

**AIRY ARMS**

Venting zips run almost the full length of the arm, from near-armpit to wrist, allowing loads of airflow in summer.

**Held AeroSec suit jacket £419.99, trousers £299.99**

www.held.de

**THIS IS A CLEVER** idea, nicely executed... up to a point. It's the same idea you may be familiar with from Held's two-chamber gloves, where you can slot your hand into one chamber for a ventilated summer feel, or use the other chamber to benefit from built-in weatherproofing.

In the case of the AeroSec jacket and trousers, you can either wear them in the conventional way - with the waterproof/windproof/breathable membrane surrounding you, or you can

adjust the position of the membrane so that it lurks behind you, allowing your front to benefit from the cooling breeze as you ride.

Compared with other textile jackets, where you have to zip out the liner and squeeze it into a pocket or slip it into your luggage (or leave it at home and regret it later) this quick and convenient. As is so often true with Held gear, it's well made, neatly detailed and stylishly cut. It comes with CE level 2 knee, elbow and shoulder armour.

My reservation concerns the waterproofing of the trousers when in bad-weather mode. On a long, unpleasant day spent riding in unrelenting rain, they leaked.

They've been fine in shorter downpours, but there's no excuse for waterproof trousers that aren't. **co**



**LEAKY LEGS**

Innovative design is great in theory, but in practice these trousers have let in water despite using the 'dry' chamber.



▲ With the jacket's membrane zipped up, it's a well-vented summer item...

▼ Dual-chamber design of trousers closely resembles Held's gloves



▲ ...but undo the central zip and it transforms into a waterproof jacket



**Alpinestars Stella SMX-1 R boots £139.99**

www.alpinestars.com

**GENERALLY IT'S ALL** about protection, but when it comes to women's riding footwear it's nice when some consideration has been given to style too. When my Lindstrands jeans arrived I realised that I couldn't easily get them over my race boots, and with me being more than happy with all other aspects of the jeans I needed to find a protective, practical and - ideally - good-looking solution. A lot of other ladies' short riding boots seem to concentrate on the fashion aspect and are geared more to pillion use, but I needed and wanted something more than that.

These Alpinestars Stella SMX-1 R boots bridge the gap between race and fashion footwear, while giving me a great level of foot and ankle

► Race boots and jeans don't always work together - but these short boots are a smart solution



protection. They come in two colours - I opted for the black with subtle gold touches. They're not clumpy or cumbersome as they include what Alpinestars call "ergonomic forefoot

streamlining", which they claim gives a neater foot profile, a better fit, and improved comfort for both riding and walking in. To top it all, I think they look pretty stylish too. **cb**