

AGV Veloce is a no-brainer

Tony has this lid to thank for the fact he walked away without a head injury after a 60mph highside

Details

1. The back of the lid has taken a hard hit and the shell has split. It's better the energy disperses through the shell breaking, than being transmitted to the head inside.

2. The plastic vent surround has dislodged from the shell, very close to the central point of the impact, and there are additional scuffs across the shell just above the vents.

3. An impact on the side of the helmet has cracked and bent the visor mounting post. The visor came off in the accident, which didn't cause me a problem, but wouldn't be pleasant for anyone crashing face-first into a gravel trap.



AGV GT Veloce helmet, £349.99



Tester: Tony Hoare

Time tested: Eight months/2000 miles/one big crash

What's good? I'm sat here writing this just days after I was thrown over the top of a Triumph Speed Triple R at about 60mph on track, landing on my back with enough force to compress the thick foam hump on my race suit. This AGV took the bulk of the impact, absorbing enough energy to leave me conscious, if somewhat dazed and confused. The damage shows it has absorbed a serious impact, as the composite-fibre shell is cracked and an exhaust vent has broken free of its mounting. Some might look at this damage as a sign of weakness, but those people need a reality check. A helmet is a disposable product that is designed to do its job once and then be retired. This did its job very well, and the proof of the pudding is that I'm still able to eat my pudding. This AGV was recently awarded five stars in the UK Government's Sharp impact tests, and this is the second time I've heavily impacted a five-star helmet and escaped without a head injury. I think this justifies the Sharp scheme and shows why it's worth investigating a helmet's safety performance before buying it.

What's not? It's hard to criticise a brain-saving helmet, but the visor came off in the accident and it's not beyond manufacturers like AGV to find a way of stopping that.

Contact: www.agv.co.uk

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Halfords three assorted finishing pads, £2.99



Tester: Emma Franklin

Time tested: Two years

What's good? A paint sprayer friend of mine first showed me the many uses of these pads. Strictly speaking they're for preparing surfaces prior to painting, however I've found them extremely useful for cleaning metal surfaces on my bike. Teamed with a squirt of brake cleaner I gently rub clean my bike's expansion pipe after each use, the medium pad doing a perfect job of buffing off any baked-on oil deposits. I've also used the fine grade pad to restore my frame's brushed aluminium finish and remove a curious, brown fibreglass splodge from one of the inner spars. And this stuff is great for gently removing sealant from the mating surfaces of crankcases prior to re-sealing.

What's not? You need to be gentle with them, especially the coarse grade pad, as it's very easy to scratch your delicate metal parts.

Contact: www.halfords.co.uk

Quality: ★★★★★

Value: ★★★★★



Arc-on Competizione gloves, £140



Tester: Tim Thompson

Time tested: 16 weeks

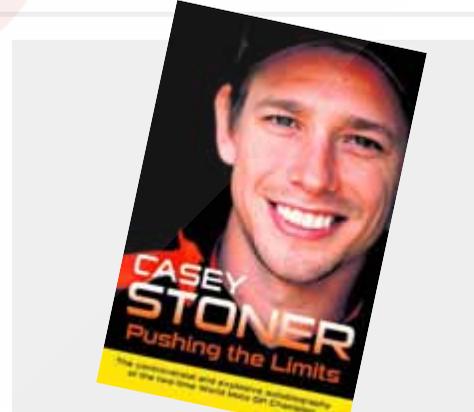
What's good? This is a substantial glove with intimate feel and sensible design. It's constructed from a mountain of range-topping safety materials – tough but supple kangaroo hide, bomb-proof stingray inserts on the cuffs and palm, titanium and carbon knuckle armour, grippy Kevlar matting on finger tips and other contact points – but, crucially, none of it gets in the way of basic comfort and usability. I particularly like the extended cuff, which ensures a three-inch overlap with sleeves, and the detailing in the fingers. They are pre-curved – normal enough – and also externally stitched for proper all-day comfort, and elasticated for a snug fit, too.

What's not? There's little venting and plenty of natural warmth in the Competizione, which can be good (Anglesey trackday in March, for example) as well as a bad, for those odd days in summer when the sun's really baking.

Contact: www.arc-on.co.uk

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Casey Stoner, Pushing the Limits, £9.99



Tester: Michael Neeves

Time used: One week

What's good? From his domination of Aussie flat track to MotoGP, Casey Stoner's autobiography is fascinating. He might have retired at just 27, but you quickly realise he's done his fill of laps. He talks about his racing journey, from his first ride around the backyard on a Yamaha PW50 when he was three, coming to the UK to race as a youngster, to his final race on a Honda RC213V in Valencia 2012. As a race fan it's amazing to find out what really went on behind the scenes in 125cc, 250cc and MotoGP, from team, paddock and tyre politics, to machinery development and his relationship with rivals.

What's not? The book rushes through at a pace and finishes too soon, but then unfortunately, so did Stoner's racing career. I bought it as an eBook, which you can't share with your mates, but it's also available in print form.

Contact: iTunes eBooks or www.amazon.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Oxford Lithium Battery Hot Vest, £149.99



Tester: Richard Newland

Time tested: 3000 miles/12 months

What's good? I used this lithium battery-powered vest throughout last winter, covering a minimum of 600 miles per week, regardless of the temperature or conditions. On my two-hour commutes it would gradually power-down toward the end of the journey, but on shorter hops you can run it at full power without fear of draining it too fast. The four heat settings are palpably different, the jacket well made and comfortable (and a good wind-resistant layer in itself), and it's washable, too. The Hot Vest is a great addition to your biking wardrobe.

What's not? The heat panels are fairly localised, and the battery life is useless for journeys longer than an hour and a half if it's properly cold. The lowest heat setting is almost imperceptible, and replacement/additional batteries are a whopping £54.99 each!

Contact: www.oxprod.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★