



By Brian Mullin

November 28, 2012

## CamelBak Charge 10 LR Review



This is one of my favorite hydration packs of all time, and it sticks to your back like Velcro, and carries the weight low on your lumbar. It's a tough well made pack, with lots of features and innovative designs. It's a small pack with only a 2 liter water capacity, but it functions extremely well for almost any ride of moderate distance.

The CamelBak Charge 10 LR hydration pack is extremely comfortable, light and conformable, and features their lumbar Antidote reservoir, which is located at the bottom of the pack. The design places the water low on the hips and back for stability and comfort, and the pack becomes part of your back, at least figuratively, as it conforms to the shape and oddities of your body. The Charge 10 LR uses lightweight ripstop fabric, has great organizational pockets, a softly padded back panel and hip belt, and uses their 70 oz (2 L) Antidote Reservoir.

### CamelBak Charge 10 LR

The Charge 10 LR (Lumbar) weighs in at a svelte 507 grams, and has padded back, hip, and shoulders, and is constructed with their Ultra-light materials,

using a combination of ripstop and stretchy nylon. The wraparound body uses their LV back panel, and Ultra-light 3-D Mesh Independent Suspension with Slider Sternum Strap. The upper portion of the pack has a long and narrow zippered main compartment, which opens in clam shell style for easy access. It has three meshed organizational pockets, one large and two smaller ones, and the larger one has a Velcro closure tab. There is an overflow storage sleeve on the back, which extends down the bottom two-thirds of the pack, and closes off with a cinch strap. The sleeve uses very stretchy fabric, so it can expand to hold various apparel or other items as required. The padded hip belt uses 1-inch webbing with a front clip, and has zippered cargo pockets on each side. In addition, the pack is equipped with lumbar compression straps, which draws the bottom of the pack into the back as the reservoir's water volume decreases, keeping things stabilized, with the weight in tight to the body. All the pockets and compartments combine together to give 488cu in or 8L of storage space, although the outer sleeve adds quite a bit of additional volume. The 70 oz. or 2L Antidote reservoir with the Quick Link connector, sits in a zippered pouch at the lower back, wrapping backwards around the hips and the lumbar. The pack will come in two colors, Pirate Black/Graphite and Skydiver/Dove (tested), and will retail for \$110.



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### Antidote LR Reservoir

The Antidote lumbar reservoir (70 oz/2 liters) sits horizontal in contrast to the typical vertical layout, and it includes mini baffles (the small cutouts) to keep the water from sloshing around and keep the shape from getting too fat (flatter bladder), and it makes it bend easier at the wings. The bite valve worked quite nicely, and was easy to draw, and didn't leak. The screw cap for the fill port takes only a quarter turn to open or close, and it does not get stuck and require brute force to open. Just line up the arrow on the cap with the circle icon 'O' (with arrows pointing in tightening direction), and turn it a quarter turn clockwise until it lines up with the solid circle icon by the top hanging hook. It only takes a light touch to close the cap, and its water tight and snug. The fill port has a wider diameter hole for easier filling, cleaning and drying, and has a handle which hooks onto the drop slot of the packs zippered pouch, helping to keep it stable and secure, and makes it handier to hold the cumbersome wide reservoir. They added an auto shutoff quick disconnect, named the Quick Link, which allows you to disconnect the reservoir from the drink hose, which facilitates cleaning, filling and drying.

### Impressions

The Charge 10 LR carries over most of its design from the excellent Charge LR, and has added some great new features, yet has still retained the excellent low lumbar weight carrying and stability characteristics of its brethren. The Charge 10 LR has lowered the pockets in the main compartment,



changed to the LV back panel, added their new helmet hook and an air pump holder, and placed the reservoir compartment on the back. The construction, reinforcement and stitching have been greatly improved over its predecessor, which adds to the longevity and durability of the pack.

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I have used the pack since the summer, and it has been thoroughly abused, and has been quite durable and tough for a pack made from lightweight materials. The lumbar design pulls the weight off the shoulders, and moves it onto the lumbar and lower back, offering increased stability and weight carrying characteristics, and draws the center of gravity in close to the torso.





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The LV back panel uses their 'integrated ventilated system', and it's soft and conformable, and offers good comfort and ventilation, though with everything squished up against the lumbar, it can get damp in that particular spot. The bottom of the pack rolls around your hips and feels like a favorite comfy pillow. The hip belt and back panel were nicely padded, and highly flexible, so it conformed extremely well to the contours of your back, and it carried the weight in a balanced manner. The shoulder straps were minimally padded and with the lighter loads, the pack would be carrying it doesn't really need much anyway, though I found them quite comfortable. The pack itself is feathery light, and I never felt the weight, even with the full two liters of water and the additional gear being carried. By having the weight of the water pulled down into your lumbar and not on your shoulders, along with the rest of the gear being snuggled tightly into the back; the pack seems to disappear, while offering excellent stability. The conformability and stability of the design mean the packs doesn't flop around on rough terrain, and stays put no matter what is going on, and felt like it was Velcroed in place. With the weighting drawn into the lumbar and lower back, it meant the shoulders were freer to move, which was advantageous in technical terrain, and reduced back, shoulder and neck strain.



The lumbar compression straps, which are located on each side of the hips, are hidden inside the wings, and help pull the bottom of the pack into the back when the extra girth of the used up water reservoir shrinks during usage. It keeps the pack, load and weight stable and centered on the back, and can be done on the fly. Although its primary use is for the reservoir, it can also be used to trim

and alter the way the pack sits on your back, giving one micro tuning customizations, and I used this feature frequently on every ride.



