

Too 'for school'

Looks great but lacks practicality

Furygan New Texas jacket, £379.99

I liked Furygan 'blouson' style was my staple, its style, and never wore out. Then the French outfit somehow slipped off my radar. This is my re-introduction.

It's a semi-casual jacket that's intended for use both on or off the bike. It looks great off-bike, coming in black or brown, its loose fit is comfy, and the three chunky metal zips make it look rugged and durable.

On-bike, enough warmth comes via a removable thermal liner, and protection comes from a built-in CE back protector, and armour at the elbows and shoulders. In summary: it's close to being the ideal jacket for short-ish rides to a social event. Decent value, too.

What's not? The casual look compromises the riding fit in some areas. The loose-fit cuffs are unadjustable and annoying to fit into gloves. The waist and collar remain loose, too. Also, there's no inside left chest pocket (traditional for wallets) and only a small inner right pocket (which is awkward) so everything has to go in the two outer, lower pockets, which isn't the best either.

Contact: www.nevis.uk.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Suedette cow leather looks and feels of good quality



Casual style means cuffs are a bit loose, but still tough to tuck gloves into



Zipped outer pockets give a rugged look but aren't very practical



New Texas packs full armour and a CE-approved back protector

BUYING ADVICE LEATHER JACKETS

1 Take your gloves. Comfort around your wrists is vital, so check it will fit well with your gloves. If the glove cuff won't go over the jacket sleeve, will it comfortably slide underneath the sleeve?

2 It's all about connections. If the connecting zip on a new jacket doesn't match up with the one on your trousers, keep the blank end that's usually connected to the zip. This can then be stitched into the trousers so you're connected in future.

3 Is that armour or foam? If there's a pad in the back, examine it for a CE mark to show it's passed an impact test. Unless it's marked, buy a proper back protector that fits in the same pocket or, better still, a separate back protector that covers more of your back.

4 Get a warm welcome. A zip-in thermal liner makes a jacket more versatile. Some line the whole upper body, including sleeves, and others are just for the torso. If it's baggy with the liner in, try it without the lining to make sure it's not too loose.

5 Stretch it out. Sportier jackets have a stretch fabric lining instead of leather on the insides of the arms, to give more flexibility and a close fit. These panels let through more air than leather, so they're chillier on cold days. Consider all-leather if you ride on cold days.

IAN JUBB



Givi Xstream rucksack, £108.99

Tester: Simon Brown
Tested for: Two months/1000 miles
What's good? Versatile and well thought out, the Givi easily lugs everything I need, including space for a laptop or tablet with a 15in screen. Chest and waist straps distribute the load, making it comfortable to wear, and so far it's been shower-resistant, but there's a rain cover that zips out and clips on for wetter days. Finally, you can currently save a tenner if you buy via MCNshop.com.

What's not? The laptop pocket isn't covered by the waterproof cover, but it sits right next to your back and hasn't let any water in so far.

Contact: www.givi.co.uk

Quality rating: ★★★★★ **Value rating:** ★★★★★



Shark Vancore, £229.99

Tester: Steve Hunt
Time tested: Eight months/1900 miles
What's good? The Vancore is a version of Shark's Raw open-face lid, but with a solid chinbar and separate goggles. It looks nasty (in a good way), and has an internal space for a Bluetooth unit at the back. It's perfect for short rides around city streets.

What's not? The goggles are on a proprietary strap attachment meaning that they're only usable with Shark helmets. Plus, the foam surround is very thin which means there's a huge gap between the goggles and the main body of the lid, letting in air and water and leaving you looking a bit war-torn at the end of the ride.

Contact: www.nevis.uk.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★ **Value rating:** ★★★★★



Ermmax nosescreen, £75.90

Tester: Alison Silcox
Time tested: One month/1500 miles
What's good? Fitting this to my Honda CB650F long-term test bike has provided massive relief on long motorway stretches. I recently undertook a 1000-mile trip over four days, travelling on a variety of roads including some stretches of motorway, and got home without any aches or pains in my neck and shoulders.

What's not? The fixings are a little unsightly, with the screen basically attaching to the top yoke via two arms, which looks a bit crude. The mounting arms are fiddly to assemble, but the screen is easy to fit once that's done.

Contact: www.pyramid-plastics.co.uk

Value: ★★★★★ **Quality:** ★★★★★