



TRIED & TESTED
 MCN STAFF RATE THEIR RIDING KIT
 ★★★★★



Vents have waterproof zips, and they work so far



Two months ON TEST

Understated design for all types of bike

Richa Orion GTX jacket £550

It's shrugged off winter

Tested by Ben Clarke for two months/300 miles
 I've only worn this new textile jacket for a couple of months and a few hundred miles but given that it's just come out and the miles I've covered have been quite extreme weather-wise, I wanted to give my first impressions.
 What drew me to the jacket in the first place is that it doesn't look like typical adventure gear. There's a tendency for this kind of kit to make you look like you're heading off around Morocco or a RTW trip. A colleague describes this aesthetic as "pockety", which I think sums it up rather well. It's all very well if you ride a GS or Tiger or whatever, but sometimes you just want textiles because the weather is rubbish. Not

that the Orion would look out of place on those bikes, either, I think you could wear it on anything, especially in the subtle colour options (although RNLI orange is also available).
 I was also pleased to see the D30 Level 1 armour and AA-rated CE certification, which isn't always a given even at this price point. Sticking with safety, there are plenty of reflective flashes to keep you visible in the winter darkness, too.
 During my first few hundred miles with the Orion, I've encountered sharp frosts, -1°C commutes and rain that would have deep sea fishing captains thinking twice, and the laminated Gore-Tex Orion has shrugged it all off no problem. With the long connector zip between the top and bottom halves fastened, I've not a drop of moisture or a puff of cold air make it

through. The jacket uses a band of elastic to cinch at the waist and a drawstring to tighten up the hem, which helps with warmth, waterproofing and riding comfort.
 I was surprised that the main zip is exposed to the elements as you often see an exterior storm flap on this type of garment, but the internal storm flap uses a clever guttering system so that any rain that comes through is channelled down and out of the bottom. The rubberised gusset zips on the sleeves have also remained watertight and double up as vents for the summer. Additional vents on either side of the chest and a large exhaust at the rear suggest that once the temperature climbs and the thermal lining is removed, I'll have no problem staying cool – I'll find out eventually, I hope!

Despite not looking too "pockety", there are plenty, with two large ones on the front, two internal and a massive side-entry poacher's pocket on the rear. The internal pockets are also on the jacket itself, not just the liner, so you get them in summer, too. There are also chest protector pockets fitted.
 So far, I've not got anything to complain about at all.
MCN rating ★★★★★
www.nevis.uk.com



This label is always a welcome sign



Zip vents will be welcome in summer

- PROS & CONS**
- + Keeps out the cold and the rain. AA rated with D30
 - As far as winter's concerned, there are none so far

Gerbing Xtreme Ladies Heated Gloves £209.99

Say goodbye to frosty fingers

Tested by Saffron Wilson for six months
 It's not very often that you get female-specific heated gloves, but Gerbing are leading the way with making this a reality. As I have long fingers, I've previously had to use gloves which gape a lot around the palm in order to get the length needed – but this pair are snug and comfortable even from the first wear, a feeling which is helped by the brushed liner and Thinsulate layer.
 Despite their waterproof/breathable Hipora liner, they didn't stay as waterproof as I'd hoped when I got caught in a heavy storm. But they have proven fine in light showers, and they're breathable, which is good when the weather warms up mid-ride.
 My only other niggle is that I'd prefer a chunkier wire going to the connectors as when you're covered in layers of bulky kit, you feel like you might rip them from the glove (this hasn't happened). Optional batteries are available (£119 extra), and the gloves have a lifetime warranty.
MCN rating ★★★★★
gerbing.co.uk



Women-specific warmers

One winter ON TEST

Halvarssons Vinvallen £889.99

Year-round textile finery

Tested by Gareth Evans for nine months
 I've really gelled with this new-for-2025 textile suit. I was told by the supplier, Bikerheadz, that the jacket (£489.99) would be 'among the most comfortable you have ever worn' and that's turned out to be a very accurate statement – I adore wearing it, with or without the warming Outlast removable liner that's been in for the past few months. Both have proven completely waterproof, having tackled some of the year's biggest storms, and their venting is such that they're suitable for a huge range of temperatures, but the high-quality, low-friction zips also mean they're easy to adjust on the move, should conditions change.



Ventilation is very impressive

3500 miles ON TEST

On the subject of zips, the one connecting jacket to trousers (£399.99) is pleasingly easy to use, which isn't always the case with these suits. I mentioned in a previous update that I was struggling to keep the cuffs of the trousers over shorter boots, but this ceases to be an issue

in winter when I wear longer, more suitable boots anyway.
 And what of the AA safety rating, where they could be AAA? You don't see many with the top score, and I'd wager they'd be less comfortable.
MCN rating ★★★★★
halvarssonsmc.com

Macna Centre heated jacket £199.95

Hotter under the collar

Tested by Richard Newland for 12 months
 Heated kit is a life-saver. It's not just about deflecting hypothermia – a cold core and chilly muscles equal slow movement, discomfort and fatigue. This Macna Centre jacket kept me functioning last winter, and has been keeping me warm through this one – and it's very nearly brilliant.
 I have used it with a 7.4v battery pack, which you plug in and pop into its own pocket in the jacket, but I much prefer using it plugged into the bike's 12v supply. Using the battery means you can only hit a max of 24 watts of warming punch – with the 12v connection it'll hit 50 watts. And that's crucial, because the Centre rarely feels significantly warm once the ambient temperature is around 0°C.
 While it feels necessary to be burning the watts on the highest setting in sub-zero temperatures (1 is the coolest, 4 is the max), and you don't feel like you're being particularly roasted – you also don't feel cold. It's an odd trick, likely helped by the foil lining that reflects and retains much of the heat being



A good-looking jacket that provides ample heat down to zero-degrees

generated. On sub-zero days when you're out all day, it's not warm enough – but it's good for short hops or days when it's not sub-zero.
 There are also power leads at the cuffs so you can plug in a pair of Macna heated gloves. I regularly do, and the system works very well.
 The four heat levels are selectable via the main power button on the right breast, and this is one aspect where the Macna is frustrating. If you're plugging into the bike, you need to then reach the power button, which means undoing your jacket (probably gloveless), locating the button and pressing it to the desired level. If you want to change settings on the move, it's essentially impossible. There is an app that drives Macna's kit on your phone... but if your phone is tucked away in a pocket/pannier/rucksack, then it's no more use.
 The stitching has also failed on one of the arms, meaning there's a gaping hole under the left pit.
 I want to love this great jacket, but it does fall just short of brilliant.
MCN rating ★★★★★
www.macna.com

7000 miles ON TEST

Oxford Air Seat – Adventure & Touring £64.99

Breathe new life into your saddle

Tested by Adam Oldfield for one year
 The Oxford Air Seat Adventure & Touring edition has breathed new life into the tired, sagging saddle of my 2004 Triumph Tiger 955i – making it a fantastic stopgap, or even long-term solution, over pricey reupholstering.
 It feels impressively tough; I've left it on through every season without issue, though after a torrential downpour it does need a bit of sunshine to fully dry out again. Thankfully, it's a breeze to fit or remove, so I often simply take it



Ready, seat, go: Oxford's air seat strapped in, comfort in an instant

off if heavy rain is looming.
 Getting the air pressure right takes some trial and error, but once dialled in for your personal mass, comfort is transformed, longer rides now feel effortless.
MCN rating ★★★★★
www.oxfordproducts.com

One Year ON TEST