

boot camp

"When you see someone putting on their Big Boots, you can be pretty sure that an adventure is going to happen."
- Winnie the Pooh

Shopping for the right pair of hiking boots can be an uphill battle. Outdoor looks at a snapshot of the market to let your fingers do the walking...

1. CHOOSE SHOETYPE

APPROACH/LOW-ANKLE WALKING SHOES

Great for day walks and light overnight hikes on smooth easy trails, this type of shoe is lighter and more versatile than a boot but offers less ankle support. Approach shoes are built on a last similar to that of a rock climbing shoe; they are stiff underfoot to allow scrambling up and around boulders. Timberland Hypertrail Low pictured.



MID-WEIGHT BOOTS - THIS ISSUE

Mid-weight boots suit the needs of most walkers, and as such this category offers the largest range of brands and models to choose from at competitive prices. These include synthetic day hikers, through to hybrid leather-synthetic boots suitable for single and multi-day load carrying hikes. Differing mid-sole stiffness and upper materials distinguish the various offerings. Snowgum Cooper pictured.



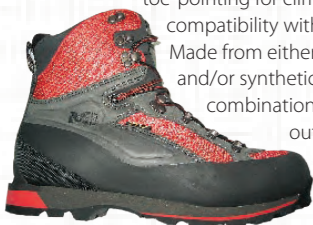
HEAVY HIKING BOOTS - THIS ISSUE

Designed for extended multi-day trips, super technical trails and for carrying heavy loads, these boots offer the highest level of foot protection and ankle support. They feature stiffer, more supportive mid-soles, thicker outsoles and thicker, more durable uppers. Such boots are commonly made with full grain leather. Scarpa Trek Pro pictured.



MOUNTAINEERING BOOTS

Designed for alpine climbing, glacier crossing and aggressive backcountry travel, these boots have very little flex along their length, provide complete underfoot support, and allow easy toe-pointing for climbing and compatibility with crampons. Made from either full-grain leather and/or synthetics or a combination of a stiff plastic outer shell and an insulated liner. Millet Super Trek GTX shown.



HOW TO BUY THE RIGHT hiking boots



Tongue

The tongue provides comfort and padding to the top of the foot, gusseted tongues prevent water and debris from entering the boot, asymmetric tongues can provide additional comfort and prevent the tongue from sliding to one side.

Lining

Such as Gore-Tex and eVent provide waterproofing and breathability. A liner often covers all the stitching and seams inside a boot minimising the uncomfortable rubbing that can cause blisters.

Midsole

A midsole is the backbone of a boot; it provides the stiffness and support that your feet need in order to walk long distances without fatigue or injury. Flexible midsoles are easier to walk on and feel more comfortable because the boot flexes completely underfoot. But throw a 15kg pack on and try to walk 15km and you'll be begging to stop. Mid-to-heavy weight boots have stiffer, more rigid midsoles and mountaineering boots have little if any flex at all.

Outsole

As the part of the boot in direct contact with the ground, the outsole's primary purpose is to provide traction, but it must also be stable and durable. Various lug patterns are available. Look for well spaced, deep lugs that allow self-cleaning of dirt and good braking and acceleration. Most high-end walking footwear uses Vibram rubber outsoles, though others such as Skywalk and brand specific rubber technology such as Colombia's Omnitech also work well.

Upper

The material used to construct a boot's upper will greatly affect its performance.

- **Full-grain leather:** Unlike other forms of leather it retains the epidermis/outer layer of the hide which contains dense tight fibres that are water-resistant, breathable and highly durable.
- **Suede:** The part of the hide that remains when the top-grain or outer layer of the hide is removed. Suede is then sanded to give it a fuzzy texture. Used for its flexibility, breathability and affordability.

- **Nubuck:** A full grain leather whose outer surface has a finely sanded texture.
- **Synthetic Leather:** Synthetic fibres bonded and finished with a leather-like finish for added durability. Less breathable and waterproof than leather, but much more affordable.
- **Fabric:** Various form of fabrics such as Cordura are used in conjunction with leather and synthetics to achieve a balance between support, lightness and breathability. They are often combined with a waterproof membrane such as Gore-Tex.

Laces

Laces often begin running through holes or eyelets in the boot's upper and then as they criss-cross towards the ankle are wrapped around lace hooks which provide customisable lacing options.

