



KICKSTARTER-D4 Portaledge March 1, 2017



The Portaledge. Re-invented.

We have been hard at work creating the new paradigm in big wall portaledges. You can currently pre-order your D4 Portaledge for a 10% discount! Note that though we have conservatively estimated an April, 2018 delivery for the 10% off orders, all is going extremely well with the development and prototype process (see the Updates!), and we currently expect all Kickstarter orders to be shipped this year. We have also offered early Kickstarter supporters a significant discounted price on the first batch of 28 ledges (sold out).

If you don't need a portaledge (though just like Sneeds, everyone needs one!), please consider one of the other rewards--all proceeds will be used to outfit some of the best big wall climbers with early prototypes for their cutting edge adventures.

All D4 Portaledges come complete with ledge, rainfly, and haulsack.

The D4 Story

John Middendorf created the first truly stormproof Portaledge in the 1980's and 1990's, testing each iteration on the world's toughest big walls. By sharing the technology through his company, A5 Adventures, a huge boom in big wall standards arose as climbers could withstand severe storms on the world's most remote big walls for the first time.

John sold his company in 1998 and since then, his 1990's design has become the standard for all the major Portaledge manufacturers today.

In 2016, while climbing with his family, John was asked by a climber in Arapiles why no one made the nice, strong, stormproof, and lightweight ledges like A5 used to make, and the conception for D4 was born.

In the past year, using FEA tools along with ideas that had been floating around in his head for 20 years, John has created a revolutionary design, with four major cutting-edge innovations, and sure to become the new paradigm in Portaledge technology.

D4's Four Major Innovations



Hybrid-diameter Tubing



The frame has been redesigned using FEA computer tools, and uses multiple diameters of tubing to make for a stronger, lighter, and more rigid ledge. Full Size (80" x 46.5") yet no spreader bar needed! These ledges are so strong, there is literally no flex even when set up in a tree with only one point of contact. For more details on the structural innovations, please see [SuperTopo Design Discussion](#).

Curved Corners



goodbye block corners!

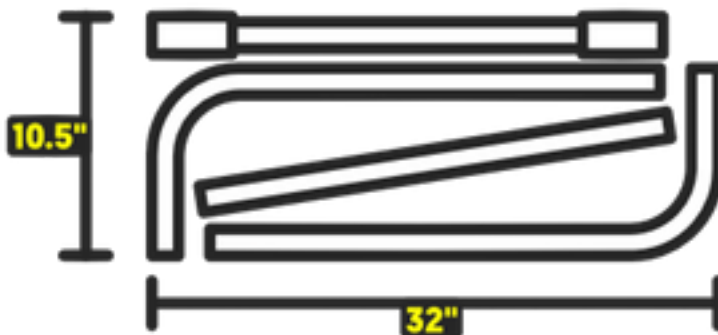
John Middendorf, the inventor of the D4 portaledge, pioneered the world's first Stormproof portaledges back in the 80's and 90's with his A5 Adventures company. One of the solutions he came up with to make a rigid ledge back then was the "Block Corner" design, which is seen on virtually every portaledge manufactured by other companies today. The new curved corners is a superior solution, offering more strength, lighter weight, and most importantly, increased rigidity of the overall frame.

Four-Point Suspension



The four-point suspension allows for easier adjustment and a more stable platform--the new D4 system is a 4/8-point equalising suspension with each of the four fins distributing the load to eight attachment points, creating more stability in typical off-center big wall loading situations. Weight is saved, fewer straps to tangle during set-up, and adjustments are easy for every big wall and tree bivy situation.

Packed Foldability



The D4 portaledge is *the* most compact folding ledge design, and even the haul sack has been re-invented to make packing up, and most importantly, deploying the portaledge tons easier, even in high wind situations. The zippered haulsack enables packing up to be simple and easy, while also ensuring an organised deployment. This unique design also allows for the portaledge to be optionally integrated with the fly (which fits in a separate pocket) as the system is packed up, for full stormproof deployments in minutes. *Poised in readiness!*



The new D4 Deploy system allows organised packing and unpacking. No more jumble of tubes and fabric coming out of a sack!

