

Buffalo Misano jacket £99.99



Tester James Archibald

Time tested Three months/500 miles

What's good? As a cheap way of keeping some protective gear on when you nip to the shops, this jacket is ideal. It isn't all singing and dancing, but it's near enough for leisurely riding or for shorter trips. It's also well-suited to newer and younger riders who are looking for a practical protective layer without breaking the bank. The jacket has two inner layers: one for waterproofing and a thermal inner, both can be removed should the weather turn warm or dry (good luck) and they dramatically change the overall feel of the jacket. The thermal layer is a welcome addition now summer is behind us and should continue to allow the jacket to stay usable in the coming months.

What's not? The armour, though CE approved, isn't exactly inspiring as it feels very thin. The waterproof layer doesn't breathe well and can leave me feeling very sticky, though it has so far done a good job of keeping the rain out. The arms are quite baggy on the jacket when worn without the thermal liner and the compression straps do little to cure this. This makes the armour very loose-fitting and doesn't reassure me that the armour will stay in place if it's needed.

Contact www.thekeycollection.co.uk

Quality ★★★★★

Value rating ★★★★★



500 MILES

Oxford Chillout Balaclava £17.99



Tester Simon Relph

Time tested Two years

What's good? It's warm and that's obviously the most important thing, but there are lots of other features worth mentioning. It has a lot of stitched seams, which give it an almost tailored fit, plus it allows the manufacturer to make the various panels out of different materials so they can each do a specific job. The panels on top of the head are made from wicking material to let moisture escape and there's a perforated area around the nose (for obvious reasons). The more exposed areas are windproof yet still breathable but my favourite bit is the lining, which is so soft that it feels like pure luxury on your face - better than that icy cold wind!

What's not? Nothing, it's a great product that does the job it's made to do.

Contact www.oxford.com

Value ★★★★★

Quality ★★★★★



TWO YEARS

Dainese Axial Pro Inboots £379.99



Tester Tim Thompson

Time tested Eight months

What's good? These race boots walk a fine line between feel and substance, and do it perfectly. They are stiff in the right places (laterally and in a twisting motion) yet comfortable and flexible at the toes and ankle too. When the bike's trying to feed information through the pegs, they help me receive it loud and clear. An internal Velcro strap looks like a palaver, but isn't, and helps hold the boot tight to my leg. I especially like the leather panel on the inside of the boot that protects the bike from scuffing.

What's not? There's little to fault here. Fit is fairly narrow so if you have wide slabs of meat go up a size.

Contact www.dainese.com

Quality ★★★★★

Value ★★★★★



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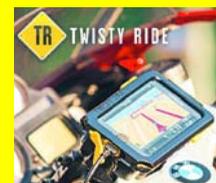
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