Water Defence

Full-grain leather boots are naturally waterproof but must be conditioned regularly in order to maintain optimal performance. Boots with waterproof linings such as Gore-Tex or eVent require little in the way of maintenance to remain waterproof, though they can benefit from a regular treatment with a cleaning and waterproofing agent.

Insole

A good insole provides three things: support, cushioning and balance. Often the standard insole provided in a boot provides little of either of these. If you're planning to spend a lot of time on your feet it may be worth investing into a pair of customised insoles.

2. CONSIDER YOUR TERRAIN AND CONDITIONS

An important consideration when selecting a pair of boots is the type of terrain and climatic conditions you anticipate wearing them in.

Climate:

There is almost no limit to the range of conditions you could possibly encounter so the boots you buy should suit conditions that you are most frequently going to be visiting. For hot and wet tropical environments, such as Kokoda Trail, you should look for a waterproof and very breathable boot. For cold and wet conditions, such as Tasmania, you will need a waterproof and possibly insulated boot to keep you warm and dry. For hot and dry conditions, such as the Larapinta Trail, you'll want a boot with maximum breathability.

Terrain:

If most of the walking you are doing is on well maintained trails for up to a few days you could manage very well with a low-ankle walking shoe as there is far less chance of slipping, rolling your ankle and possibly injuring yourself. If you are getting off-trail and frequenting steep technical climbs and rocky descents you will benefit from the added support and stability of a high-ankle boot. Many people find that their needs are somewhere in the middle, so opting for a mid-weight boot is a good choice.

3. LET YOUR FINGERS DO THE WALKING

Outdoor made an executive decision to give our test team a blister-free issue and compiled a shopping list instead. We took a look at one boot from 18 of the best brands to give shoppers a snapshot of the market. Keep in mind that it is NOT a comparative list, and that each boot comes from a brand stable bursting with shoes to meet every budget and foot.

**All weights approx for pair mens size US8/EU41.*



ASOLO
POWER MATIC 400 GV
\$349

Designed to be an all-terrain vehicle, the Power Matic is made for serious walking with or without a heavy pack. A composite fabric lightweight boot, the toe box and sole are crafted in such a way that they make you want to walk forward with a rolling action. The sole is comprised of three different PU densities that are co-injected and moulded together to provide a high-density front portion which secures and maximises stability, while the medium density heel reduces shock and fatigue during take off and landing.

vital stats

- **Upper:** 1.6mm – 1.8mm suede plus cordura
- **Midsole:** High density PU
- **Water Defence:** Gore-Tex
- **Sizes:** Mens and womens UK 6-13.5
- **Made In:** Europe
- **Weight*:** 1500g

About the brand, from the brand...

Since its inception in 1975, Asolo has gained worldwide renown for innovations in midsole and outsole design and produces technical mountain shoes with products dedicated to alpinism, hiking and trekking. In the 1980s it won the "Golden Compass" award from the Industrial Design Association, and has since claimed "The Best Shoe Of The Year" in an American outdoor magazine. 02 9476 0672, www.asolo.com



CHACO
CANYONLAND MID
\$249

The waterproof and breathable Canyonland Mid features a removable BioCentric footbed and fit system. A high-friction rubber outsole and stiff nylon shank provide excellent stability on a variety of surfaces, and performance-grade 1.8mm water-resistant nubuck leather and eVent waterproof technology promises to keep your feet comfortable and dry in any activity. As a result, Chaco shoes have been awarded the Seal of Acceptance by the AMPA (American Podiatric Medical Association).

vital stats

- **Upper:** 1.8mm nubuck leather
- **Midsole:** EVA and nylon shank
- **Water Defence:** eVent
- **Sizes:** Men US 7-12,13,14,15, women 5-11,12
- **Made In:** China
- **Weight*:** 1138g

About the brand, from the brand...

Fit. Function. Comfort. Quality. Since 1989, our mission has been to create best-in-class footwear for the adventure driven. Everything we make passes a litmus test. We want to inspire a lifelong commitment from those who put our gear on their feet. 02 99669800, www.spelean.com.au, www.chacousa.com



COLUMBIA SPORTSWEAR
OCANTO PEAK
\$219.95

With a moulded nylon shank for torsion rigidity and support, the Ocanto Peak is built to be waterproof, breathable and supportive. Internal lining and footbed are constructed with anti-microbial treated fabric. Full-length polypropylene lasting board provides support and protection in the sole, and non-marking Omni-Grip rubber compound provides traction with a rugged tread pattern. Other noteworthy features include metal D-rings and hooks on upper eye-stays, and a gusseted tongue.

vital stats

- **Upper:** Suede-mesh with synthetic support frame
- **Midsole:** Compression molded EVA
- **Water Defence:** Omni-Tech
- **Sizes:** Men US 7-15, women 6-11
- **Made In:** Vietnam
- **Weight*:** 1320g

About the brand, from the brand...

