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TRIED & TESTED

MCN STAFF RATE THEIR RIDING KIT

★★★★★

Smart looks and Saff added some Sena comms

15 months ON TEST

It's dual homologated so you can ride it flipped

Shoei Neotec 3 £689.99

Flip-up without flipping out

Tested by Saffron Wilson for over 10,000 miles

Not everyone loves a flip-up, but I'm sure more would come around if they tried the Shoei Neotec 3. I've been wearing it daily for over a year, and have found the flip-up mechanism, visor action, sunshield and all the vents easy to use, with or without gloves and none of them have let me down.

I fitted comms, namely the Sena SRL3 (£339) which integrates perfectly with the helmet, and it has worked seamlessly with no outages. Buttons quickly become familiar with practice, and fitting the system was easy – plus the battery lasts all day.

The only other time I've removed the Neotec's lining was to wash it after a recent riding trip in India, when it really needed freshening up.

I found it was a little tricky putting the padding back in place, and there have been numerous times where I've turned the helmet over and found that I hadn't slot the retaining lugs back in place properly as it wasn't sitting right. It's worth noting that you can get different cheek pad thicknesses to ensure the helmet is perfectly comfortable for you.

At ECE 22.06, it meets the latest standard, and it uses a ratchet chin strap system which I find easy to use.

For a flip-up, it's relatively quiet next to its competitors and many users have noted that it is indeed a lot quieter compared to previous versions. I still found it noisy if I was sitting on the motorway for hours at a time (but equally, I had an iffy screen that seemed to send wind straight onto my visor which may have been part of the problem). Shoei say there's a newly developed visor system on the Neotec 3 and you most certainly have a wide field of view which is reassuring on the move, and the sealing system hasn't let in a drop of rain even in the worst storms. It does take a forceful push to seal the visor completely so you may wonder why you're seeing trickles before you realise you haven't closed it properly.

Overall, the helmet was comfortable from the first wear and has stayed that way for the 10,000 miles + we've spent together.

Available in a whole host of colourways, there'll be something that takes your fancy, but bear in mind that if you do get a cool design, it'll add £60 to the price of the lid (depending on the design). Plus there are options for eight different visor variations including dark smoke and even a rainbow. There's no getting away from the fact that it's a costly piece of gear. But for something that is comfortable from the first ride, you know will protect your noggin with standards met (including P/J homologation which is needed for flip-ups) shock-absorbent shell and EPS liner system with different densities, it's not an area you want to scrimp on. Plus, now they've been out for a while, it's likely you'll be able to get a decent deal on one somewhere.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.shoei-europe.com

PROS & CONS

+ Chatting to people without having to take my lid off
− Forgetting to shut the visor properly

Drop-down visor has a smooth action

One-handed flip-up mechanism

Sidi Arx Air Shoes £169.99

One step too steep

Tested by Tom Willard for eight months

Short casual boots are ideal if you are on and off your bike throughout the day and prefer kit that looks a little less motorbike-y. Yet they offer a clear improvement in protection when compared to non-bike specific shoes. Sidi's Arx Air shoes are designed for summer urban use and as such feature large ventilated panels that are breathable meaning that I've never found myself with stuffy feet whilst wearing them. At speed the airflow is easy to feel and it doesn't get too drafty when the temperature is down as the most ventilated areas are on the sides. As you'd expect, however, there are no claims about waterproofing so these are very much for summer use only.

They look mega, feel extremely comfy to walk in, and can easily pass as a pair of trendy high tops, but I'm conflicted as to whether they make good motorbike shoes. The lace holders are too elasticated and low, so the laces can fall out and risk getting snagged. They are CE certified (minimum 1|1|1|1 certification) offering light protection, but they are hard to recommend for the price.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.sidiuk.com

Smart looks but pricey for the protection

Eight months ON TEST

Oxford Oximiser Pro 1250 £79.99

Fully charged

Tested by Michael Guy for six months

The saying 'use it or lose it' couldn't be more accurate when it comes to the battery on your bike. If it gets used regularly and for a decent amount of time then there's every chance it will remain trouble free. But being left connected and inactive will almost inevitably compromise performance, ultimately necessitating the unwanted expense of a replacement.

There's a range of battery chargers on the market and they are constantly evolving. This latest offering from Oxford is the best I've used to date. It's suitable for indoor or outdoor use and has eight-stage automatic charging: polarity test, analyse, desulfation soft start mode, bulk mode, absorption mode, voltage check and maintain mode.

You can use it indoors or outside

Six months ON TEST

While I'd be lying if I said I knew exactly what each of the stages really mean, what I do know is that the battery on my four-year-old KTM 690 Enduro R remains in top condition and is always more than happy to turn over the big single.

Unlike other chargers I've used, the Oxford charger generates virtually no heat, which is reassuring as it is plugged in and connected 24/7. While I use it on a 12v wet battery, it's also suitable for AGM, GEL and 12V LiFePO4 batteries.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.oxfordproducts.com

Rev'It Fusion 3 GTX £164.99

Clever hand-warming tech

Tested by Ben Clarke for 18 months/ 1500 miles

Rev'it's Fusion 3 GTX gloves are designed specifically to work with heated grips, which is a clever idea that I hadn't tried before. The gloves are lighter and more dextrous than most deep-winter options, yet still deliver impressive cold-weather performance – provided you're using heated grips.

Fit is true to size, and even in XL they don't feel overly bulky and dexterity is good for a winter glove, making it easy to operate switches and controls, and there are no uncomfortable seam pressure points. The touchscreen-compatible fingertips are fine for quick satnav changes or brief phone use if you've pulled over, but too bulky for proper typing.

Warmth is excellent with heated grips, but on a frosty commute without them, my hands became painfully cold, so they really do rely on that extra heat source.

Protection is CE certified to Level 1 KP, which is common for winter gloves that balance weatherproofing with impact resistance. There's a scaphoid slider on the palm, knuckle protection, extra reinforcement in high-risk areas, and a secure Velcro wrist strap plus a secondary cuff closure. Once fastened, they feel secure and unlikely to come off in a crash.

Construction is goatskin with reinforced grip areas, and after 18 months and 1500 miles, the leather, stitching and fastenings have all held up well. The red pull-tabs are genuinely useful for tugging on the second glove, especially on cold mornings, too.

The Gore-Tex lining keeps water out, even in heavy rain, and breathability is good. The look is sport-inspired, especially in the palm and protection detailing, and they avoid the bulky, utilitarian appearance of some winter gloves to an extent. At £164.99, they're at the premium end of the winter glove market, but the Gore-Tex waterproofing, solid protection and heated-grip-focused design justify the price. Comparable gloves exist, but none are specifically designed for heated grips.

For riders with heated grips who ride through winter, they're a strong, well-executed option.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.revitsport.com

Sportier than your average winter gear but you need heated grips

18 months ON TEST

All the essentials in one easy display

RiderNav R7M £299

3 months ON TEST

Easy plug-and-play

Tested by Robin Kirkley for three months

This RiderNav navigation system is designed to work seamlessly with BMWs – and that is the case.

Plug-and-play beats half a day of complex installation. After testing a few motorcycle CarPlay/Android Auto systems that had to be wired into my bike's battery I was looking forward to riding with the RiderNav R7M. Its 7-inch display is designed for BMW motorcycles equipped with the OEM satnav cradle, and all I had to do was slot it in, connect it to my phone via Bluetooth, sort out a few settings and hit the road. As easy as that. No more scrolling through menus, the riding data I need is now conveniently on one clear screen.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.ridernav.com