

# TOP GEAR

You've voted. The results are in. And it seems you're a loyal bunch. Or your gear is just so damn good that you haven't worn it out since last year's awards, despite the miles you've no doubt covered. There are a few movements in the ranks, however, as members venture forth to test-drive new brands, new gear and new places to walk. **Chris Townsend** announces this year's winners.

**L**ast year I commented on how loyal you were to favourite brands. This year has reinforced that with even fewer changes from last year than between 2005 and 2006. In 12 of the fifteen categories that were run last year, the winner is the same, and there are only two new entries - Lowe Alpine in waterproof jackets, where they replace Sprayway in third place, and Paramo in fleece, where they replace Regatta as runner-up.

Otherwise, there's been a little shuffling of position but nothing more. I suspect that many of you are voting for the same products year after year, given the long life of good quality outdoor gear. But the votes show that you must really like the gear too. Items that don't perform satisfactorily tend to get replaced quickly, however durable they may be. People certainly don't vote for them. Your favourite brands are top-of-the-range expensive ones too, showing an appreciation of good quality and a willingness to spend money on it.



Chris Townsend



## MEINDL

**MEINDL 2 BRASHER 3 SCARPA**

This category combines two of last year's categories. Then, Meindl were first in boots and second in shoes. The company that was first in shoes has vanished. I guess this reflects the fact that you wear boots more than shoes. That Meindl is first isn't surprising given the comfort, high quality and durability of Meindl footwear. Meindl has also balanced modern trends with traditional designs, offering the classic 'little brown boot' alongside rather more colourful and eye-catching modern trail shoes. Meindl is a German company and has been making footwear for over 300 years. Today, its Bavarian factory employs over 200 people who produce over a million pairs of boots and shoes a year. Some of these clearly find their way onto the feet of **walk** readers.



### Best Walking Boot



**BERGHAUS**

**2 PARAMO  
3 HELLY HANSON**

Base layers are unglamorous, but important for comfort. Berghaus has done more than most to make the appearance of base layers less like old fashioned thermal underwear and more like modern casual wear with the Tech T range, which probably explains why they are top for the second year running. And for those longer trips when you can't wash your base layers every day, the X-Static range is treated with silver to stop it smelling. Recently, Berghaus has added a range of base layers called Exposure, which are made from 60 per cent wool and designed for cold weather.



### Best Base Layer



**CRAGHOPPER**

**2 ROHAN  
3 REGATTA**

Third last year, Craghoppers hops to the top, reflecting its increasing range of trousers, which includes ones treated with insect repellent for tropical travel (and the midges of the Scottish Highlands!) and ones with fleece inners for cold weather. There are trousers with zip off legs too, so you can change them into shorts when the weather brightens up. Craghoppers trousers are made from durable synthetic and polycotton fabrics and are functional with plenty of pockets.



### Best Walking Trousers

**CRAGHOPPERS**