Established in 1938 in Portland, Oregon, Columbia Sportswear Company has grown to be a global leader in the outdoor industry, and now distributes to over 10 600 retailers in 42 countries around the world. Columbia's extensive product line includes a wide variety of outerwear, sportswear, footwear, fishing apparel, skiwear, and adventure luggage. 1800 030 895, www.columbia.com.au



ECCO
XPLORER
\$399.95

ECCO designers saw the potential in Yak leather due to its compacted woven fibres, making it extremely strong and durable and have incorporated it into the Xplorer. At the heart of this boot is a direct-injected super light PU midsole that seamlessly bonds the upper and the outsole. The shoe uses internal wedge construction to stabilize every step, no matter what surface you are climbing, hiking or trekking on. The Xplorer is designed for everyone from core hikers to weekend walkers.

vital stats

- **Upper:** Yak leather
- **Midsole:** Injected PU
- **Water Defence:** Gore-Tex
- **Sizes:** Men EU 40-47, women 36-42 (\$339.95)
- **Made In:** Thailand, Slovakia or China
- **Weight*:** 832g

About the brand, from the brand...

Founded in Denmark more than 40 years ago by the same Toosbuy family that owns it today, ECCO is the first major shoe company to use Yak leather. The core of the Xplorer boot was engineered for the Danish Sirius 2000 expedition team, which clocked 3500 kilometres across Greenland with Danish Crown Prince Frederik as one of its pioneering members. www.ecco.com



GARMONT
FLASH III GTX
\$249

Designed for all-weather day hikes and light multi-day hikes, the Flash III features a polyurethane midsole, which is a great shock absorber and very durable. Garmont's Anatomically Directed Design slightly alters traditional shoe construction in an effort to more accurately match true foot and ankle structure. Asymmetrical lacing, lateral tongue posting, enlarged first metatarsal toe-box, and differential malleolar pads all combine to enhance the wearer's experience.

vital stats

- **Upper:** 1.8mm suede and synthetic
- **Midsole:** Polyurethane
- **Water Defence:** Gore-Tex XCR
- **Sizes:** Men UK 7-13, women UK 5-9
- **Made In:** China
- **Weight*:** 1130g

About the brand, from the brand...

Garmont is located in Montebelluna, Italy, at the foot of the mountains. With great experience and resources – over 140 years of unbroken lineage of five generations of boot makers – Garmont is a leading footwear brand in the most demanding niches of the outdoor worldwide market. 1300 174 876, www.garmont.com.au



HELLY HANSEN
MARKA
\$349

All-terrain mountain-hiking boot designed to spend weeks on the summit and keep you dry with Helly Tech XP waterproofing. Heel stabiliser and protection plates for heavyweight hiking are built to protect every step of your journey. The Helly Wear sole is carbon rubber for longevity and non-slip and Helly Grip lugs offer great grip. Other noteworthy features include reflectivity markings on the shoes so you can see them in the dark...

vital stats

- **Upper:** Helly Tech XP
- **Midsole:** C-Zone cushioning
- **Water Defence:** Helly Tech XP
- **Sizes:** Men US 6.5-12, 13
- **Made In:** Vietnam
- **Weight*:** 1020g

About the brand, from the brand...

Since 1877 Helly Hansen have been making action utility wear for survival, work and sport. Scandinavian designed and tested in the most extreme conditions on earth – so athletes can push the limits and go further. (03) 9338 5326, www.hellyhansen.com

KRISTIE BROWN, Outdoor tester



Used For: Seven years.
Bought: Chamonix, France, 2001 for approximately 120 Euros.
My Feet: Have been described as witch's feet due to their bony appearance. The podiatrist in the store had the whole shop laughing at them!
Breaking-In: None to mention. This is why I love them so.
The Day The Boots Punished Me: On the Tour of Mont Blanc during a two-hour rocky descent beside the Glacier du Trient.

