

Held Davina jacket

£440

www.held.de

Lovely jacket, except it lets in water

Many female riders struggle to find decent kit and it gets worse if you're not a "standard" size. I'm 6ft tall with arms designed to reach things from tall cupboards, and I've always ridden in men's jackets. German kit manufacturers Held offer a wide range of women's kit with tailored fit options to suit shorter women as well as tall ones like me.

This is part of their premium Quattrotempi (four seasons) range. It's cut long, adventure-style, with a strong Cordura shell and CE-approved armour at the shoulder and elbow (but no back protector, though there is a pocket in which one can be fitted). It has a zip-out thermal liner, vents for coolness and a Gore-Tex membrane that promises waterproofing.

The cut suits my taller frame, there are plenty of adjusters to fine-tune the fit and I was still finding new pockets after three weeks.

There's only one problem: it leaks. Badly. Eight hours of rain on a trip to Scotland soaked my front to the skin. Post-traumatic analysis suggests the collar is the problem. It's a stylish low neck, but there's no storm collar, no press-stud fastening and no overlap to seal the jacket tight against the weather. This style is fine on days when you're sure it's not going to rain, but then why wear a waterproof jacket on such days?

There's another problem too. As the Gore-Tex technology used in this jacket is their Z-liner system, it's a liner rather than integral to the outer layer. And so in heavy rain the Cordura outer soaks up the rain, becoming heavy.

So the Davina looks good, it's comfortable to wear and it's beautifully made – ideal if you're not going to be riding all day in bad weather. But that leaky neck means it's back to the butch look for me.

Shelia McQueen



That stylish collar is cut too low to keep out rain



Shark SX2 helmet

£99.99

www.nevis.uk.com

Bargain off-road lid

All the quality manufacture and light weight (just 1350g) I've come to expect from Shark, a restrained paint job and all for a hundred quid. The peak's easily adjustable, the shape of the back of the shell helps hold your goggle strap in place and, the whole lining can be removed for washing. Top value.

Kev Raymond



Laser crimping pliers

£25

www.amazon.co.uk

Every toolbox should have some

If you want to make proper, factory-style electrical crimp connections then you need a pair of these. I've been using these for a couple of years now and there's no sign of wear – they'll probably last me for life. Easily the best 20 quid I've spent on tools in the past decade – they're a bit more pricey now, but still a great investment. **Kev Raymond**

JARGON BUSTER

CE approval: European product safety labelling system. If something has CE approval it means the product has been tested and found to meet a certain standard. Confusion arises because you have to read the label to see precisely what it applies to – often it refers only to the armour in a product, not the product as a whole. There are two levels of CE approval for body armour: EN1621-2 is higher than EN1621-1.

ACU Gold: Sticker required on any helmet used on track.

ECE22-05: Helmets sold in the UK are tested to this standard.

Sharp: This government scheme awards helmets a rating out of five.

Snell test: United States helmet safety standard. Universally respected, but has no standing in British law.