



QBag Tail Bag 4 £69.99

'Solid but simple'



Tested by Ben Clarke for six months

QBag are a German luggage firm that have won a lot of hearts with their low-priced but quality kit. Like the rest of the firm's products, the Tail bag 4 is as simple as can be. You get quality nylon construction, rugged zips, bungee fitment and that's about it. But what is there feels exceptionally well-made and strong, and I think it will stand the test of time well beyond this six-month test.

The QBag is certainly impressive in terms of quality and value, and I would buy one without a second thought if I was caught short for luggage for a weekend away. The construction is exceptional and I think the luggage should last you years and years – a lifetime of occasional use.

But if I was using luggage daily or keeping it permanently attached to the bike, I'd opt for something sleeker and with built-in waterproofing. Its 5kg maximum load capacity would also prevent you being able to transport anything beyond a change of clothes.

Overall, I would say the QBag Tail Bag 4 is a high-quality bit of kit you wouldn't regret buying, especially at such a reasonable price in comparison to more fancy brands.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
sportsbikeshop.co.uk



Trilobite 661 Parado jeans £227

'Top tech-spec denim jeans'



Tested by Justin Hayzelden for eight months

A pair of CE-certified denim riding jeans can be a low-profile option for many people, a way of wearing motorcycle clothing without looking like you're wearing bike clothing. It gives the wearer the ability to blend in when you get to wherever you're going, be it work, shopping or to hang out with mates.

But there are more advantages to denim jeans than just understated looks; top of the list are comfort and breathability and the Trilobite Parados score highly here. That's not to say they don't look good, in fact they have a cool technical style, more like textiles or leathers, which incorporates the practicality of stretch panels and adjustable ventilation ports.

In terms of protection the Parados are certified to CE standard prEN17092, earning an AA for impact, abrasion and tear resistance, plus seam strength and numerous other tests that this standard subjects them to. For the most part, construction is 11.5oz cotton denim with a 2% Elastane mix for stretch, and a generous Kevlar aramid fibre lining on the seat and knees. CE Level 2 SAS-TEC armour is included for knee and hip.

The knee armour sits snugly in a fabric holder, which slips into a pocket where it can be adjusted up and down on a large Velcro panel for a custom fit. Although it provides the upper level in protection, I have swapped out the hip armour for Level 1 D30 Ghost armour, as the slimline design doesn't have that 'child-bearing-hip' aesthetic!

Comfort is where these jeans excel, which is down to the stretch in the denim, a large flexible crotch panel and accordion panels at the lower back and above the knee. They feel great to wear and I've worn them all day on more occasions than I can remember, from the daily commute, to a 2000-mile tour around the Emerald Isle and numerous road tests. These are the slim-fit version, and they come up exactly true to size.

Waterproofing isn't a feature, however the large zippable ventilation ports on the thighs ship a ton of air when wide open, providing a flow that will not only keep you cool, but help them dry out should you get caught in a summer shower.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
forcefieldbodyarmour.com



CE A-rating for urban riding

5000 miles ON TEST

The hood isn't detachable

Alpinestars Domino Tech £219.99

'Soft shell jacket covers hard yards'



Tested by Michael Neeves for 18 months

With its lightweight construction and pre-curved sleeves this soft-shell jacket is comfy, easy to wear, good looking and proved to be sturdy after lots of use on and off bikes.

I'm a lanky six-footer and this size large fits perfectly with enough wiggle room to wear layers underneath, and it's long enough at the rear to cover my lower back leant forward reaching the bars. Although light, it's substantial, very warm and its high neck and fabric collar ensure maximum cosiness.

The weatherproofing is excellent, repelling wind and rain and the mesh lining is breathable for warmer weather, but with minimal venting, it's sometimes too warm to wear in the height of summer.

It comes with a non-removable hood and plenty of deep, internal and external zippable pockets. With its basic 'A' CE rating and Level 1 shoulder and elbow armour it isn't designed for high-speed spills, but I combine it with a back protector, or Alpinestars airbag vest, for extra protection.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.alpinestars.com



Oxford Clamp-On brake lever clamp £6.99

'Handy gadget stops stress'



Tested by Emma Franklin for two years

A simple-but-effective little gizmo for helping to keep your bike where it should be during transportation. Made from tough, shaped plastic, one end of the Clamp-On push-fits over your throttle grip, then you pull the front brake all the way in and hook the smaller hooked end of the clamp over the lever.

Once you let go of the lever, the device holds the front brake on – providing extra peace of mind when strapping a bike into a van, trailer or ferry, by preventing it from rolling forward or backward. I've used it mostly when transporting bikes in a van and found it to be a universal fit, with both standard and aftermarket levers.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
oxfordproducts.com

TWO years ON TEST