ASOLO FUSION 95 GTX

The Day I Punished The Boots: Wineglass Bay, Tasmania; a long wet day with an extra six months of pregnancy weight bearing down on them.
Terrain Travelled: France, Nepal, Australia.
Why I Love Them: The customised 'superfeet' foot beds make them sooo comfy.
Why I Will Replace Them: No way... these old faithfuls will 'walk the walk' for many days to come.

JODIE HEWETT, Outdoor's First Lady

Used For: Six years.
Bought: Manly, 2002 for a bargain sale price of \$80.
My foot is: Small
Breaking-In: They were a late purchase (as my old boots worn out) before an endurance event, so I walked home to Dee Why fresh off the showroom floor... not enjoyable.
The Day The Boots Punished Me: The Oxfam Trailwalker, a week after purchase. 100km – blisters galore.

MERRELL EXPLORERS



The Day I Punished The Boots: 16 days of self-guided walking in the Ladakh and Zaskar ranges; wild, rocky, dusty and long days... punishing terrain for boots.
Terrain Travelled: India, Indonesia, South America, New Zealand and countless romps in the Aussie scrub.
Why I Love Them: These shoes have done the hard yards, after a wobbly start (home from the store) they are so comfy I dread replacing them.



KAYLAND
GLOBO
\$399.90

Advanced grip on wet, slippery terrain and the new technical solutions offered improve shock-absorption around the heel, ankle anchoring and rolling motion of the base, ensuring a very natural walking motion and protection through the entire range of movement. The Globo is a unisex top-of-the-range boot for the serious hiker who wants quality and product they can depend on for all conditions. It is waterproof, light and rigid with a Vibram sole.



KEEN
TARGHEE II MID
\$280

Revamped with eVENT waterproof barrier to keep your feet dry and even more comfortable, the Targhee II has an aggressive outsole with 4mm lugs to bite into the terrain, providing excellent traction. The ESS shank provides stability for a secure ride. The mid cut height increases ankle support. Features include a removable footbed and toe bumper. Secure-fit lace capture system with sturdy nylon webbing eyelets and heel wrap help lock feet to footbeds for increased support.



LA SPORTIVA
TYPHOON
\$379

A beautifully crafted all-leather waterproof technical backpacking and hiking boot for moderate to heavier loads, which is also available in nubuck (pictured). Its balanced design is the result of a combination of traditional lines with a touch of innovation. Ideal for year round excursions, its lace system uses a lace-lock-up for maximum tension. Rubber reinforcements at toe and heel give more protection and safety. The Vibram sole uses the Impact Brake System to absorb impact, helping during traction and braking.



LAFUMA
RANDO 4 GTX
\$289

The Rando is a waterproof synthetic/leather composite boot designed for both day hikes and multi-day hikes. A Climactive lining membrane offers breathability without sacrificing water defence. Front and rear synthetic stone guards also work to defend your feet on harsh trails. With foam-padded, gusseted tongue and removable PES/EVA footbed, comfort and adjustment are easy. Lafuma Fixwalk rubber and EVA shock-absorbent heel, midsole and forefoot combine to offer maximum shock-absorption.



MERRELL
PULSE II WATERPROOF
\$229

A serious hiking boot for rugged, rocky trails or no trails at all, this mid-height hiker is designed for support and waterproof protection. Compression-moulded EVA footframe and nylon injection-molded arch shank combine to provide stability and fit, which coupled with a plush inner liner and generous toe-box promises comfort straight from the box. With a rubber toe bumper, Vibram sole and five-millimetre sole lug depth, the Pulse II is a shoe to tackle the toughest terrain.



MILLET
THANGA GTX
\$329

From a brand that originated in the early pioneering days of high altitude mountaineering, Millet has stretched its legs into footwear for general non-glaciated hiking with boots such as the Thanga. Fully waterproof, this composite boot is a lightweight option for single to multiday use. Deep lugs and Vibram outsole make it great for tough conditions, and add durability.

