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LE CHAMEAU CONDOR LCX HUNTING BOOT

TEST SERIES BY STEVEN M. KIDD

LONG-TERM REPORT

April 23, 2018

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TESTER INFORMATION

NAME: Steven M. Kidd
EMAIL: ftroop94ATgmailDOTcom
AGE: 45
LOCATION: Arrington, Tennessee
GENDER: M
HEIGHT: 5' 9" (1.75 m)
WEIGHT: 185 lb (83.90 kg)
SHOE SIZE 10.5 US

Backpacking Background: I've been a backpacker on and off for over 30 years. I backpacked as a Boy Scout, and then again almost every month in my twenties, while packing an average weight of 50+ lb (23+ kg). In the last several years I have become a hammock camping enthusiast. I generally go on one or two night outings that cover from 5 to 20 mi (8 - 32 km) distances. I also do several annual outings lasting four to five days covering distances between 15 to 20 mi (24 - 32 km) per day. I try to keep the all-inclusive weight of my pack under 20 lb (9 kg) even in the winter.

INITIAL REPORT

PRODUCT INFORMATION & SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Le Chameau
Year of Manufacture: 2017
Manufacturer's Website: <http://www.lechameau.com/>
MSRP: US \$399
Listed Weight: 1490 g (53 oz)
Measured Weight: 178 g (60.6 oz) for Size 11.5 US
Color: Marron (Brown)
Sizes Available: 6.5, 7, 8, 8.5, 9.5, 10, 11, 11.5, 12.5 US
Seasonal Use: Year Round to -10 C (14 F)
Upper: 2.2 mm (0.09 in) Oiled Nubuck Leather
Sole: Michelin OC Deep Forest

The Le Chameau Condor LCH Hunting Boots are a lightweight, waterproof and breathable products designed for game stalking (hunting). They offer a full grain leather upper with softer malleable leather above the Achilles and on the calf. The Deep Forest soles are made exclusively by Michelin, with motocross technology, and are designed for durability, flexibility, traction and comfort.

The inner material is a 5-layer construction known as LCX and is 100% waterproof. The construction is designed to prevent water from permeating the boot, yet allowing moisture to escape in order to allow the feet to stay dry in varying conditions. The boots also provide a 360-degree rubber rand around the leather outer for extended protection to the leather.

Due to the tighter fit found in the boot, the manufacturer recommends ordering one size larger than one would generally wear.

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

The Condor boots are a fully waterproof high-cut hunting boot that rise to the calf for adequate protection on stream crossings or other marshy areas. They are created with an ultra-lightweight design for comfort during extended use. Save a pair of supple leather duck boots with a similar rise that I wear occasionally in snowy conditions, I have not worn a high riding boot like this since the days I was required to wear combat boots. For backpacking, I was a little skeptical about their use as I've personally moved away from the traditionally lower cut, just over-the-ankle, waterproof full grain leather boots; and I typically wear trail runners with zero waterproofing as a general rule in most conditions these days. However, I do hunt, or gamestalk, occasionally and



La Chameau Condor LCX

often spend time wading through mucky conditions whilst sitting long hours in cold temperatures, so I felt obliged to give the Le Chateau boots a stab.

Le Chateau's origins although currently headquartered in London, England, began in the Cherbourg, France and are known for their 'Welly' style boots. Although they offer other hunting boots, the Condor is the only style I see offered with laces. The website clearly suggested sizing up one (1) US foot size due to the tight fit of the boot. I generally wear a 10.5 US, so I ordered an 11.5 US. The boots are only offered in one standard width (no description of D, E, etc.). This caused me a little consternation in ordering off the internet without a true fitting, since I have an extremely wide forefoot and many standard (D) width shoes are simply too narrow for my clodhoppers.



Notice the Michelin OCS Tread

tightened too snugly. At the base of the boot's throat, there is an angled eyelet that completely locks my foot into place before lacing the remaining portion of the boot up the shaft with another four eyelets for a total of nine locking points. I walked around up and down and didn't notice my foot sliding inside the boot.

I also noticed the quality of the boot appeared unmatched. The Our Story section on the La Chateau website mentions that even today it takes over nine months to become a bottier, as I find the craftsmanship impeccable. I find it an attractive boot. I slid my hand down the inside of the boot and noticed how smooth and soft the LCX waterproofing material felt. It felt buttery. Again, I went to not one but two other boots with waterproof lining and ran my hand down the inside. Both were coarse and heavy.

