



est. 1906
TUBBS
SNOWSHOES

Tubbs Mountaineer wins 2011 Gear of the Year



trail

SNOWSHOES

There are two reasons to wear snowshoes: float and grip. For the former, most snowshoes are weight-rated: If you're heavier or headed out after a big storm, you'll want a big deck, like Faber's Mountain Quest (page 60), to keep you on top of the snow. On icy or technical terrain, aggressive teeth are key, like what you'll find on the Tubbs Mountaineer, left. [Just keep in mind that a high-profile claw can be uncomfortable in packed-snow conditions.] If you'll be on steep slopes, opt for a heel lifter and a crampon that's easy to frontpoint in. No matter the conditions, a good snowshoe should be comfortable, with a binding that's easy to adjust even when you're wearing bulky gloves.

BY BERNE BROUDY

AND THE WINNER IS ... TUBBS MOUNTAINEER \$250 We've tested plenty of snowshoes with serious bite, and others that are extraordinarily comfy, but what makes the Mountaineer so impressive is how well it performed in both those categories. Thanks in part to two independent toe straps, the binding perfectly cradled every boot we jammed in it, from bulky Sorels to winterized trail runners. Strap pressure, a common annoyance with less sophisticated bindings, was practically nonexistent. Fine-tuning the fit on the fly was a cinch. And they release with one quick tug. Flip the shoe over and it's like peering into the jaws of a great white shark, with eight incisors up front and two more rows of teeth in back, for extra traction when your heel hits the deck. "I pushed these snowshoes in seriously technical terrain," said a tester who climbed two fourteeners in them [Mount Elbert and Quandary Peak], "and they never wavered." 4.8 lbs; tubbsnowshoes.com

GRIP: 4.5 (OUT OF 5)

COMFORT: 4.5

EASE OF USE: 4

