



800
miles
ON TEST

Merlin are new
to lids and this
is a great start

Double-D and a
plush lining too

Merlin Torres £279.99

'New kid on the block'



Tested by Steve Herbert-Mattick for three months

Merlin are a new name to the helmet market this year with two retro models (full and open face), alongside this adventure lid. The spec is as you'd expect from a decent dual-sport helmet: ECE 22.06 certified, drop-down sun visor, Pinlock, lightweight fibreglass shell, removable and washable lining, chin and top vents and double D-ring chin strap.

My size medium tips the scales at 1723g – not the lightest but fairly standard for this style of helmet. The huge visor is easy to remove to install the Pinlock (included) but it does feel thin compared to the visors on more premium lids.

The Torres is well designed. Noise is minimal (I always ride with earplugs) and the slot gaps in the large peak do well to stop your head being yanked around by turbulence and cross-winds.

It's smooth, the plush lining is

comfortable on full day rides, and although venting isn't the most generous it does work well. The large chin vent is easy to operate with gloves on, but the switch for the head vent (nestled in a recess in the top of the peak) is harder to find.

For a first attempt, it's a very decent thing at a competitive price.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.merlinbikegear.shop

Sidi Performer Gore £279.99

'Dry feet every time'



Tested by Dan Sutherland for eight months

I chose to test these Sidi Performer Gore boots because I wanted a reliable, sporty-looking set of footwear, that would work in all conditions.

As someone that commutes in all weathers – including winter – I needed something that would provide comfort, and tuck inside textile trousers, but not look out of place on the Honda CBR600RR I was living with at the time.

These boots have lived up to all of these criteria and have been nothing short of superb. They are comfortable on and off the bike and, while the styling does look a little dated, the slim profile allows them to slip seamlessly under riding jeans and textiles. Plus there is just enough space to slip on an extra pair of socks when things get really cold.

I have used them in some appalling riding conditions, subjecting them to hundreds, if not thousands, of miles of salty spray along the A1 during the winter, and they more than stood up to the challenge.

I continue to use them on a daily basis and now that things have warmed up and my riding has become a little more animated, they



The white is just about holding up, while comfort has been spot on

have been flexible enough to let me lean further off the bike.

Being white, they have discoloured slightly on the area of the boot that's exposed to the elements – creating a sort of tan line that begins at the base of the shin. However, the

stretch panelling, external stitching, toe slider screws, and sole still look good.

The white has also allowed for some visible marking from rubbing against heel plates during usage, with a slightly darker patch appearing on the white on the inner side of each boot as a result of gear changes, and rear braking manoeuvres. If you're worried about discolouration, Sidi will also sell you an all-black pair for the same price.

They score well for safety, gaining the maximum CE Level 2 across the board for foot protection.

The toes are showing some signs of external wear, but nothing of major concern, and whilst I'm yet to use the boots at the height of summer, they've been perfectly acceptable in temperatures up to around 20°C.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.sidiuk.com

4000
miles
ON TEST

MotoGirl Nimi trousers £199

'They fit like leggings'



Tested by Charlotte King for three months

The MotoGirl Nimi trousers are a good alternative to riding jeans. Made from a lovely stretchy fabric, the waist adjustment straps and zipped ankles make them easy to put on and mean that you can get a great fit, while the classic multi-pocket design makes them practical.

However, the soft, stretchy fabric makes them feel more like leggings which is a good thing, even though they are AA-rated so you know that you're well protected in them too. The armour is D30 Ghost CE Level 1 at both the hip and knee and it's removable from the outside, making the Nimi practical for wearing on or off the bike as you can quickly pop



Smart look and stretchy with protection too

1150
miles
ON TEST

the armour in and out for wearing around the office. I found that the armour did feel tight over my knees, leaving them a little sore and with some interesting patterns imprinted on them after longer rides. I'm unsure if it's due to the fit at the knee or the armour itself, but

removing the protectors when off the bike does help.

Overall, they are a flattering and comfortable pair of riding trousers at a fair price, that are suitable for most rides.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.motogirl.co.uk



Far from sexy but it works

Wild Ass Sport £179.99

2500
miles
ON TEST

'Comfy, but costly'



Tested by Carl Stevens for six months

Comfort is the key to a pleasant ride, and the Wild Ass is a handy, quick addition for easing the load on your rear end.

It's easy to fit, does provide some serious extra comfort and doesn't stand out as too much of an eyesore on the bike, either.

However, the Wild Ass actually

works far better on an adventure or touring machine, as it doesn't quite stay in the exact spot if you move around a lot on the seat (on a more spirited ride).

Plus in this guise with the Neoprene inner, it is at the pricier end of the spectrum, especially compared to the price of some aftermarket comfort seats.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.rg-racing.com