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The Gear Junkie Scoop: CamelBak Antidote

It was more than 20 years ago when an enterprising endurance athlete stuffed a medical IV bag into a tube sock and sewed it onto his cycling jersey. CamelBak, the self-proclaimed inventor of the "hands-free hydration category," was born, and hydration in the outdoors would never be the same.

This year, a distant descendant of the tube-sock holder will be released. The company claims its Antidote product line will redefine "how packs and reservoirs should work together as complete hydration systems."

I am a fan of CamelBak's reservoir line. They have proven to be bomber and leak-proof after years of use. Water does not taste bad from a CamelBak reservoir, even after a week of straight use in a hot climate. (I know this from experience on a ten-day desert trip.)



The redesigned Antidote reservoir--which won't be on the market until this fall, and which I have not yet got my hands on --includes a few upgrades, some significant, others minor. The open-



ing on the water container, still a screw-on lid, is now the "widest opening on the market," the company says. Any size hand, CamelBak claims, can reach into all areas of the reservoir for cleaning. Its cap can be opened and locked with a quarter turn. For airing it out after use, there are integrated "dryer arms" that fold out from behind to open up the reservoir.

The Antidote is lighter than past models and has a lower profile. It sits flatter in a backpack when filled with water.

Finally, the hose has new click-in connections. There are auto shut-off valves to let you take the hose out (and keep the water from leaking).

Available this autumn, the new line includes a 100-ounce version (\$35), 70-ounce (\$33), and 50-ounce (\$30). They will be sold alone, along with multiple CamelBak backpack models in October. Tube socks and IV bags not required.