

Men's Journal

May 2009 Volume 18 Number 5

GEAR

WRISTWEAR FOR EXPLORERS

Adventure watches have always packed in functionality but put off users with complicated interfaces. We tested six of the newest to see if they've become more user-friendly. *by* DAN A. NELSON

▼ **GARMIN FORERUNNER 405**

It can track your running times, heart rate, and route (using the integrated GPS receiver), then wirelessly send that data to your computer. Tapping the touch-sensitive bezel let us change modes easily on the move, making the watch perfect for trail running or adventure racing. But with none of the adventure basics, such as an altimeter or compass, the Garmin isn't so useful off the beaten path. [[\\$300; garmin.com](#)]

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▼ **FREESTYLE NOMAD**

With an altimeter that can cumulatively record ascents and descents, and big buttons that are easy to mash when wearing gloves, the Nomad is tailor-made for skiers eager to log their daily vert. Not that this watch is beholden to the slopes: A barometer, digital compass, and chronograph make the Nomad worthy anywhere but at sea. (Last-in-class 30-meter water resistance is a bit skittish.) [[\\$160; freestyleusa.com](#)]

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▼ **TIMEX EXPEDITION WS4**

At first the WS4 looks as complex as an Airbus cockpit, but we soon loved that its huge 1.5-inch screen offers so much data at a glance. That meant less digging through menus to find what we needed, though we wouldn't have minded — it was simple to access the WS4's other functions, which include an altitude alert that comes in handy for alpinists heading toward the death zone on climbs. [[\\$199; timexpedition.com](#)]

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▲ **SUUNTO X10**

Most adventure GPS receivers have altimeters, digital compasses, and route-tracking options, but only the X10 puts all of them on your wrist. It locked onto satellites even in the narrow glacier valleys of North Cascades National Park, and its interface is one of the easiest to use. Back home, Google Earth soaks up the Suunto's data, letting you map your trek and brag with sweet visuals. [[\\$599; suunto.com](#)]

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▲ **ORIGO GRANITE PEAK TITANIUM SLEEK**

As we pushed through whiteout conditions on Mount Rainier, our only sense of location came via the Origo's altimeter — thankfully, the most precise of the watches we tested. Combined with the ability to quickly bring up the compass for only 10 seconds (which saves battery life) and an unflinching titanium case, it makes the Origo a winner for mountaineers. [[\\$290; origowatch.com](#)]

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▲ **HIGHGEAR AXIO**

Highgear debuted 10 years back as the Hyundai of the adventure watch set: high on features and slightly homely looking. But while the Axio's no Rolex, it is sleeker and smaller than its predecessors. It offers the company's well-regarded interface and functionality, including a Swiss-made altimeter and a hydration alarm, but you'll have to spend \$25 more on the Axio Max to get a digital compass. [[\\$125; highgear.com](#)]

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