

Maxpedition Sitka Gearslinger

A true story of the American dream, Maxpedition® is the brainchild of founder and CEO Tim Tang, who dropped out of medical school in 2003 to start his own company in his parents' garage. Ten years (and several progressively larger warehouses) later, Maxpedition is now thriving in its own Los Angeles-based corporate and distribution compound.

Innovative from the start, Maxpedition gained a competitive edge in its early years by creating bags and packs with superior durability and ergonomics, such as the Versipack® and Gearslinger® series. Early customers were military operators and law enforcement officers, but the civilian and concealed-carry markets quickly caught on, selecting Maxpedition as their preferred EDC (Every Day Carry).

While already the leader in their market space, Maxpedition is committed to improvement, optimizing ergonomics, creating user-friendly designs, and using only the highest quality materials and world-class craftsmanship. They strive to make their products more accessible to customers around the world through an expanding international network, while finding even better ways to service customers, both before and after the sale.

Still family owned after 11 years, Maxpedition is breaking new ground with innovations in bags, packs and pouches.

They are also diversifying, with a new range of knives and tools, as well as a line of morale patches.

It doesn't matter how many packs I've seen over the years—I enjoy reviewing packs and bags. It goes way back to my youth, showing up to my first professional bull riding with my gear in a burlap sack and my riggin' in an old purse my mother had thrown away.

Bull riders had plenty of jokes about this cowboy who was too poor to buy the cool-guy stuff. But nothing stops jokes like winning a couple of go-rounds and using the extra cash to invest in a quality bag.

Maxpedition's motto is "hard-use gear"—and they mean it. I have carried and trusted a Maxpedition Fatboy™ Versipack for years. When I change vehicles—either personal or department—the Fatboy goes with me.

I recently had the opportunity to evaluate the Sitka™ Gearslinger. Like the Fatboy, the Sitka is great for hiking or just having emergency items with you in a vehicle. The first thing I noticed was this pack is similar to a



Front of Maxpedition Sitka Gearslinger pack.



Rear of Sitka Gearslinger showing wide contoured padded shoulder strap and padded back side.



Main compartment's zipper allows full clamshell opening.

backpack because of how it can be worn. Wearing it slung over the left shoulder—for right-handed shooters—leaves the right shoulder open to shoulder a long gun (left-handed versions available).

The Sitka Gearslinger has an ergonomic three-inch-wide shoulder strap, two-inch quick-release buckle, six channels of PALS webbing, key retainer, and concealable sternum strap made from .75-inch webbing. The shoulder strap is padded and fully adjustable.

The pack can also be rotated and worn in front and the compartments accessed while sitting down. The fact that this pack can be worn sitting down in a vehicle saves space, and you can still bail out quickly with all your gear and be rolling. I like that. My pack does not have to be in the back of the vehicle if I am out hunting big game or defending against an attack. I can bail out if necessary and if I can't get back to the vehicle for a while, I've got essential gear with me.

The Gearslinger's overall dimensions are 12.5"(L) x 18"(H) x 5.25"(W) and the main compartment measures 8.5"(L) x 16"(H) x 4"(W). The right side of the pack's exterior has a large pocket that would be perfect for a Nalgene bottle. The opposite has nylon webbing for extra gear. The back is padded for comfort against the body. Behind the main compartment is a zippered compartment that will hold a three-liter hydration reservoir. A hole at the top allows the hydration tube to come out.

On the front of the exterior are plenty of pockets. They include one 8.5"(L) x 5"(H) x 2"(W) zippered pouch, one 7.5"(L) x 3"(H) internal slip pocket, internal three-channel elastic organization, one 9"(L) x 5.5"(H) external horizontal zippered pocket with Button-Lock™ security strap, one 8"(L) x 9"(H) x 2"(W) zippered pouch, one 8.5"(L) x 5"(H) internal horizon-

tal slip pocket, and one 10"(L) x 7.25"(H) internal horizontal slip pocket.

Also on the front is a "Y" compression strap, 8.25" x 2" piece of loop material for name/morale patches, and four rows of PALS webbing.

The heavy-duty zipper runs around three sides of the Sitka Gearslinger for a full clamshell-type opening. Once the pack is open, it has plenty of room for larger gear.

On the front side of the interior are one 9"(L) x 5.5"(H) zippered mesh pocket, one 6.5" x 5.5"(H) zippered mesh pocket, a 15"(L) x 7"(H) slip pocket and a 8.75"(L) x 7"(H) internal loop field for attaching a holster. The pockets are secured with one-inch webbing with quick-release buckle. On the backside of the interior are a 9.25"(L) x 6.75"(H) slip pocket and 7"(L) x 6.5"(H) slip pocket.

The Gearslinger comes in five colors: Black, Khaki, Foliage Green, OD Green, and a combination of Khaki and Foliage Green. It has a suggested retail price of \$139.00.

The colors the Sitka comes in signify to many that the wearer may be armed. The one thing I'd change would be to expand the selection of colors. The Fatboy I mentioned earlier comes in 15 different colors, everything from Black to Pink. Some of these colors may not be as "tacti-cool," but they also won't give you away.

If I were giving this pack a grade, it would be an "A." No big surprise to me as it is what I have come to expect from Maxpedition. ☺

Below: Sitka pack can be rotated and worn in front, allowing easy access to front pockets. **Right:** Pack can be easily transferred to the back and will not interfere with operation of a long gun.



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