vital stats

- **Upper:** Nubuck leather
- **Midsole:** Kayland PU
- **Water Defence:** eVent
- **Sizes:** UK 7-13
- **Made In:** Romania
- **Weight*:** NA

vital stats

- **Upper:** Leather
- **Midsole:** EVA
- **Water Defence:** eVent
- **Sizes:** Men US 7-15, womens available
- **Made In:** NA
- **Weight*:** 964g

vital stats

- **Upper:** 1.8mm full grain leather (or nubuck leather)
- **Midsole:** Trailon with half polypropylene shank
- **Water Defence:** Gore-Tex
- **Sizes:** Unisex EU 38-47.5
- **Made In:** Asia
- **Weight*:** 1200g

vital stats

- **Upper:** 1.6/1.8mm leather and textile
- **Midsole:** EVA
- **Water Defence:** Gore-Tex MSR
- **Sizes:** Men 8-12, women 5-8
- **Made In:** Vietnam
- **Weight*:** 1228g

vital stats

- **Upper:** Nubuck leather
- **Midsole:** Air cushion midsole
- **Water Defence:** Waterproof construction
- **Sizes:** Men 7-15, women 5, 6-11
- **Made In:** China
- **Weight*:** 1200g

vital stats

- **Upper:** 1.8/2mm leather and textile
- **Midsole:** Millet Phyton
- **Water Defence:** Gore-Tex
- **Sizes:** US 7 - 12
- **Made In:** China
- **Weight*:** 1500g

About the brand, from the brand...
Testing and development for Italian manufacturer Kayland takes place in the mountains around Chamonix, in the heart of the French Alps, where mountain guides and rescue team members provide valuable feedback for footwear development. The emphasis throughout the Kayland range is geared strongly towards "minimum weight, maximum function." 1800 333 484, www.kathmandu.com.au

About the brand, from the brand...
Established in 2003, Keen has fast become a market leader across multiple footwear categories due to their shoes being light in weight and offering superior comfort whilst maintaining a high level of durability - KEEN is about caring for the environment and engaging with causes that make a difference. Create, Play and Care. It's a way of life. We call it Hybridlife. www.keenfootwear.com.au

About the brand, from the brand...
In 1928, Narciso Delladio hand-crafted wooden clogs and leather boots for lumber-jacks and farmers of the Fassa and Fiemme valleys in Italy, and La Sportiva was born. In their 80-year existence La Sportiva have been at the forefront of technical footwear and are a widely recognised leader in the climbing sector. (02) 9476 0672, www.lasportiva.com

About the brand, from the brand...
Originating in 1930, French brand Lafuma makes a range of lightweight, strong products, particularly well suited to walking up to medium mountain level. With the notion of ventilation and lightness built in, these products are both high-performance and comfortable, the ideal accompaniment for nature enthusiasts. (02) 9283 6400, www.peakfifteen.com.au

About the brand, from the brand...
Coming from the Green Mountains of Vermont USA, Merrell believes in continuously expanding the outdoor journey of discovery and freedom. Being outside brings us adventure and exhilaration, as well as self-knowledge between people and cultures, uniting those who enjoy exploring and seeking out new experiences. (02) 9577 1330, www.merrell.com

About the brand, from the brand...
Millet listens to first hand experience. Good design flows from attentive listening to: athletes, disciples, practitioners, confidants, the virtual confessors of web users and lastly, the business auditors of a fast changing market! The exercise enables Millet to provide plentiful solutions to the most difficult outdoor challenges. (02) 9283 6400, www.peakfifteen.com.au

RAY MACKIN, Program Coordinator/Trainer, Outdoor Education Group



Used For: Two years
Bought: Bushcraft, Wollongong, on sale for \$25! Seriously!
My Feet: Thin, with a good arch, five toes... The boot is actually a woman's shoe, the largest size they had left and they fit fine.
The Day The Boots Punished Me: This is the second pair I've had in this style (the first was a male boot, honest!), and both pairs broke the seam at the instep where my big toe joins my foot.
The Day I Punished The Boots: These boots get a trashing and then go straight to the bar afterwards! They don't get any

LA SPORTIVA SUEDE BOOT WITH GORE TEX

attention or affection and are only cleaned when it rains or when I walk them through something that's flowing.
Terrain Travelled: Working as an outdoor instructor the boots have been all over - they know where to go better than I do.
Why I Love Them: Really comfortable, keep my feet really dry.
Why I Replaced Them: The last pair was comfy right to the end, I even had the stitching fixed by a boot repairer to give them another run. So when I saw a new pair for \$25, I couldn't go past them.