My heel will often slip in a new pair of boots until the leather breaks in and this too was the case with the La Chateau's. However, this only lasted for about 5 - 10 minutes while walking around inside my house. The suspect the softer leathers on the boot allow for this and they actually felt broken in before I ever decided to wear them outside.

For a quick break-in prior to the Field Report that I will post in approximately two months I wore the boots on a short Cub Scout hike that was approximately 3 mi (5 km). Temperatures were around 50 F (10 C) that day and I wore them for at least 5 hours with minimal moisture buildup inside the boot or socks. I also purposely walked along the edge of two ponds with water rising approximately 8 in (20 cm) without any leakage! My initial impression was certainly positive!

SUMMARY

I'm initially impressed by both the lightweight nature, the quality craftsmanship and the breathability of the La Chateau Condor LCX boots! They appear to be well made and fit me well, even with a little extra room in the toebox. That's not even a gripe or thorn as I typically deal with this in a boot that is specifically designed as Wide.

The first thing I noticed about the boots when they arrived was how truly lightweight they were! I lifted them from the box and was amazed at the featherweight. The very first thing I did was walk to over to my food scale and set a boot on it. The one boot weighed 30.3 oz (859 g). I was perplexed, so before I even tried them on I walked into my closet and grabbed a 20-year-old full grain leather-hiking boot that came just over the ankle and put it on the scale...27.9 oz (791 g). I was shocked! Yes, there has been twenty years of technology, but I immediately had several thoughts enter my head; (1) they still make that 20 year old boot, (2) these hunting boots are several inches taller than the other ones and (3) although the Condor boots are heavier the weight distribution made them appear lighter...basically not clunky and heavy.

My next test was to see if my stump would fit into the foot bed. Amazingly, it did and comfortably. The boot did appear to be a little long in the toes and I was initially concerned about this but I tried them around the house. By a little long, I easily have 1/2 a thumb length from the end of my big toe to the front of the boot. That generally is excessive length for the average footwear, but again my foot is extremely wide! I immediately realized I could potentially try to size down to an 11 US, but it would likely end up being too narrow. I only say this due to repeated experience with footwear over my 45 years, and even when dealing with a product that is designed as Wide.

The nice thing about these boots is the lacing system. My heel fits snugly into the counter of the boot and the lacing system locks my foot into place not allowing it to slide forward (and hopefully preventing any toe blistering). To further explain, there are four eyelets on the vamp of the boot that really don't have to be



Cub Scout Day Hike

FIELD REPORT

FIELD LOCATIONS AND CONDITIONS

24-25 November 2017; Land Between the Lakes near Cadiz, Kentucky. This was an overnight outing to celebrate #OptOutside with both my children and a few other hammock camping friends. The in and out covered around 6 mi (10 km) with daytime temperatures reaching around 55 F (12 C) and evening temperatures dropping to around 36 F (2 C). We hiked from Sugar Bay down to Higgins bay on the North-South Trail spending the night on the island just several yards outside Brown Cemetery.



Island Camping

this southern state/county down for over a week! One evening my kids had cabin fever and I took them out to the woods in our neighborhood. We have plenty of untouched wooded acreage in our subdivision and I have permission from our developer to camp on the property, so a fire on a 25 F (-4 C) evening was comforting! Normally we'd sleep in hammocks, but setup and take down was too rigorous an undertaking for a single night and I wanted to ensure the kids stayed plenty warm...and we had the dog!

6-10 December 2017; Suwanee River, Florida. This was a 5-day/4-night kayaking trip from River mile markers 113 - 76 (Dowling Park River Camp to a Branford exit). We spent evenings at Lafayette Blue Springs, Peacock Slough and Adams Tract. The first two days were wet and rainy with high temperatures around 45 F (7 C), but it felt much cooler on the river. A massive cold front came through on the third evening that dumped a ton of water on us while dropping snow all over the south. It dried up and even became sunny by the final day, but the clear weather brought a low of 29 F (-2 C) that final evening. Our plan to paddle in short sleeve shirts and swim trunks did not occur! Rather, we spent most days in waterproof-warm attire!

