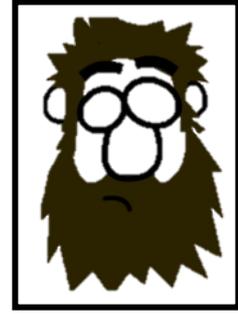


Uncle Wacko's Gear Corner



TRAMPING GEAR ADVICE FROM THE EXPERT

Sorting your Shelter

She's a big subject this one, so let's rip right into your education.

Single vs double wall First you need to decide between single and double skin. Single skin are lighter, cheaper and pack smaller, but colder and you need to know how to manage condensation and maybe "misting".

With an inner and a fly, double walled tents are warmer and give better overall water protection. But they're bulkier, heavier and cost more.

Double skins are where you should start, and they'll suit most people most of the time. Uncle Wacko reckons you should get a truckload of backcountry trips under your belt before tackling single skin.

Materials Some manufacturers are using materials more flimsy than a bride's negligee and damn near as see-through. The result is they're producing shelters that simply aren't robust enough or waterproof enough for NZ conditions.

In persistent rain or on a boggy site, water will pond under your tent. With a flimsy floor, your body weight can force that water right through it. Uncle Wacko reckons your floor should be 5000 mm hydrostatic head – any less and you need a groundsheet. 10,000 hh is the gold standard.

And your fly should be 3000 mm, ideally 5000. Any less, and prolonged rain can come marching right through it. Wet sleeping bag, anybody?

You'll find heaps of tents with lower specs than this. They'll work fine 95% of the time. But you may just come a gutser when you really need your shelter to do what it's supposed to do ... you know, actually shelter you. Like in the sort of storms we can get in the hills in NZ, any time of year.

If you want to take that risk, go for it. But Uncle Wacko reckons you're more addled than a kereru gorging on rotting puriri berries.

Weight 1.25kg max for double skin, 800g for single. Anything above that is just extra weight you don't need to be lugging around.

Pegs Some tents come with rubbish pegs. Swap them out for Groundhogs or Mini Groundhogs if you want your shelter to stay put in a decent blow.

WHAT TO BUY – DOOZY DOUBLE SKIN, 1 PERSON TENTS

So you want your personal palace to look the part, stand up to the elements and not weigh too much? Then here's what to buy.

Hilleberg – the Rolls Royce of tents

The **Hilleberg Enan** is a work of art. Beautifully constructed, 1.2 kg, 12K hh floor, 5K outer. Uncle Wacko reckons tents don't come much better than this. But you sure pay for that quality. Pick one up at a snip from the NZ dealers for a mere NZD1154. Yeah, I know ... or find one online.

Vaude – consistently excellent

The **Lizard GUL 1P** is the go, but potentially a tad tight for those of Uncle Wacko's herculean proportions – it's 600 wide, 75cm headroom. But get this: 10K floor, 3K outer, 690 grams. NZD600 - 700 online.

Vaude have 2 other killer tents, BUT with 3000 hh fly and floor (consider a groundsheet). The **Power Lizard SUL 1-2P** is *spaaacious* for 1, genuinely Ok for 2 - Uncle Wacko can attest to this after spending a stormy night in one on the tops with a bony-elbowed sheila following an unfortunate incident with another tent. 1.16kg.

And the **Hogan SUL 1-2P**, front entry, 1.25 kg, also a cracker tent.

Terra Nova – pommy perfection

You see plenty of **Laser Competition 1s** about and they've been a cracker tent in NZ conditions over many years. 6K floor, 5K fly, 970g. Or for more room, get the (so-called) 2 person at 1.23kg.

Plus Terra Nova have 2 other tents with 5K floor, 3K fly. The smallish **Laser Photon** is 720g, the bigger **Solar Photon 2**, 849g. What's not to like there!

Prices for all 3 vary - hunt around and pick one up for NZD500-700.

Nordisk - Europe's favourite

The **Telemark 1LW** is 850g, has an 8K hh floor but borderline 2K fly, NZD600 - 700 online. The roomier **2 LW** is 970g, and there's an **ULW** version saving a few more grams for extra cost. Not bad eh! No wonder they're so popular in Europe.

So there you go – 4 ripper brands and a bunch of cracker 3-season tent options that'll see you right in the hills.

Next month – single skins.

Right now I'm off to catch up with that bony-elbowed sheila you reminded me of.

Spot ya.

Uncle Wacko