

'I have seen the light with clever flip-front helmet'

Never wrestle with sidepods and screws again, thanks to the first light-reactive visor

Lazer Monaco Window Pure Carbon, £396.85

Tested by: Simon Relph

Time tested: 2800 miles/five months

What's good? This is a very high-spec helmet which has some great innovations I had never tried before. The main part of the helmet is made from carbon fibre and Lazer claim it's the lightest flip-front on the market. But most impressive is the Lumino photochromic visor which uses a light-reactive Transitions coating, just like the glasses you buy from the opticians. The visor reacts quickly to changing

light conditions, darkening with sunlight and going clear when light fades, which gives a crystal-clear view in all conditions. It's very quiet on the move due to close-fitting ear pads, which is a plus, but also with this comes a minus (see below). All-round visibility is good and the ratchet that fastens the chin strap is easy to use.

What's not? The lack of space around my ears results in pressure points, which become uncomfortable on long journeys

(though I admit to not having the smallest ears in the world). The padding around the ears is removable, but taking it out increases noise levels so much it's intolerable without wearing earplugs – while it's fine to ride with the pads in and no plugs. Also, it's quite hard to close and lock the chinbar down with one hand – it's much easier with two – and it makes a very loud clunk as it locks into place.

Contact: www.lazerhelmets.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★

DETAILS

1. Visor The Lumino photochromic visor is fantastic, changing from clear to dark depending on the amount of sunlight



QUICK BUYING ADVICE FLIPS

1 It's all in the label

The letter at the end of the code on the chinstrap tells you how the chinbar is rated: P (protective); NP (non-protective); or P/J (lid is approved as a full-face when the chinbar is down, and also as an open-face with the chinbar up).

2 Trackdays

The majority of trackday organisers in this country insist on an ACU Gold sticker that certifies a helmet for racing. Flip-fronts do come with ACU approval but not as routinely as a normal full-face, so check before buying.

3 We will communicate

If flip-fronts are for touring and commuting then Bluetooth headsets are handy additions, letting you listen to music or talk with pillions. These are much more comfy if there are recesses by the ears for speakers. Check for them.

4 Buckle up

Most flips have a ratchet-style strap fastener. Rather than the old seatbelt-style buckle, these involve sliding a toothed insert into a retainer that grips it until you pull a tab to release it.

5 Removable chinbars

Some helmets go further than just raising the chinbar. Scorpion has a flip-front where the chinbar can be removed and the lid used as an open-face. The Shark Evoline's chinbar can rotate over the back of the lid so it's out of view.

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Knox Orsa leather gloves, £79.99

Tester: Andy Davidson

Time tested: 10 months/4000 miles

What's good? These perforated goatskin shorty gloves use a Boa fastening system instead of Velcro. It takes a couple of seconds longer to secure, but saves you from fraying and scratchy Velcro, and provides a more secure fit. There are knuckle, finger and palm protectors. These are ideal summer companions; they're breathable, light and fit neatly under my jacket sleeve. They've remained sturdy and look as good as the day I got them.

What's not? It took me a while to get used to the fastening system, but the effort has been worth it.

Contact: www.planet-knox.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★ **Value rating:** ★★★★★



Oxford Chain Brush, £9.99

Tester: Tony Hoare

Time Tested: Six chain cleans

What's good? Looking after chains is an important job to me, and this brush makes it much easier. The bristles clean the chain from both sides and the rear at the same time and do a great job of getting rid of old lube, and even light surface rust. Before spotting this product I'd considered making a similar brush myself from three nailbrushes, so I'm glad this came along to save me the bother.

What's not? Some will see a tenner as a lot for a brush. I see it as an investment in extending the life of components that would be expensive to replace.

Contact: www.oxprod.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★ **Value rating:** ★★★★★



ACF50 Corrosion Block grease, £10

Tester: Andy Downes

Time tested: Two years

What's good? I love ACF50 anti-corrosion spray, and this grease is made by the same people. It stops any corrosion, resists being washed away and can be used as a light lubricant too. Caliper bolts, banjo bolts and exhaust header bolts have all been treated and remain easy to remove. I also used it on my Ducati Multistrada's exhaust valve – these are notorious for seizing but I had no such problems.

What's not? Not a lot. Just beware online sellers with tempting prices as low as £2.45. They're only selling a tiny amount, not the 454g pot which costs around £10.

Contact: www.acf-50.co.uk

Quality rating: ★★★★★ **Value rating:** ★★★★★