



## PÁRAMO VELEZ ADVENTURE LIGHT **£180**

PRAISE BE – COULD THIS BE THE JACKET TO FINALLY SILENCE PÁRAMO'S DOUBTERS?

**FIRST  
TEST**

For many, the word 'Light' that suffixes this new, slimmer riff on Páramo's cracking Velez Adventure Smock will arch an interested eyebrow. Páramo waterproof

products have always been love-'em-or-leave-'em affairs for many, with praise usually centring on their freakish waterproof/breathability powers (more of which later) and durability, and excuses typically involving the words 'hot' and 'heavy'.

The original Velez Adventure Smock hit its target squarely, cut as it was for loose and free action activities such as scrambling as well as conventional hill-walking. It was unquestionably a well-designed bit of kit with considerable merit. But it's Páramo, the naysayers wagged. Hot. Heavy. Therefore, no.

Well, in a rare victory for the naysayers, Páramo appears to have listened. And, in doing so, may well have struck gold.

The Velez Adventure (VA) Light is the same design as its still-available daddy – but 20 per cent lighter, slimming from 774g to a Gore-Tex-worrying 584g (men's size M). That's within eyeshot of light hard shell jackets such as the Mountain Equipment Morpheus (470g, men's size L), and considerably leaner than winter shells such as the Rab Latock (648g, men's size L). This dramatic diet is due to a redesigned fabric and resultant slight reduction in insulation. But the smock still has the feel of something that will keep you warm and comfortable as well as dry – which makes it instantly interesting.

### Beastie tech

Páramo's waterproofing system uses a technique nicked from mammal hair, called Nikwax Analogy. If water gets forced through the face fabric – which it might – a special liner pushes it back out again, using fibre-to-fibre moisture transport. This goes for liquid

water, as well as sweat vapour. It sounds odd, but it works: Páramo products keep you dry in a way few other waterproofs can manage. But where the classic Páramo fabric is a thick, matte affair, the VA Light sports a tissue-thin, textured skin. This is welcome at the weigh-in. But surely it's less rain-resistant?

### Cut for action

My first impression of the Light when I put it on was how silky comfortable it was. Having used a 'regular' Velez Adventure for some time, the weight reduction is quite noticeable and the smock feels like a comfortable soft shell rather than a waterproof. The pump liner is comfortable, and the thinner face fabric facilitates freedom of movement very well. The wired hood is well-designed, adjustable and big enough for a helmet. There's a huge chest pocket, and venting zips at the sides. There are some irritations: the drawstrings are of the thin



Hood's excellent: there's a helmet under there.



Venting good but hand pockets a fiddle.



Central map pocket is roomy.



and ludicrously stretchy variety that require two feet of pulling before they start to take effect. I have concerns over the durability of the fabric when it comes to scrambling. The zipped hand pockets are in a fiddly place (behind the side venting zips, which have to be unzipped for access), the cut is short at the front – which won't suit everyone – and the scooped tail flips up quite easily when tightened. But these are minor niggles when I consider its performance: so far it has been excellent. I used it over December on drizzly hill-walks to substitute a mid layer and waterproof jacket, and remained bone dry, and warm in everything from ten degrees to freezing. And, when January came, well below that.

### Winter thrill

Páramo's dedicated winter jacket – the very warm Aspira – comes in at a whopping 924g, so taking a jacket weighing half that into the blizzard-bound

Carneddau felt slightly edgy. In the end said hellish day turned into two, with a night out in some seriously bad weather: gale-propelled spindrift, snow blizzard, eye-freezing wind chill and an hour of rain to finish off with. I was wearing a base layer, a fleece gilet and the Páramo on top of it, and I stayed both comfortably warm and completely dry. Based on my own experience with every type of membrane and hard shell there is, this would not have happened to me with another jacket. Stripped-down insulation be damned: this was an impressive performance indeed, and one that has made the regular-weight Velez Adventure – still available alongside this version – rather redundant in my kit cupboard. Come to think of it, every other waterproof and mid layer in there is looking nervous. As for performance in the warmer wet weather it was designed to cope with, I'll soon find out: its next testing ground is Kilimanjaro, so watch this space. **T**

### FACTS

**Price** £180

**Weight** 584g (men's size M)

**Outer** Lightweight Nikwax Analogy

**Inner** Nikwax Pump liner

**Waterproofness** water-resistant (though effectively waterproof due to the pump liner)

**Breathability** extremely breathable

**Sizes** S-XXL (men's); XS-XL (women's)

**Made in** Colombia



comfortable, quiet, warm, waterproof



annoying drawstrings; short cut at front



superb waterproof jacket with the warmth of a mid layer

»» Out spring 09; [www.paramo.co.uk](http://www.paramo.co.uk)