The D4 Design

Stronger, Lighter: With these four innovations, the D4 ledge is the strongest, lightest, most rigid full-size ledge available today. The size is 46.5" x 80", and current prototypes weigh in at 10.5 pounds. Complete with fly, haul sack and tent pole, the system weighs 14 pounds, making it the lightest full-size portaledge system ever created. There are a number of other progressive innovations as well, such as the top-vent, a novel fly tensioning system, and integrated fly-tentpole pocket. Every aspect of the D4 Portaledge has been redesigned and enhanced from the ground up!



D4 Prototype #1
(now in Baffin Island)



D4 Prototype #2 (John Middendorf will be climbing a big wall in mainland Australia with this one in March)



Proto #3--new fly material (vent not yet installed)

The D4 Design Process

This is as authentic as it gets. We don't sell a product right after the initial design, and hope it works. We are continually refining and improving our design, and personally testing each iteration. Currently we are building a series of prototypes that are going out with some of the world's best climbers, including Marek Reganowicz (who has the D4 Prototype on an extreme wall in the Canadian Arctic right now), Mike Libeck (for a Greenland trip), Twid Turner (for an Alaskan wall), and even the El Cap master, PPTP, who is known for his abuse of ledges (he hauls them fully assembled up the walls). We are also supplying [TheTreeProjects](#) with the D4 Portledge for their tree camping adventures, so will be covering the whole range of vertical camping experiences in our development and product testing.

D4 design isn't about just how the trim will look or colour combinations, it is about creating the strongest, lightest, easiest-to-use, most functional and safest product possible. It begins and ends with engineering, and in between is the creative process of exploring a variety of ideas and materials to ensure the most rapid and efficient innovation possible.

We won't compromise--you can be assured that when we begin building the official Kickstarter batch in May, they will have the latest design refinements, features, and best materials possible for the world's finest portaledge.

UPDATES: Stay tuned for [updates](#)--this is where you will see the design process unfold. During the next few months, we will be building a series of prototypes and sending them out to the field, examining the ledges after use, and with the feedback received, will be continually improving the design. As we get new data and information from our field testers (including John Middendorf), we will post updates with the information and explain exactly how we are improving the product for our Kickstarter production.

By the way, we know that other companies will copy our lead, and future portaledges will all incorporate D4 original innovations--that's par for the course as explained in [this radio interview](#). As also explained in the [Business Insider article](#), we will simply continue to "out-innovate" the rest, as many of the best climbers are already on board with the D4, and their feedback and expertise will drive future innovation. Just as the A5 design was the best in the 1990's, the D4 is the best portaledge ever to hit the big walls of the world. Accept no substitutes!

Another great thing about this project is that we are "getting the band back together". The A5 era of the 80's and 90's was a highly collaborative time with many climbers pushing their own limits in both climbing and craftsmanship, bringing great ideas and product-feedback to the table for new climbing gear. Barry Ward was one of the original craftsmen and fellow innovator at A5, and will be making the sewn parts of the new ledge in his Durango Sewing Solutions shop. *All Kickstarter orders will be shipped from Durango, Colorado, USA (note, it is likely we will be able to ship batches of the 2017 Kickstarter D4 Portaledges earlier than September--if so, they will be shipped on a first ordered, first shipped basis--so order sooner than later!)*



Barry Ward, one of the original A5 craftsmen.

Kickstarter Video: <https://youtu.be/4rfnnX8hK6g>

Press for D4

- Business Insider: [The secret to conquering the toughest climb in the Himalayas may lie in a shed in Tasmania](#)
 - ABC News: [Big wall climbing being reinvented in John Middendorf's Tasmanian shed](#)
 - The Tree Project interview
 - ABC Radio Interview (w/ pics)
 - Gripped Magazine
 - Emerging Gear--Gear Junkie
 - Big Wall Gear Facebook Page
 - D4 Fans Mailing List.
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Backer Rewards

Support this project and help raise the bar in climbing technology once again to expand the boundaries for climbers around the world. The D4 Portaledge is a new dawn for portaledge design!