ANDREW LOCK, Mountaineer

Used For: 2005 to now.
Bought: Kathmandu, 2005 for US\$500
Breaking-In: A matter of "put them on, start climbing".
The Day The Boots Punished Me: On Annapurna in 2007. It was very steep and the boots are pretty soft, so they nearly came off when I was trying to front point (using crampons) up an overhanging ice cliff.
The Day I Punished The Boots: The same day. They aren't really made for technical climbing.

Terrain Travelled: Cho Oyu, Kanchenjunga and Annapurna.
Why I Love Them: I still have my toes! I descended from Kanchenjunga's summit in a terrible blizzard at night and very dehydrated - perfect conditions for frostbite.
Why I Will Replace Them: They are only built for one or two expeditions and I've used them on five, so they are getting tired, but they'll keep on for a while yet. In fact I only bought this pair because a friend dropped one boot of my previous pair down a crevasse on Mt Everest in 2004!

MILLET EVEREST GTX





NORTH FACE
PINYON XCR MID
\$269.95

The Pinyon XCR Mid is a multipurpose, waterproof, breathable boot designed for fast-paced outdoor activities. Waterproof nubuck leather upper with waterproof synthetic nubuck underlays, seams are all sealed for maximum weather protection. An ergonomically designed, multi-density footbed with antimicrobial covering cups the foot and minimises stink. A moulded rubber external heel counter and heel air pods ensure that your often forgotten heel is well loved.

vital stats

- **Upper:** 1.6-1.8mm nubuck leather
- **Midsole:** EVA
- **Water Defence:** Gore-Tex XCR
- **Sizes:** Men US 8-12, 13, 14
- **Made In:** NA
- **Weight*:** 1066g

About the brand, from the brand...
In the Northern Hemisphere, the north face of a mountain is generally the coldest, iciest and most formidable route to climb. The North Face founders thought this name reflected their mission and dedication to the extreme. The North Face logo was inspired by the Half Dome in Yosemite, revered as one of the greatest climbing big walls in the world. (02) 9698 6555, www.thenorthface.com.au



PATAGONIA
VAGABOND WATERPROOF
\$279

The Vagabond has a high, protective mesh upper with bellows tongue, waterproof full-grain leather, a dual-density recycled polyethylene/polyurethane insole for lateral support on uneven terrain, and a Vibram Ecotstep (up to 30% recycled rubber) lug outsole. An air-cushioning disk in the EVA foam midsole (15% recycled) also helps heel stability. The synthetic-cork footbed (70% recycled) has a carbon component with antimicrobial qualities; the fast-wicking, quick-drying Capilene lining has natural odour control.

vital stats

- **Upper:** Nylon textile and full-grain leather
- **Midsole:** Dual-density board made from 100% recycled polyethylene/polyurethane
- **Water Defence:** Waterproof bootie
- **Sizes:** Men US 7-13, women 5, 6-11
- **Made In:** China
- **Weight*:** 1020g

About the brand, from the brand...
The Patagonia philosophy is inspired by our love of the world's great places and guided by our desire to leave a minimal footprint on them. We strive for simplicity, innovate when possible, and invent when necessary. We make comfortable, highly functional footwear that leaves minimal footprint. Make the best product, do the least harm. (02) 9577 1330, www.patagonia.com



RAICHLÉ
MT CAMP GTX
\$389.95

New for May 08, the Mt Camp GTX is a waterproof, medium-stiffness trekking boot for rugged adventurers, developed with comfort in mind. With motion control and a composite-plastic midsole for cushioning and support, the flexible but durable velour leather requires little-to-no wearing in. A rubber toe-cap provides extra protection. A grippy, cushioning and non-slip sole, watertight Gore-Tex membrane and padding memo foam around the tongue and ankle complete this quality shoe.

vital stats

- **Upper:** Velour leather
- **Midsole:** Composite plastics
- **Water Defence:** Gore-Tex
- **Sizes:** Men UK 7-13
- **Made In:** Romania
- **Weight*:** 1495g

About the brand, from the brand...
Since 1924 Raichle have been a premier boot manufacturer, with a strong heritage in making quality outdoor footwear. Modern Raichle innovations are still developed in the Swiss mountains – with an eye toward combining optimal performance with comfort and lightness. www.mountaindesigns.com

CRAIG MURDOCH, Kiwi Adventure Guide

Used For: Four years.
Bought: Kathmandu store, Christchurch, 2004, \$130 (at a classic Kathmandu half-price sale).
My foot is: Large and wide with a high arch.
Breaking-In: No breaking-in was required.
The Day The Boots Punished Me: I can't think of one.
The Day I Punished The Boots: Getting them covered in wet cement while concreting and having to replace the laces and re-waterproof them after serious cleaning.

