



Hard to fault from the off

Shoei Neotec 3 £679.99

Six months ON TEST

'Feels like it's been built to last'



Tested by Al Silcox for six months
Comfortable from the get-go, the Shoei Neotec3 is a dual-homologated modular

helmet so you can ride with it flipped or closed. It meets ECE22.06 standard and is five-star SHARP tested for protection. There's a plush

lining, buckle fastener and drop-down sun visor, which has a dark enough tint to be of use. There are well-placed vents, which are easy to operate with a gloved hand, as is the button to work the flip. My main criticism is the visor closure, I find the button to release the visor is difficult to use when on the move.

This means I often ride with the visor

slightly cracked, which can be chilly. At the thick end of £700 it's not cheap but it is a quality piece of kit and with a five-year warranty it feels like it has been built to last. Various colour options are available, and I love the subtle red, white and blue version that I've been wearing.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.shoeiassured.co.uk

Spada Tachi Trainers £139.99

'Understated but great'



Tested by Gareth Evans for 8 months
These waterproof boots have stood up to some serious abuse,

and it's testament to their build quality that they remain mucky-but-unaffected after thousands of miles on a variety of bikes and in all weathers, including torrential rain.

They're a pair I've used for regular office days too, which means I've walked a lot in them, and although they took a full day (and two blisters) to bed in, since then they've been very comfortable.

Core to their appeal is how quickly they do up. The rotary Fitgo fastener is much better than laces in this respect, but it isn't perfect. A few times when I've been in a rush I've felt the boots had secured tightly



Eight months ON TEST

Dirty but effective

enough around my ankle but the fastener has popped open again.

But otherwise, brilliant. It took me a while to realise the trainers were reflective, with 3M material under the black outer shell, because they cleverly also do an excellent job of not standing out as bike clobber.

There's gear and brake lever protection over the toes, and their CE safety rating is Level 1 for height (obviously) and transverse rigidity, but Level 2 for impact abrasion and impact cut performance.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.spadaclimbing.com

Bridgestone Battlax S23 £307

'Confidence boosters'



Tested by Saffron Wilson for 7500 miles

After running the BMW R12 nineT on its OE

tyres and squaring them off after numerous tedious motorway miles, I opted for an upgrade in the form of Bridgestone's Battlax S23 tyres before I embarked on my cross-European voyage through the Alps to the tip of southern Germany.

Coming from square rubber onto the sporty S23s was nothing short of a delight. Previously, with the BMW's original rubber resembling a car tyre, cornering was done with more care than usual, but as soon as I'd scrubbed in the new rubber the nineT was turning with effortless aplomb, regardless of how tight the bend was and where you were on the tyre.

With their multi compounds, the Bridgestones warm up quickly, and I could instantly feel the difference, which resulted in more confidence in my own riding ability too.

The S23's predecessor, the S22, was a highly rated tyre in its own right. But Bridgestone claim that the latest version has improved wet weather performance, as well as improved stopping distances.

Although I didn't do a back-to-back test, after climbing numerous Alpine



They warm up fast and were great for Alpine touring on the BMW

passes in the rain, I can categorically state that I had more confidence than ever before, even when I was high up in low clouds battling mini rivers coursing down the tarmac.

Six months ON TEST

The front has three-layer compound technology and the rear boasts a five-layer compound, designed to deliver performance that should mean they perform and last on track as well as they do on road. They have a mono spiral belt claiming to run cooler with more stability, and a 'pulse groove' design for better grip in the wet.

After the trip (which was a couple of thousand miles) I did keep the S23s on, but ideally I should have replaced them again as the square shape was creeping back (I'll blame that on the relentless French toll roads rather than the tyre). But they lasted until the end of my time with the BMW and although they were overdue a change, they were still completely legal and rideable, with plenty of tread left.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.bridgestone.co.uk

Tru-Tension Chain Cleaner £10

'Blasts away old lube'



Tested by Emma Franklin for one can
As a heavy user of chain cleaner, value is important for me

because I seem to get through an awful lot of the stuff. As Tru-Tension sits at the upper end of the price range, I was deliberately less liberal in my application – and found that, actually, I didn't need to be as cavalier as I am with cheaper varieties. The nozzle provides a very powerful and concentrated jet, which blasts away old lube on contact. Then, once the solution itself gets a chance to eat into the gunk, all it takes is a quick wipe for a beautifully clean



There's no monkeying around here!

chain. Tru-Tension claim the solution is safe on plastics, paints and seals – and so far this seems to be the case.

Three months ON TEST

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.tru-tension.co.uk