27-28 December 2017: Appalachian Trail, near Damascus, Virginia. I went out for an overnight on the AT while visiting my parents over the Christmas holiday season. I hiked 5 mi (8 km) in one day and returned on the same path the next morning, as had parked in the well-known town. Temperatures were frigid, averaging 17 F (-8 C), but wind chills were near 0 F (-18 C). It wasn't super fun hanging out in these temperatures alone. If I'd had a buddy with me I may have hiked all the way back into Tennessee, but decided the one-nighter was enough.

16-17 January 2018: Private land near Arrington, Tennessee. We had a rare 3 in (8 cm) snow here in middle Tennessee, which shut the school system in

PERFORMANCE IN THE FIELD

I have been thoroughly impressed with these boots from right out of the gate! They felt broken-in from the time I first put them on. They are very comfortable in general. Even for such a high boot and one that weighs quite a bit more than the trail runners I've become accustomed to wearing on the trail. The boots seemed a little long in the toebox originally, but I've noticed no sliding at all and I've had zero discomfort or blistering to date!

The hike at Land Between the Lakes was a great weather test on the upper end of the temperature spectrum in my opinion. That hike included 55 F (12 C) temperatures on a sunny day and I'm happy to report the boots had minimal/if any moisture build up from perspiration! My socks were minimally damp when I removed them and there was absolutely no clamminess to my feet.

After we settled into camp, I did unlace the upper laces and loosely tie them around the lower part of the boot as can be seen in the image when I'm standing in the water. I did this primarily for comfort while sitting around the campfire, but I feel this also added to some breathability for sure. My son was running around on the beach tossing rocks in the water like boys do when our dog started chasing them into the lake. They had a blast and I had a soaking wet dog for a while, but it was sunny and he dried quickly enough. There shenanigans gave me the idea to test out the waterproof properties of the boots. I'd purposefully walked through several mud puddles on the Scout hike prior to the Field Report, but on this afternoon, I decided to simply go stand in the shallow water just off the island beach. I stood directly in the water for several minutes and had absolutely no leaking. The boots also dried fairly quickly when I came out of the water, which leads me to believe the waterproofing material on the leather is a pretty good quality and certainly wasn't breach to even reach the boots inner liners.



Island Camping Standing in the Bay

I took them on a kayaking trip to Florida, and although I didn't wear them in the boat, they were comfortable during the early part of the trip on the first evening and second morning in the cool freezing temperatures. In fact, I wore the boots on the entire 12-hour car ride from Tennessee to Florida and once again, the breathability was amazing. Any of my other older full grain leather waterproof boots in a car ride like that and I'd have had swamp foot for sure! The boots weren't quite high enough for some of the river exits I would entail on this trip, so I chose other footwear once I made it on the water.

My December and January camping was in extremely cool weather and the boots excelled in both these scenarios. I wore winter weight wool socks with liners and my feet stayed both dry and warm. In the image where we were sledding, my feet were a little chilly (not cold) after 90 minutes of standing around in the snow. I'd say, I wasn't as mobile as the other outings to keep my blood flowing, and I actually stood around quite a bit while my children were doing the majority of the sledding. That's likely where the chill came from. In addition, the wind chill temperature was in the single digits and I believe I recall the comfort rating to around 14 F (-10 C), so I'll give them a passing grade here for sure!

During the week in January when schools were closed due to snow, I actually wore the boots to work every day. I'm in and out of my vehicle regularly throughout the day, and I was walking around in slick and icy parking lots each day as snow and ice removal in the south is dismal. That stated I found the traction amazing.



A Boy and His Dog

Finally, I was able to go on two hunts wearing the boots. Temperatures were around freezing both trips as I hung out in a tree stand several hours each trip and hiked in and out by crossing creeks. The boots kept my feet toasty and warm, but unfortunately, I left each of those trips empty handed.

SUMMARY

In summary, I have been extremely impressed with the Le Chameau Condor LCX Hunting Boots. I honestly have only roses for these boots. They are really light for all they offer. Although they weigh more than the typical trail runners I wear on a general basis, they don't feel heavy on my feet. The weight of the boot is so spread out over a larger area and somehow it just makes them feel light. They are warm, and offer amazing support. Again, I have no thorns on the boots at this point.



Snow Day!

