

TRIED & TESTED

MCN STAFF RATE THEIR RIDING KIT

★★★★★



It's a proper classic cut



12

months

ON TEST

Richa Camden £349.99

'Looks great, but only AA?'

Perfectly at home on a retro



Tested by Ben Clarke for one year/2000 miles

I'm rarely so conflicted as I am about the Richa Camden jacket. On the face of it, it's a solid piece of kit that captures the aesthetic of the North Circular café scene or the Rocker movement it spawned. The build quality is excellent, too, with chunky zips, reassuringly stiff snap fasteners and not a stitch out of place. The trouble is, I wouldn't spend £350 on a leather jacket with a AA CE certification these days, no matter how pretty it is. There are simply too many AAA options out there around, or even below, this price. That said, if you like the look of the Camden and you're not so safety-conscious then you certainly won't be disappointed with the look, feel and quality.

There's a lot to like about the Camden and it all starts with the looks. That double-breasted zip arrangement, ribbed shoulder stitching and wrap-around collar absolutely nail the retro brief but without feeling over-egged or try-hard. This jacket would be equally at home on a modern naked, a retro, or a genuine classic – it puts me in mind of the jacket my dad wore on his Honda CB400 Four. And it's not just the look that makes this jacket suitable for so many types of bike. The cut is roomy enough to reach the bars comfortably in all but the most extreme riding positions and there's a short zip connector at the back to save you any blushes from exposing your 'lower back' on a sportsbike. Riding anything with extreme clip-ons will start to restrict blood flow, though, as it doesn't have

the arms-forward cut of a sportier bike jacket, causing some restriction at the shoulders. The standard D30 shoulder and elbow armour (Level 1) is very comfortable, not too bulky and stays in place well as you move around. There's a back protector pocket but no item included (another gripe of mine) so I popped in an Oxford Level 2 one and it fits perfectly. Additional Velcro strips inside the pocket mean it'll also hold a narrower protector in place, which is a nice touch. The cotton lining is much nicer against your skin than the polyester mesh you so often get in leather jackets, which is a good thing because I'm more likely to wear the Camden over a T-shirt in the summer than a base layer. The ventilation zips on the chest are also a welcome addition and I like that they use the same

chunky zips as the pockets (of which there are two inside and two out). Like I said at the start, I'm in two minds about the Richa Camden. It's a fabulous bit of kit in almost every way, let down by a CE certification that doesn't live up to the price. Worn back-to-back with the AAA Gold Top 619 I reviewed a few weeks ago, there is a gulf in luxuriousness/spec that far exceeds the mere £70 price difference between the two. **MCN rating ★★★★★** www.richa.eu

PROS & CONS

- +

Looks the absolute business and is great to wear
- I'd expect a AAA certification at this price point



Quality chunky zips and fasteners



Cotton liner is a win for comfort