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Packing the hard/soft way

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LITEGEAR 20-INCH HYBRID CARRY ON

Will we ever find the perfect wheel-aboard bag — light in weight but with enough of a frame to protect contents from being smushed under heavier bags?

The 20-inch wheeled Hybrid Carry-On from LiteGear offers a nice mix of light and sturdy. At 6 pounds, it's not the lightest wheel-aboard around, but the hard-shell underside combined with the soft-sided expandable polyester top make the bag one of the best-structured compromises in the category.

Sized a tad shorter and slimmer than most wheel-aboards (20 inches by 13.5 inches by 9 inches deep), the more compact dimensions are designed to fit into a wider range of overhead bins and under-the-seat spaces on both domestic and international flights.

The bag is all big open space inside, with a full-length zippered mesh pocket on the inside of the top, and multiple spacious zippered pockets on the outside. A zippered expansion panel provides an extra 3 inches in depth when you need more space. The telescoping handle has a good ergonomic grip, built-in padded top and side carry handles assist lifting, and an adjustable, removable add-a-bag strap plays well with additional bags. Available in black or mallard green.

LiteGear 20-inch Hybrid Carry-On is \$159.95. Buying info at www.litegearbags.com.

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