

PETZL Navaho Complet Fast

Manufacturer: Petzl
Origin: France
Cost: £151. exc VAT \$234.
Weight: 1.7 to 1.8 kg /
Standards: CE EN 358, EN 813 & EN 361
 ANSIA10.14 type 1

We almost feel guilty including another Petzl Navaho review but the problem is that it is such a good harness and Petzl keep updating some of the features! But Petzl need to keep on their toes because after gaining so much ground in the early days and with some competitors trying to counter with vastly over-complicated designs there are now a number of competing good designs. We'll be looking at the Yates Explorer and yet another impressive east european model in subsequent issues but in the meantime the Navaho remains the one to beat. This review is a little overdue since the FAST version has been around for some time now and the all-important quick-release buckles are now 'old-hat', especially to industrial users. This is primarily a review for urban industrial rescue but we are already addressing this imbalance and you'll start to see many more mountain rescue, lightweight and special application harnesses appearing in forthcoming issues.

CONSTRUCTION

(With apologies to long-term readers who will have read this back in issue 43!) the Navaho consists of a sit section and integrated top section that cannot be separated but can be packed into a pouch (from your own supply) and clipped to the back of the harness to allow you to wear the sit section only (standards and protocol obligations allowing!). There are 5 D-ring connections, one dorsal, one sternal, one waist (central or MHP) and two sides (pole-strap). The key differences from the previous Complet/V2 Bod version are the larger, slightly offset D-rings used in all 5 positions and the quick release buckles used on the leg loops. The waist belt adjustment is still via two auto-locks (simply pull back on the loose ends on each side and wiggle your hips!)

IN ACTION

The quick release leg loop buckles are the main draw for other Complet users and it is rescuers more than industrial-users who will appreciate the increased donning speed that this feature affords. If all you're doing is donning at the beginning of a days work and taking off at the end of the day then you may rightly point out that the original buckles were fine. But anyone familiar with trying to speedily don your harness over boots the size of battleships while trying to take in the sit-rep from the on-scene officer will appreciate the FAST version. You can now simply step through the waist belt and support the weight of the harness and its quarter ton of dangling hardware with the shoulder straps before turning back to the simple job of connecting the metal 'hook-over & click' buckles. No more tripping over one leg loop while fitting your boot through the other and the inherent risk of NOT looking as cool and in-control as you ought to! These quick release buckles are a little more fiddly than the push-fit Stubai-style designs (metal 'Fastex') but are presumably far more secure and once adjusted for your leg size are fast indeed.

The larger, offset D-rings are not so clear-cut as an asset - probably very subjective because we feel the pole strap D-rings are far too large for our purposes and a little obtrusive in the sternal and waist positions but industrial customers have obviously seen this as a necessary change. Having said all this we have appreciated the larger waist-D-ring on the seemingly numerous occasions when we're cramming far too many carabiners into it!! The main waist D-ring is rated for 23kN loading, all others to 15kN. Other modifications are the increased waist band width with firmer padding and a larger webbing organiser plate behind the dorsal D-ring. There are two 10 daN

gear loops with substantial plastic tube protection as well as 4 smaller 5 daN plastic D-rings. Remarkably there is still no rear gear loop, only the plastic d-rings which you can use to create your own more substantial gear loop. But pre-manufactured would be better and a rear position keeps your frontal work area clean. There are also 2 gaps in the webbing belt which can accommodate Petzl's Caritool 'carabiner' (see separate text box above). This is an excellent accessory which will fit any harness with 40mm webbing.

The increased width waist band and leg loops and the new pre-formed padding isn't noticeably more comfortable from new but it retains its shape far better than the original versions and is therefore more comfortable in the long term. The padding is now breathable but to be honest, between 4 wearers we haven't noticed any difference at all even when working all day in high temperatures! This is very subjective of course and probably a noticeable improvement if you wear shorts or have sweaty legs.'

CONCLUSION

This version of the Navaho is great for rescuers and fire-rescue personnel in particular. It's easier to don in a rush, instantly obvious how to don (it's not



Petzl's 'Caritool' is a spectacularly useful accessory carabiner that clips onto the waist belt webbing at either of the 2 gaps in stitching. All items are easily clipped but if working in areas with mesh such as enclosed ladders, be careful that you do not accidentally get hung up!

a big nest of webbing!), it's comfortable and has all the primary attachment options. It couldn't do much more except perhaps include the now less popular (but occasionally useful) rear D-ring on the waist (preferably one that's smaller than the current d-rings and folds flat to the band rather than offset). This is still the benchmark for full-body harnesses in our book.

Contact Petzl at: www.petzl.com or www.lyon.co.uk

