

Vanguard VEO Active 42M

The newest VEO is tailor-made for photographers who demand a functional, rugged backpack that suits longer walks in the great outdoors

VANGUARD'S VEO ACTIVE family targets photographers who enjoy the outdoors, and need a rugged backpack designed to perform well when the going gets tough. A range of carrying capacities is available, and the Active 42M with 17-litre storage capacity is the smallest and cheapest. But that's still roomy enough for a decent mirrorless outfit. It's not lacking in useful features, either, starting with super-tough 840D Cordura, a highly weather- and tear-resistant nylon, for the exterior shell, waterproof zips and a metal frame running around the outside. The bag includes a sleeve for a hydration wallet and USB-A port with a lead on the inside, to connect to a power bank for on-the-move charging.

The main compartment houses a removable, solid-walled insert with its own zipped cover. It is lined to accept the supplied inserts, so you can take it out and use on its own – perhaps to protect kit inside a large suitcase. Another option is removing the insert, transforming the Active 42M into a spacious daypack.

Installed in the bag, the cover can provide some extra security and protection. Or, tuck it underneath so that kit is quickly accessible when you undo the main rear cover. This has separate padded sleeves for a 13-inch laptop and ten-inch tablet. If you have both in place, the extra depth means securing the rear cover is a squeeze, depending on your camera kit. With a taller mirrorless,



LEGS ON BOARD The 42M has two options to attach a tripod, on the back or on the side, as shown here. Either way, getting the pod off the bag is quick, so time lost is minimal



like the Canon EOS R5, having both devices makes for a tighter fit, but that's less troublesome with the shorter Fujifilm X-S10.

I packed an EOS R5, with a wide zoom, standard zoom and macro lens. With the X-S10, I could fit a body with standard zoom, a wide zoom, telezoom and a couple of primes or speedlight. If the camera was moved to the top compartment, that would give room for more kit. Or, place a larger lens in the supplied lens pouch attached to the exterior.



STORAGE MATTERS The bag's main space is home to a solid-walled insert with a self-cover, which is lined to accept dividers. Take it out and you have a roomy daypack

How the storage space works for you depends on the lenses you have; if you have fast aperture zooms, maybe there's only room for a standard zoom and a telezoom. It obviously depends on your mission for the day, but having the flexibility increases this bag's appeal.

The extended peak design of the top compartment means extra headroom. I squeezed in a padded Rab jacket with no problem, and there's a zipped mesh pocket for odds and sods. Here, there's a USB-A lead, which leads to a port on the exterior in a zipped protective pocket – that was just big enough for my iPhone X.

On the opposite side is a hydration sleeve pocket that I used to hold snacks, batteries and a couple of screw-in filters, so they were quick to get at. I just clipped the water bottle to one of several exterior straps.

Tripod straps are provided on one side of the Active 42M, and there is also the option to carry one on the rear. I tried a Vanguard VEO 3T 265HABP pod – and that fitted no problem. On the rear flap are loops

running down both sides of the bag that accept the supplied straps. Use these to hold the external lens or accessory pouch that's also supplied – or, because they are quite long, to hold a bigger jacket.

I used it on a coastal shoot, then for a work trip to the city, rejigged slightly to suit. On both occasions, I found the Active 42M great in use.

In the urban setting, the bag's slim profile was handy in crowds and on public transport, and I was happy

SPECS

- › **Price** £149
- › **In the box** Active 42M, detachable lens pouch (to 70-200mm) and accessories pouch
- › **Colour** Green, grey (tested here)
- › **Capacity** 17 litres
- › **Tripod holder** Yes
- › **Laptop/tablet sleeve** 13in laptop, 10in tablet
- › **Rain cover** Supplied
- › **Daypack section** Yes
- › **Other features** USB port interface for charging on the go
- › **External dimensions** 27x19x44cm
- › **Internal dimensions** 25x15x42cm
- › **Camera compartment dimensions** 22x11x28cm
- › **Weight** 1.96kg
- › **Contact** vanguardworld.co.uk



POWER UP Plug in a power bank and charge your phone while on the move. The USB-A port is in a zipped sleeve for protection

that the contents were secure and well-protected. On the scenic shoot, where I ended up walking further, I found the backpack comfortable, with plenty of height adjustment to suit my shape. The sternum and waist straps were great, while I liked the elasticated pouch on the right shoulder strap that was big enough to hold my phone. Usefully, the waist straps can be tucked away, so didn't get wet or covered in sand. **WC**

Verdict

The Vanguard VEO Active 42M is a capable, multifaceted bag. It doesn't have huge camera-carrying capacity, but enough for a versatile outfit – and if you need more space, Vanguard offers a range of sizes. We'll be testing the biggest very soon.

PROS Lovely handling, attractive, comfortable to carry, high protection levels, storage options

CONS Having a tablet and laptop is a tight fit, but nothing serious