>\$10
D4 Logo Decal



>\$25
D4 Patch



>\$75
Big wall BuddyBag



BUSINESS INSIDER
AUSTRALIA

 Radio

 ***SUPERTOPO***TM

Climbing

THE
CLIMBING
ZINE



Gripped



Additional Credits:

- Graphic design by Hudson Paine
- Logo design by Tyler Miller

UPDATE 1 — March 2, 2017

20 ledges pre-ordered on Day 1!

Dear Supporters:

Thank you for a great first day! We really appreciate your interest and support for this innovative new portaledge, and we are very much looking forward to supplying each and every portaledge backer with the finest stronger and lighter portaledge available today. And many thanks also to the supporters who opted for the Buddy Bag, patches, and decal rewards--so much appreciated!

As of mid-day on Day 2, we only have seven more portaledges available for 2017 delivery, so please share with your friends who might need a portaledge for their vertical camping adventures.

By the way, this is also the first portaledge truly suitable for tree-camping thanks to its rigidity even in a tree-loading situation (where all the forces are on one point of the frame) thanks to the hybrid diameter larger middle tube of the D4 design. So tell your tree-camping friends as well!

Today I finished the initial pattern for the Haulsack, and I was very pleased with the new fit of the ledge, fly and flypole all in its compact zippered haulable pack. Along with its lighter weight, the smaller packed size really makes this system tempting to bring even on the most minimal camping excursions.



Version 3 of the Haulsack--still a prototype but coming along. Very compact--inside is the ledge, fly and flypole.

Thanks again for your support, and please keep spreading the word, as we do hope to establish our company further with lots of new ideas on the table for fun outdoor tools.

PS. Here is the way the haulsack works again for reference--the way the ledge and fly can be integrated enables full stormproof deployment in minutes.

D4 Ledge set-up sequence with new ez-deploy haulsack



Ledge and fly can be packed and unpacked as a unit for quick deploy.
Haulsack has pockets for fly and poles. No more jumble of fabric and tubes coming out of a sack.

D4 Haulsack Deployment System

Cheers!
John Middendorf

UPDATE 2—March 4, 2017

D4 Portaledge Kickstarter Update: now taking orders for 2018!

Dear D4 Portaledge Supporters:

Wow! We reached our kickstarter goal for the D4 Portaledge in less than 3 days! We are feeling very excited about seeing the D4 out in the climbing world!

I want to thank all of our supporters and so many others for their encouraging words! We have been inspired and grateful for the amazing response!

2018 OFFER--please share!

Due to the fantastic support, we are offering the first 20 ledges 2018 ledges at a 10% discount, so you can order them for your 2018 big wall season through our Kickstarter for \$1080, \$120 off the normal retail. Note that these come with fly, fly-pole, and haulsack, the complete set-up for all your vertical adventures.

Please let your friends know about this offer, the D4 Portaledge is sure to be in high demand in the coming years, and we will certainly be building them first to our initial Kickstarter supporters before they would be available in shops.

Please share this Link: [D4 Portaledge Kickstarter 2018](#)

Product Updates:

We are continuing to refine the product and send our first prototypes to key product testers. Because of our confidence that the structural strength of the D4 surpasses all other designs, we have outfitted Steve and Jen of [TheTreeProjects.com](#) with Prototype #2 to be used this weekend in some of Tasmania's tallest trees, and in the coming months for their amazing work in raising awareness of the unique values of the world's trees. Tree

set-ups are one of the most severe loading situations for a portaledge due to the fact that the load is carried fully by the middle of the ledge. The D4 is built strong and light for every loading situation, and we look forward to hearing of the increased mobility (packs small for moving up the tree) and comfort with the D4 ledge from our tree testers.



Jen and Steve checking out their new D4 Portaledge

John has been refining the design of the D4 haulsack, which is getting rave reviews on many Facebook and [Supertopo](#) conversations. This design simplifies the setup and packing up of the portaledge, something every climber has previously struggled with at one time or another. Every version gets a little better!



John working on the third version of the D4 Haulsack System. Barry has put the finishing touches on the new top vent system, and this first one is being sent to Marek Reganowicz who is now in Clyde River, so he can test out our new material revisions. For Marek's first wall in Baffin Island, he will be climbing with a D4 ledge and our original chosen fly material, but since then we have chosen a superior fly material, so we look forward to his comparative review and feedback for his second wall project up in the Canadian Arctic.