Terrain Travelled: High altitude scree slopes, river crossings, wet muddy trails, snow and ice; as well as Australian bushland.
Why I Love Them: They're a wide cut to fit my feet. They're pretty waterproof but when they do get wet they're quick and easy to dry. And even though they're lightweight I've always felt confident wearing them while carrying a heavy pack.
Why I Will Replace Them: I've had to restitch them already and the Vibram soles are showing signs of wear.



KATHMANDU HOUNSLOW

hiking boots



SCARPA TREK PRO \$299.95

Made exclusively for Australia, the Trek Pro is the natural evolution of the iconic Trek. Higher for more support and protection, featuring more padding for greater comfort, and made from HS12 nubuk leather for greater water resistance durability and flexibility. The Comfort Flex midsole is moulded so it has minimum flex in the heel section but gives comfortable flex in the forefoot area. Taibrelle, the engineered synthetic used in the lining, wears well, absorbs and transfers moisture, dries out quickly, and remains soft and pliant even after years of use.

vital stats

- **Upper:** HS12 nubuck
- **Midsole:** Nylon comfort flex
- **Water Defence:** HS12 waterproof leather
- **Sizes:** Men EU 41-50, women 36-43
- **Made In:** NA
- **Weight*:** 1420 g

About the brand, from the brand...

Since 1938 the Parisotto family have run Scarpa and have upheld valued traditions while striving to innovate and develop an envied range of outdoor footwear using the most sophisticated synthetics as well as the best quality leathers, encompassing footwear for snow and rock and everything in between. www.outdooragencies.com.au, www.scarpa.com.au



TIMBERLAND CHOCORUA TRAIL \$249.95

The Chocorua Trail features premium, full-grain, waterproof leather for comfort, durability and abrasion resistance, with a seam-sealed waterproof construction to keep feet dry in any weather. Lugs that are strategically placed to follow the curved centre of pressure path and the four natural motions of your foot - braking, supporting, flexing and propelling to provide improved traction and longer wearing performance. This is a shoe that will suit day walks as well as multi-day hikes.

vital stats

- **Upper:** Full-grain leather
- **Midsole:** EVA
- **Water Defence:** Gore-Tex
- **Sizes:** Men 7-13, women 6-10
- **Made In:** NA
- **Weight*:** 900g

About the brand, from the brand...

Our mission is to equip people to make a difference in their world. We do this by creating outstanding products and by trying to make a difference in the communities where we live and work. Making new products goes hand in hand with making things better. That means reducing our carbon footprint and being as environmentally responsible as we can. (03) 8878 3000, www.timberland.com



ZAMBERLAN TENACY GT From \$300

Designed for extended trips in the outdoors, the Tenacy GT features hybrid leather/fabric construction to reduce overall weight and maximise breathability. A stretch Lycra collar, Zamberlan Air System foam and wicking footbed enhance comfort and ease of fit. The special Flex GT shank is constructed with carefully graded polypropylene to provide a tuned flex for natural movement of the foot and a consistent flex pattern across all sizes. Thermoplastic toe and heel promise to keep the shoe in shape after extended use.

vital stats

- **Upper:** Split leather and Cordura
- **Midsole:** Zamberlan Flex GT
- **Water Defence:** Gore-Tex
- **Sizes:** Unisex US 8-12, 13
- **Made In:** Italy
- **Weight*:** 1200g

About the brand, from the brand...

The production of quality mountain footwear began with Giuseppe Zamberlan in 1929 and was continued by his son, Emilio. Nowadays the third generation of the family is actively involved in the family business, from production and testing to sales. All models are made in Italy. (03) 9799 4999, www.zamberlan.com

GLENN TEMPEST, Australian Bushwalking and Rock Climbing Guru



Used For: Ten years.

My Foot Is: Narrow, gruesome and twisted (a climber's foot).

The Day The Boots Punished Me: Never have. They fit like a pair of 10-year-old Levis from the first and have never let me down. I met a German in Nepal once (suffering from huge blisters) who said he'd swap his attractive girlfriend for a good pair of boots. She wasn't impressed but I could see where he was coming from. Nothing is more important than a pair of boots that fit.

