

The friendly face of biking

High-tech Schubert C3 Pro is packed with quality features but comes at a wallet-busting price

Details

1. Schubert supplies a bespoke comms system (an extra £329.99) for the C3 Pro. It replaces the standard collar and has integrated buttons. You can make phone calls and access music via Bluetooth from your phone, or listen to the radio. The SRC-System will be reviewed soon.

2. It also comes with a handy flip down internal sun visor. The slider button is easy to reach and move even with a big glove. No more hassle with carrying and changing black and clear visors.

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Schubert C3 Pro, £499.99-£599.99



Tester: Andy Davidson

Time tested: 10 weeks/6400 miles

What's good? I love modular lids. They make so much sense, especially when touring and travelling, as pulling up in the middle of nowhere and asking for directions through a muffled helmet can be intimidating for a local. But pull up and flip up to reveal your pearly whites and you're in with a chance. Petrol station attendants will love you, you can take photos, sip water, eat a choccy bar, shout at a car driver – all are made possible with a flip-up lid. And the C3 Pro is the crème-de-la-crème. One easy-to-thumb tab under the chin bar releases the jaw piece, which smoothly moves up. The helmet itself is light and comes with two vents that allow plenty of air in. It's cosy inside with plush, removable padding. I haven't felt any aches, sores or pressure points even after riding 1000 miles in a week. Instead of a traditional D-ring strap it uses a quick and easy-to-fasten micro-ratchet. One of my favourite features is the incredibly easy-to-remove visor which takes one click on each side to pop off.

What's bad? Noise. You will get a bit of sound running through the lid, which is the curse of the flip-front helmet. But the Schubert is nowhere near as bad as others I have tried. A good pair of earplugs is still in order though. The German firm asks for a premium price tag at £499.99 for plain colours and up to a whopping £599.99 for designs.

Contact: www.tranam.co.uk

Quality: ★★★★★

Value: ★★★★★



Oxford Warm Dry top (£29.99) and bottoms (£29.99)



Tester: Liam Marsden

Time tested: 3600 miles/three months

What's good? It's sometimes difficult to tell whether base layers – especially ones designed to keep you warm – work, but these Oxford base layers definitely take the chill off. Their presence is especially felt on my legs. The foot loops on the bottom of the trousers stop the legs from rolling up when you put your boots on, which is a nice touch – thumb loops on the arms would be good, too. In the time I've owned them they've been washed once and they don't smell bad so the anti-odour technology works. They're not exceptional, but I wouldn't leave the house without them on a long journey from Autumn through to Spring.

What's not? The stitching has come undone on one of the sleeves – I can only assume it kept getting caught on Velcro. They work really well at keeping the heat in at slower speeds around town to the point of being too warm.

Contact: www.oxprod.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



RST TracTech one-piece, £399.99 (replaced by TracTech Evo)



Tester: Tony Hoare

Time tested: Two years/2000 miles

What's good? I threw myself up the track at somewhere between 60mph and 70mph and this suit remained intact. It's not an expensive option at £400, but it did the job I required of it. Until that point it had been a comfortable and reliable suit with a cut to suit my slightly podgy British physique rather than a lithe Italian, and also a more upright fit to suit road riding rather than someone who spends their life in the racing crouch. The colourscheme is also subtle, which can't be said of its replacement, the TracTech Evo, which also promises a more race-derived cut.

What's not? Nothing can make you invincible and the hard impact on my left elbow was enough to tear the skin and leave me needing four stitches, even though the suit stayed intact and did everything I could ask of it. The addition of hip armour would also be good.

Contact: www.rst-moto.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Ultimate Hearing Soundear headphones, £170



Tester: Simon Patterson

Time tested: 350 miles

What's good? Made from the same mould as my custom earplugs (without needing a new fitting session) these have been exceptionally nice for some of the motorway riding I've been doing recently. With the custom silicone shapes fitting right inside my ear, I can hear barely any background noise, and I get my music too! Plugged into my iPhone, I can have the volume turned down to 20% and still be able to hear it on the move – which means a nice background noise instead of just wind rushing past.

What's not? They're expensive, especially if you have to pay an audiologist to get an ear mould made (although Ultimate Hearing do them free at most of the big bike shows). The cable to the headphones themselves feel a little flimsy, and the sound quality isn't what you'd get from an ultra-expensive pair of headphones.

Contact: www.ultimateear.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Shark Sharktooth Bluetooth headset, £199.99



Tester: Simon Relph

Time tested: 8300 miles/two years

What's good? If you have a Shark helmet that's compatible with Sharktooth (EvoLine Series 2 ST, Race-R, Race-R Pro, Vision-R, RSJ ST, Evoline Series 3) this comms system can be easily fitted. Recesses for headphones and wiring are there already and once fitted in the helmet, it is easy to connect to a wide variety of devices, from other headsets to GPS devices to my Bluetooth-enabled iPod. The sound quality is very good and as the speed increases the auto volume level goes up and if riding at high speed there is a volume control on the side of the helmet for full volume. Battery life is impressive, Shark says it will last for 10 hours talk time and up to 700 hours standby, but it seems longer than that to me.

What's not? I have had no problems so far, so no grumbles.

Contact: www.nevis.uk.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★