Barry dancing with his latest fly.

Frame production for the prototypes goes well, and even here, we are continually creating even stronger and better ways to create the best product for our upcoming Kickstarter batch.



Tubing for Proto#3 ready for bends and assembly.

Thank you again so much for your support. John will be climbing with the D4 portaledge in the next week or two, so please check the [Facebook page](#) for updates, where he hopes to post Instagram/Facebook pictures of the ledge in use from the field.

Yours

The D4 Portaledge Team.

UPDATE 3—March 16, 2017

D4 portaledge in action

From halfway up Australia's iconic big wall, at 250metres vertical, Ozymandias at Mt Buffalo national park:

The D4 ledge is performing flawlessly. Packs small so fits inside the haul bag well, simplifying hauling. Sets up easy, and nice and roomy for two tall folks (me and Simon Mentz). The weather looked iffy today so we decided just to hang out for the day in this most exposed spot, very scenic view!

Making small design changes to enhance the ledge's convenience. Really happy with the D4's compactness and lightness when packed, and the roominess and stability when deployed.

More details once we return to the horizontal. Cheers! John Middendorf





field design work



Where we are at this moment. Photo by Michelle Doherty, mt Buffalo park ranger.

UPDATE 4

D4 Portaledge Update March 24, 2017

Exciting things are happening in the continuing development of the D4 production Portaledge. First, the ledge has been wall-tested by its inventor, John Middendorf, on Ozymandias--Australia's iconic big wall in Mt. Buffalo--see the [Ozy Trip Report](#)) The four major new features [namely, the hybrid diameter tubing, the curved corners, the four-point equalising suspension, and the new D4 Haulsack] have performed amazingly well, each bringing new significant improvements to the modern portaledge design.



D4 Portaledge on Ozymandias, Mt. Buffalo. Photo by Simon Mentz.

First Wall Review: The curved corners and the hybrid-diameter tubing design create an incredibly rigid ledge, with almost no flex even when dancing in the portaledge (Simon Mentz, my partner on Ozymandias, will

be working on a video documenting our climb). The four/eight point equalising suspension system exceeded all expectations to make a strong and stable platform with no micro-shifts of the ledge (as typical with 6-point systems) while moving about, while also minimising extra weight and creating simplicity in adjustment. The Ready-to-Deploy Haulsack is a big breakthrough and enables the ledge to be deployed and packed up quickly and efficiently--plus the whole system is so compact that it's super easy to shove it inside even an already-packed haulbag (though of course it can be hauled separately too), so there's no reason not to use the D4 as a super comfy belay ledge!



The D4 is so easy to deploy and pack up, there's no reason not to use it as a belay ledge on the big stones!

Standard Features: The overall weight of complete portaledge system (ledge, fly, fly pole, haulsack, and included quicklink for the fly/ledge attachment (saving a carabiner) is now at 16.2 lbs. (7.3kg.), a bit heavier

than the first protos primarily because we have upgraded to a beefier waterproof fly material--but overall, the D4 is still lighter than even the competitor's single portaledges! We have innovated new ways to construct the fly and vent system, and the fly fits snugly on the frame even before tightening the drawcords! The prototype beds are made from lightweight 210D Dyneema fabric, which offers uncompromising strength and puncture resistance. Even though this material is very expensive and generally only seen on high end packs, we plan to use it for production beds due to its exceptional and unique characteristics of lightweight strength.



D4 Ledge in the Tarkine. Photo by Steve Pearce.

Prototypes and Testing: We are continuing to send out more prototypes for testing and feedback. Yosemite Demo #1 goes out on Monday to Eliza Kerr, who plans to climb as a mother/daughter team on El Cap in April; this ledge should be in continuous use in Yosemite for the next few months. [Steve Pearce](#) of [The Tree Projects](#), has given us glowing reports of the ledge after attending the Tarkine Tree protest--this ledge has also gotten wide coverage by the [Bob Brown Foundation](#). The D4 portaledge is really the first true "tree portaledge", with minimal flex even with only one frame point of contact. And we should soon hear back from Marek Reganowicz, who is scheduled to be completing his first winter ascent in Baffin Island.