The main compartment had a nice long zipper, which opened along most of the pack's length, allowing efficient access to everything without having to dig around for hidden items. The three mesh pockets in the main compartments are located at the bottom of the pack for stability and to keep the weight on the hips. They offered effective organizing for tools, parts, and other sundry items, and the small Velcro closing tab on the inner one kept things in place. The pump holder sat up higher in the pack above the pockets, and worked nicely to keep the pump secure and out of the way. The hip belt's two cargo pockets are quite roomy, and I used them for my cell phone, camera, tools, and keys. I do wish there was a key hook in one of them, as it would be a great place for quick access to your keys. The back sleeve pocket was excellent for overflow storage, and the stretchy material on its side allowed a jacket or armor to be placed in it. It was easy to route the hydration tube from the shoulder strap, through the top of the main compartment and then inserting it through the port by the pockets into the reservoir back chamber.





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The Antidote lumbar reservoir system worked extremely well, and the new screw closure only takes a quarter turn to open and close, and the wide mount is easy to pour into and clean, though to fill to capacity you do need to hold it with the handle at a slight angle to facilitate. A minuscule amount of water can get stuck in the nooks of the wings, exacerbated by the prone cycling position. Most of the water gets pulled out of the wings by the partial vacuum produced by drawing water towards the inlet when drinking, and body movement, such as pedaling and hip swivel aid in drawing any lingering remnants back towards the center. Testing showed a worst-case scenario of 4 oz or 1/2 cup of water staying in the reservoir, some in the wings, and the rest where the draw port wasn't able to extract the residual. Doing the same experiment with a normal reservoir, there were 1-2 oz or 1/8-1/4 cup of water left. The Quick Link is pretty sweet, and facilitated clipping and in a leak-free manner for the bladder removal, though on occasion, the hose would dribble some water, so I would blow the hose clean beforehand. With age, I found the push button connector on it got stiff, and made it tougher to remove the tube.

The hydration reservoir compartment is now located at the back of the pack, and this new design makes it easier to swap out a full reservoir when the pack is fully loaded with gear. To remove the reservoir, unzip the compartment, pull it out and unclip the tube. You can fill the reservoir back up, clip the tube, push the tails into the hip belt, and then hook it back on and zip it shut.

### Measured Specs:

Pack Weight (no reservoir) – 507 grams / 17.9 oz

Antidote Reservoir (with hose) – 184 grams / 6.5 oz

Total Weight – 691 grams / 24.4 oz

### Bottom Line

The CamelBak Charge 10 LR is a superb pack, and synergy of the lumbar design, low slung reservoir, conformable back panel and hip belt, and functional suspension system makes for a fantastically stable and comfortable entity. The pack adheres to your back, like its attached with Velcro, and it car-



ries the weight centered properly on your hips, lower back and lumbar. It seems to all but disappear, and during any type of extreme riding it didn't flop or bounce around. The lumbar compression straps helped pull the bottom of the pack into the back when the reservoir started to shrink in size, and it was useful for doing customized load and fit trimming. Besides the exceptional load carrying and stability characteristics, the pack had some other excellent features, including helmet hooks, the main compartments clam shell opening and mesh pockets, the roomy side cargo pockets, and the stretchy back overflow sleeve. The 70 oz (2 L) of water is fine for short rides, and the storage space works adequately, especially when adding in the rear sleeve.

The Antidote lumbar reservoir was easy to clean, and install in the pack, but it was cumbersome to fill (especially re-filling) and difficult to dry properly, and the Quick Link's button got stiff with age. I would have liked a keychain hook in the hip cargo pockets for convenience.



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The Charge 10 LR's innovative design, lightweight materials, soft padding, and its highly flexible nature, create a plush and comfortable pack, and it becomes one with the back, and has just enough space for moderate rides.

### Strengths

- Antidote bladder system
- Comfortable, conformable and nicely padded
- Weight and pack disappear
- No flopping and bouncing around
- Clam shell opening
- Lumbar compression straps
- Main compartments mesh pockets
- Overflow sleeve
- Helmet hooks

### Weaknesses

Cargo pockets need a keychain hook  
Reservoir difficult to dry  
Reservoir cumbersome to fill/re-fill  
Quick connect button gets stiff with age

**MSRP: \$110**

**Overall Rating:** 5 Flamin' Chili Peppers



### Charge 10 LR Specs:

- MSRP \$110
- Ultralight lumbar reservoir pack for light and fast rides.
- Antidote Reservoir with Quick Link System
- Capacity: 10L (8L + 2L Reservoir)
- Pack weight: 0.45kg
- Pack dimensions: 50 x 58 x 15cm
- Back panel: LV
- Harness: Ultralight 3-D Mesh Independent Suspension™
- Belt: Fixed 25mm with cargo pockets
- Features: Ultralight materials, Bike tool organizer pocket, Helmet hook, Stretch overflow storage, Lumbar compression, Media pocket
- Fabric: 40D Diamond Ripstop, 230D Taffeta & 210D Nylon with DWR + 1000 mm PU + Silicon

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**Camelbak Charge LR**

**MSRP: \$ 152.96**

**Number of Reviews: 1**

**Overall Rating: 5 out of 5**

