



Quiet, comfy
and smart



HJC F31 £229.99

**Two
months
ON TEST**

'No pinch points from day one'



**Tested by
Alison Silcox
for 1000 miles**

I'm not usually a fan of open-face lids, but with a ride to Amsterdam planned during the hottest week of the year, I thought I'd put this HJC to the test.

From the start, the comfort, fit, and convenience impressed me. Made from fibreglass with a partially removable lining, it was comfortable

straight away with no headaches or pinch points even after 450 miles on day one. The quick-release chin strap is simple and easy to adjust.

The large visor offers a wide field of vision and comes with a Pinlock insert, while the drop-down sun visor is easy to use and dark enough to be practical. Ventilation is excellent, with well-placed, easy-to-operate vents, though it's really the open-face design that

keeps things cool. Noise isn't an issue with earplugs, and there's space for HJC's integrated intercom system (Gen 2 11B, 21B or 50B), though I prefer a quiet ride. I'm not big on pink, but the subtle line looks good on this understated design.

It's good value, and you can usually find a deal somewhere. I'd want a full-face for winter, though.

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

Rabaconda dirt bike tyre changer £435 + £75 for five tyre levers

'Dread turned into smugness'



**Tested by Michael
Guy for 15 months**

In all my time riding motorbikes I can honestly say that no

one has ever said to me 'oh I love changing tyres'. Personally I'd go so far as to say I dislike it, so anything I can do to make the job easier and even a bit more pleasant... I'm all in.

I first started using the Rabaconda dirt bike tyre changer half way through last year and it's a game changer. The dread I associated with the job has been replaced with an air of confidence verging on smugness that I can actually do it.

The Rabaconda tyre changer is designed to take all the grief, sweat and tears out of tyre changing. Assembling it is easy and its benefits are instant because the system means that the wheel is completely secure as well as being at a good height, so you're no longer having to work on your hands and knees.

Removing the Michelin Trackers was easy, but before I allowed myself to get carried away I knew that removing tyres is far easier than fitting them, plus I knew my tyre choice would be a massive factor.

The first tyres I fitted were a Dunlop 606 front and Dunlop 908RR rear. The rear in particular is a full on



Stress-free home or field-based tyre changes for the masses – made easy

rally option. Being a Dunlop it also has a notoriously stiff structure and sidewall – making fitting them a real challenge.

I'll be honest, I was almost psyched out of even attempting to try the 908 rear having spoken to far better mechanics than me who warned me how hard they are to fit.

But I didn't rush, followed the guide on Rabaconda's YouTube channel and in just over an hour both tyres were on, perfectly seated on the bead and ready to put back on the bike.

I've subsequently removed the Dunlops and fitted a set of enduro tyres and the system is consistently enabling me to get the job done in good time and without stress. The tyre levers which have a distinctive sweeping shape work in harmony as part of the set-up and are also a must-have addition to your tyre change armoury.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.rabaconda.com

**15
months
ON TEST**

Merlin Axe Hydro £199.99

'Protective plaid that's got chops'



**Tested by
Ben Clarke for
3000 miles**

A plaid shirt is a staple of the cruiser and custom bike scene and there are plenty of options on the market these days ranging from workwear that wouldn't do much to save your skin to CE certified options that will.

The Axe (presumably so called due to its lumberjack looks, cue the Monty Python track) falls into the latter category with a CE AA certification thanks to DuPont Kevlar reinforcement, and armour at the elbows and shoulders plus a pocket for a back protector.

Although I planned to wear it through the summer, I was tantalised



A perfect
match for
the Scout

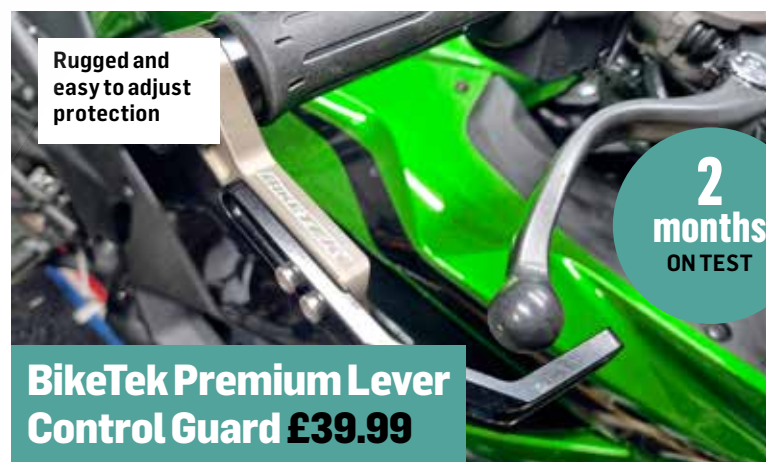
**7
months
ON TEST**

by its waterproof liner – meaning I wouldn't have to pull over and don a plastic oversuit if the clouds burst on a ride. While the Axe is up to the odd shower, I tried to ride in it through a proper storm and only made it 10 miles before a torrent of cats and dogs burst through the main zip.

In every other respect, I'm a big fan of the Axe Hydro, though, it looks superb, is warm enough for chilly starts and cool enough for hot weather plus the build quality is genuinely excellent.

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

Rugged and
easy to adjust
protection



BikeTek Premium Lever Control Guard £39.99

**2
months
ON TEST**

'Robust peace of mind'



**Tested by
Emma Franklin
for two months**

Thanks to being easy to fit, this lever guard meant that I was able to get out on circuit after arriving for my trackday without adding a compulsory brake lever guard in advance.

Machined from aluminium and given an anodised grey coating, the guard feels robust and high quality,

and expanding spacers means it's suitable for handlebars with tube diameters of 22mm or 18mm. The blade itself can also be easily and swiftly adjusted to cover desired span via two Allen bolts and a slide mechanism. It was fitted in less than 10 minutes, and certainly gives as much peace of mind as more expensive guards.

MCN rating ★★★★★
www.bikeittradde.com