[ShareThis](#)

See Also:

[Reality TV: Climbing Mt. Everest](#)
[Mountain Bike Hits 130.7 MPH ... on Snow](#)
[Upload Every Mountain](#)
Search Wired

Top Stories ·

Related Topics:

Comments (1)

Want to start a new thread or reply to a post?

[Login/Register](#) and start talking!


[See All Comments](#)

Posted by: [armouredbear](#) 29 days ago 1 Point

why would you take an axe like the cobra to everest? it's really for vertical ice - i mean it can certainly be used as a walking tool, but wouldn't the venom or the raven be better for everest (if you have to buy black diamond)?

[Permalink](#)

[See All Comments](#)

[Corrections](#) | [Sitemap](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Wired Staff](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Press Center](#) | [Subscription Services](#) | [Newsletter](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) 



web sites:

[Webmonkey.com](#) | [Reddit.com](#) | [ArsTechnica.com](#) | [Epicurious.com](#) | [NutritionData.com](#) | [Concierge.com](#) | [HotelChatter.com](#) | [Jaunted.com](#) | [Style.com](#) | [Men.Style.com](#) | [Flip.com](#)

[Login/Registration](#)

© 2008 CondéNet, Inc. All rights reserved.
Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)