

Kit's the best of both worlds

Weise's affordable leather/Cordura combo is impressive and well armoured, but the fit isn't perfect



Weise Psycho 2 jacket, £189.99

Tester: Tony Hoare

Time tested: 1200 miles/three months

What's good? Textile jackets are good at repelling water and remaining cool in summer, while leather is always best for abrasion resistance. This jacket combines the two with its main construction being Cordura, and then extra panels of leather across the arms and shoulders. It's waterproof, as proven in heavy rain showers, warm enough for temperatures from around 12°C upwards with the thermal lining in place, cool enough for heatwave temperatures with it removed, and it is properly equipped with CE-approved armour, including a CE back protector insert (most 'padding' in jackets is near-useless foam). The zips are strong YKK efforts too, showing a commendable commitment to quality materials. This has to be among the best-value motorcycle jackets on the market, and it is a big seller for Weise.

What's not? Either the fit is odd, or my arms are. The sleeves are a couple of inches too long for my arms. It's the upper arm that's the problem, as the elbow armour sits a little below my elbows – which is quite annoying. Wearing my gloves inside the sleeves pushes the armour back up, but it's something Weise need to sort for future runs. I'd like to try the matching trousers, but I've given up trying to get a pair that fit me comfortably, so there's something else for Weise to sort.

Contact: www.thekeycollection.co.uk

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



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Details

1. Elbow armour sits here. Unfortunately the elbows themselves are a little further up the arm. Tucking glove cuffs inside the jacket corrects matters.

2. Vents on shoulders and the ribs prove very useful when the temperatures soar.



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3. It comes with proper CE-approved back protection. Most jackets at double this price will give you a foam-filled pocket and charge you more if you want to replace the foam with something that does a job.

IAN JUBB



Alpinestars Avant jacket, £299.99



Tester: Phil West

Time tested: 400 miles/two months

What's good? Alpinestars' summer leather jacket has bags of subtle style (coming in plain and classy brown, beige or black), plenty of features (pre-shaped sleeves, armour for elbows and shoulders and lots of stretch panels, pockets and adjustment tabs), 1.1mm leather where it counts and, I reckon, it's reasonable value, too, considering how pricey A-stars and Dainese stuff can be. It does everything I would expect of it; nothing has gone wrong and I've no cause for complaint...

What's not? ... except there's a 'but'. I feel short-changed, slightly. The huge stretch panels on the inner arm mean there's not as much leather as I'd expected plus the whole thing is all a bit gimmicky with all the 'mesh liner this, compartments that and removable the other'. I'm getting fed up with all this adjustable everything. What happened to good old-fashioned, straightforward jackets?

Contact: www.alpinestars.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Held Akira-Evo gloves, £139.99



Tester: Tim Thompson

Time tested: 12,500 miles/18 months

What's good? Until a few weeks ago I'd have said 'simplicity' – a gimmick-free, robust simplicity. Now that I've thrown them down the road at 60mph with my hands inside I'd add crash protection. Held's race-style range are made in Europe and have an understated quality that many others, with their look-at-me gizmos and clever-clever design, can't quite match. They come in half-sizes, too, while all the left-hand index fingers carry a trademark visor wipe blade. My crash, a front end wash out, highlighted the benefit of long protective cuffs and a construction with minimal seams for the road to pick at. They're scuffed but structurally undamaged.

What's not? The Akira-Evos are unlined but have no venting, so are a tad warm for a summer like this one. And the left glove's cuff Velcro is coming adrift from its tab, the first fault I've encountered on half-a-dozen pairs of Held gloves.

Contact: www.held.de

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Alpinestars Moab knee/shin guards, £89.99



Tester: Adam Child

Time tested: 800 miles/four months

What's good? These knee/shin guards are intended for downhill mountain biking, but I've been wearing them under denim jeans when riding on the road. I like riding in normal jeans and a leather jacket, especially in summer, but hate the lack of knee protection – so these guards give a little extra security. They're also comfortable, light and easy to fit. I've also worn them for enduro riding to deflect flying rocks and they've saved my knees in the odd low-speed crash, which is inevitable off-road. The straps are comfortable, don't nip or rub and they're easy to adjust to fit most sizes. They don't make you too hot, either.

What's not? Wearing jeans with these protectors underneath isn't going to be as protective as wearing full leathers. However, I'd rather have them than nothing under jeans.

Contact: www.alpinestars.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Kriega R15 Rucksack, £75



Tester: Andy Davidson

Time tested: 9000 miles/six months

What's good? Quality – that's the best way to describe the R15. You can't deny the build quality of such a rucksack, which comes with a 10-year guarantee. There's a small harness at the front as opposed to other Kriega bags that have massive ones. It works well enough so I forget I'm even wearing it. It has all the holes and straps required for fitting a hydration pack and has two inner pockets and one outer. It is the smallest bag Kriega makes, enough to fit a lap top, a sandwich and bottle of Coke. If you need more space then you can easily attach a Kriega US-10 or 5-litre dry bag.

What's not? It's not waterproof! At £75 I expect it to be. Kriega say it has water-resistant zips, but that's not enough. The abundance of straps don't bother me, I like to know everything's tightly secured but I can see how some may get annoyed with all the clicking and tightening.

Contact: www.kriega.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★