Steve Pearce during a Tarkine Tree Protest--notice no flex of the ledge even though the frame has only one point of contact. No other ledge will be so rigid in this situation.

We are also continuing to get additional coverage in the media as interest in this new paradigm in portaledges increases, including [Gripped Magazine](#) and [Gear Junkie](#). Additional links if you have not seen them are here: [Business Insider](#), [ABC Radio Interview \(w/ pics\)](#), [ABC Online](#), and [Big Wall Gear Facebook page](#).

KICKSTARTER--*Tell your friends!* We still have 16 ledges available at the Kickstarter discount (\$1080 complete with ledge, fly, flypole, and haulsack--the best deal in portaledges on the market) , so please share the link with your friends: <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1188459201/the-d4-portaledge>. Even if your friends do not need a portaledge, we have cool perks and the funding will be used to sponsor the most extreme big wall expeditions worldwide. We know this new portaledge will be in high demand once the big wall season kicks into gear, but as we are only committing to producing Kickstarter orders this year, order soon! *Last week for the discounted Kickstarter orders!*

Other things: I have updated the [Set Up Sequence video](#) showing the set up by assembling the long tubes first, then the end tubes. However, Steve Pearce has since discovered an alternate method, and tells us he had an easier time setting up the end tubes first (making two big "U's"), then the

long tubes. Either way, the deployment and pack up of the D4 ledge is really quite straightforward and intuitive, and much easier than other designs, thanks largely to the new D4 Haulsack design and integrated fly/ledge ability.

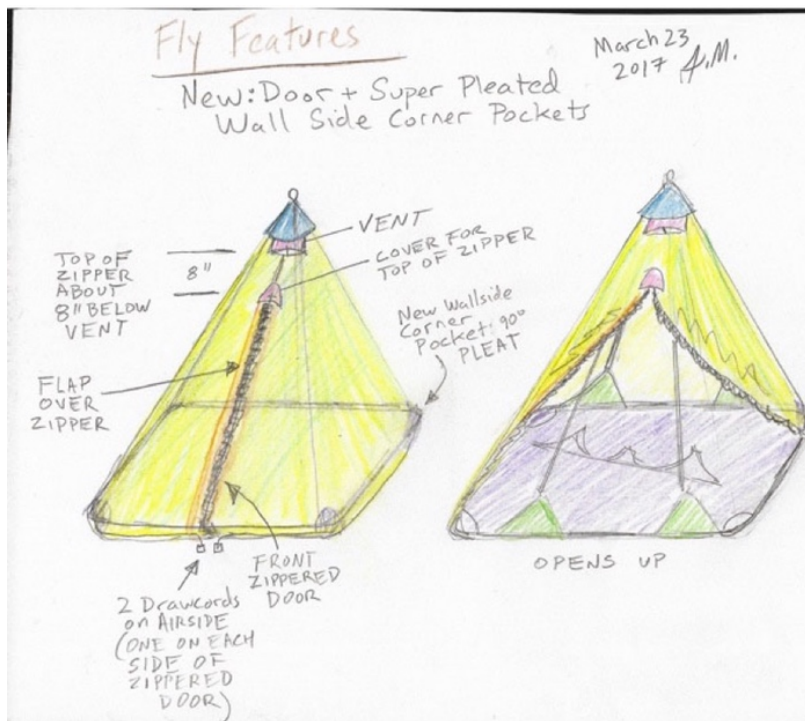
There are ongoing tweaks to enhance the usability of the ledge and fly, and we are dialing in the "camping features" such as the optimum lengths of the adjustment straps, position of clip-in daisies, and the way the fly pole attaches. We are also working on a new innovative fly door, which we plan to extensively test to ensure the storm-proofness of the ledge, but it will likely become a standard feature in our Kickstarter batch, as it really offers amazing versatility--more details to come soon. We are committed to offering the finest uncompromising tools for every vertical camping need!



Detail of the fly pole attachment, as well as new 2" web reinforcement at wall side corners--totally bomber!



Fly Pole setup now part of frame, rather than fly, increasing the usability of the system.



New Zippered Door Concept--minimal seams and adds incredible versatility--more details soon.

Thank you for your ongoing interest in this project!
Yours, John Middendorf.