LONG-TERM REPORT

LONG-TERM TEST LOCATIONS AND CONDITIONS

24-26 February 2018: A three-day and two-night outing at South Cumberland State Park in Collins West area of the park near Altamont, Tennessee. I backpacked roughly 19 mi (31 km) over three days of hiking. Daytime highs reached around 50 F (10 C) and evening lows hovered right around freezing. The weather was mostly grey and overcast with an occasional light rain. However, it had rained repeatedly in the ensuing weeks and the ground was soaked.

6 - 8 April 2018: A three-day and two night outing on the Appalachian Trail near Damascus, Virginia. I covered a little over 30 mi (48 km) going from Damascus to Watauga Lake in Tennessee and back. The weather was clear for the first two days, but began to flurry on the final day of hiking. Highs averaged around 40 F (4.5 C) and were as low as 25 F (-4 C), but wind chills made it feel cooler.

PERFORMANCE IN THE FIELD & SUMMARY

I was able to use the Condor boots on two more distinct backpacking outings during the final phase of the test series. I was pleasantly surprised that I was able to use them as late as late as April, but we had an unusual cold snap that even brought snow on the final day.

On the AT trip I hiked upwards of 15 mi (24 km) on one day and never became fatigued in the boots. It was certainly the highest mileage during the series and the boots are simply comfortable. My feet did have some perspiration, but never became a sweatbox. I did tend to wear fresh socks on each individual day to ensure my feet started the day good and dry.

The South Cumberland trip was very wet and my feet stay completely dry from the elements. The boots were quite muddy after that weekend and they cleaned up like new when I returned home. To date, I have only cleaned them with a good rinse and a soft brush. I do not feel as if they need any waterproofing at this point. I will likely condition them with a leather conditioner before I stow them away for the summer, but that is all at this point.

Having primarily stopped wearing hiking boots several years ago and moving to lightweight trail runners I never thought I would enjoy a boot like this, but I have come to love the Le Chameau Condor LCX boots.

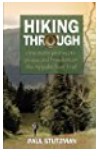



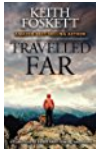

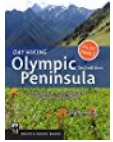
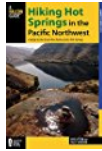
I have worn them on the trail, on several hunts and around town in inclement weather. I have given them praise to many people and they have always noted how aesthetically pleasing they are.

It is rare for me to finalize a product review without even the slightest thorn, but I simply do not have one for these boots. If I wanted to nitpick, I might request them to dial the sizing in or offer a wide version, but even though these are not specifically a wide, they fit me well. They may be a wee bit long in the toe box, but I have become accustomed to this due to the funky shape of my hooves! Also, even though they may be a little longer than they need be, my foot has never slid or more importantly blistered in the boot.

Therefore, in summary, I am fully impressed with these boots and they will definitely remain a key product in my gear kit. I certainly will not use them for every backpacking outing, but short mileage ones that are wet and cold will certainly fit the bill for using. I like wearing them around town. They really feel sneaker-like! Funny for a boot? I know that Le Chameau is known more for their 'Wellie' style boots, but these hunting boots hit the mark for hiking, hunting and leisure.

I would like to thank Le Chameau and BackpackGearTest.org for allowing me to test the amazing Condor LCX Hunting boots.

Some Hiking and Trail Books

 <p>Hiking Through: One Man's Journey to Peace and Freedom on the Appalach...</p> <p>\$8.52 \$43.00</p> <p>(749)</p>	 <p>Fifty Places to Hike Before You Die: Outdoor Experts Share the World's G...</p> <p>\$9.99</p> <p>(44)</p>	 <p>America's Great Hiking Trails: Appalachian, Pacific Crest, Continenta...</p> <p>\$40.00 \$60.00</p> <p>(38)</p>	 <p>Thru-Hiking Will Break Your Heart: An Adventure on the Pacific Crest Trail</p> <p>\$11.97 \$42.48</p> <p>(1068)</p>
 <p>Travelled Far: A Collection of Hiking Adventures</p> <p>\$6.95</p> <p>(103)</p>	 <p>Backpacker Long Trails: Mastering the Art of the Thru-Hike</p> <p>\$16.96 \$24.95</p> <p>(32)</p>	 <p>Day Hiking Olympic Peninsula</p> <p>\$9.21 \$48.05</p> <p>(8)</p>	 <p>Hiking Hot Springs in the Pacific Northwest: A Guide to the Area's Bes...</p> <p>\$18.20 \$24.95</p> <p>(24)</p>

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