The Day I Punished The Boots: We had to fix the broken door to Macalister Springs Hut in the Wonnangatta as the snow was

SCARPA SL ATTACK (FULL LEATHER)

finding its way in. We couldn't find a hammer so we used my Scarpa boots instead. I swear that we actually bent the nails as we hammered them in. Worked a treat.

Why I Love Them: No upper stitching on the leather, which means they won't fall apart at the seams. Full leather is really tough when it comes to rugged terrain especially in alpine conditions. These Scarpa SL Attacks are true thoroughbreds. No bells and whistles. No problems.

Why I Will Replace Them: I can't really see them ever finding their way into the bin.

tips for toes

Getting to know a boot in store and at home



Outdoor Gear Guy
STEPHEN WINNACOTT

When he isn't flogging outdoor gear to the unsuspecting Australian public, you will find Stevie canyoning, rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking or doing Tai Chi somewhere in the bush surrounding Sydney.

The most important thing to do when buying a pair of boots is to take your time. Try on as many makes and models as possible. Every boot is made from a unique last designed to fit a specific foot shape, so it's unlikely that you'll find the perfect pair of boots first go. Most people's feet swell throughout the day, so go shopping for boots in the afternoon when your feet are at their largest.



- **IN THE STORE:** Your heel should be firmly locked in place and not move around inside the boot.
- You want as much room as possible in front of (1.5 cm is good) and around your toes without losing a firm fit around your heel. Check this by kicking something solid. Your foot should not slide forward in the boot.
- If you can slide a finger between your heel and the boot, they are too big. If you can feel your toes pushing the front of the boot, they are too small.
- Correct width is important. Your forefoot should not feel squashed at the sides nor should it move from side to side inside the boot. A man with narrow feet should try womens' boots and ladies with wide feet should also try mens'.
- Experiment by trying different socks and insoles inside a boot to see if it improves the fit for you. If you use orthotics take these with you.
- Simulate walking up and down hills and leave the boots on for at least 15 minutes. Concentrate on any rubbing and pinching that boot may cause, these are tell tale signs of blisters. If possible, load up a pack.
- Given a choice between boots that are a bit too big or a bit too small, go with the bigger pair.

- If you're not 100% sure ask the shopkeeper if you can take them home and wear them on the carpet with the option of returning them.

DEALING WITH BLISTERS

For a blister to occur there must be friction between the boot and your foot,



which can occur if your boots are either too tight or too loose. The presence of moisture accelerates the process, so most often blisters occur when your feet are sweaty and soggy and are being rubbed repeatedly inside the boot. No matter what footwear and sock combination you are wearing your feet will never stop sweating, though the choice of which combination to use in what conditions can make a significant difference.

- If your boots are a little too big and this is causing rubbing, try a volume-adjusting insole, a slightly thicker, more cushioning sock, wear a sock and sock-liner or even two socks together.
- In hot climates, when your feet sweat more, you should wear a more breathable boot. Also consider using a sock liner made from Coolmax fabric to wick moisture away from the surface of you feet.
- The choice of opting for a waterproof membrane or not, will also affect how breathable your footwear system is. Membranes,

while making a boot waterproof, will decrease the overall breathability of footwear.

- As a last ditch effort you can tape your foot using Elaso plast.

BOOT MAINTENANCE

Providing a little bit of love to your boots can add years to their life. It is recommended to treat your boots with a waterproofing/conditioning agent right out of the box when they are at their cleanest. Otherwise, before applying waterproofing treatments to your boots, clean them with warm water, a mild soap and a stiff brush to remove dirt. Ensure your boots are clean and dry when not in use to avoid mould, mildew and rot from developing. Avoid exposing your boots to high temperatures to dry them, as heat can damage boot materials and adhesives used in a boot's construction.



SOCKS - SYNTHETIC OR WOOL?

Both synthetic and natural fibres are used in a sock to wick away sweat. The differences between the two are that synthetic materials tend to cling to your cheesy three-day vintage more so than wool, but will dry faster when wet, and are often lighter. Woollen socks, on the other foot, offer increased thermal properties but will take longer to dry. Sock fabrics with silver fibres are also kicking around, offering insulation and anti-cheese. Keep an eye out for pairs with woollen inner layers for warmth against the skin, and synthetic outers for dryness.

