

SCUBAPRO X-TEK SIDEMOUNT SYSTEM | Harness £259 (€335) Wing £249 (€322) Cover £25 (€32)

Mark Evans: Sidemount is still the in-vogue style of diving, and the X-Tek sidemount harness from Scubapro is a well-thought-out and robust piece of kit.

Although sidemount originally developed through cave diving, it is now commonplace on wreck and reef dives across the globe. However, there is a vast array of styles within the 'art' of sidemount, with ways of mounting the dual cylinders on to the harness varying depending on how the user was trained or how they prefer to dive. The X-Tek has been constructed in a modular fashion, which means whether you use butt-plates, fixed waist-belt D-rings, single-bungee, etc, it can cater for you.

It is also available with two different size bladders - 25lb and 45lb - so you can select the size you require depending on where you are going to be diving.

There is plenty of adjustment in the harness - shoulder straps, waist belt and crotch strap can all be tailored to fit like a glove, which holds the backplate and wing rigidly against your body.

As with all sidemount rigs, don't expect to get it out of the box and go diving minutes later. The harness and wing need to be built and fastened together, and then you need to dial in the fit for you, so allow a couple of hours to get it all set up just right before heading for your nearest body of water.

Underwater, the system feels like an extension of your body, and everything just falls to hand, including the efficient power inflator. My test unit also came with the optional top cover, which just Velcros around the shoulder straps and is designed to increase the overall streamlining of the system.

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Mark Evans: For the test dives on the X-Tek rig, I teamed it up with a set of sidemount regulators from Scubapro, comprising MK25 first stages and G260 second stages. The MK25 is the perfect reg for sidemount aficionados, as it is a high-performance unit and it offers multiple routing options, especially via the port out of the top of the turret. The G260 has that old-school appeal, performs admirably in all conditions, and can be configured with a left-hand or right-hand hose routing, so you can tailor it to your personal preference. I was taught with two right-hand regulators on my sidemount course, and the Scubapro regs both came left-hand routed, but I soon got my head around it and managed to get them set up in a streamlined fashion.

