



Shark Spartan RS
£299.99

'Comfy, quiet commuter'

Tested by Dan Sutherland, five months



I'm a fan of sporty lids. They might often be louder, less weatherproof, and more single-minded, but I don't think you can beat the fit, finish, and look.

Imagine my surprise then when I fell head over heels for Shark's Spartan RS touring lid, which has been perfect for all-weather commuting and comfy cruising in the second half of this year. Passing ECE 22.06 safety standards, it blends the looks of their Race R Pro with distance comfort and practicality.

As well as being a good fit, there's a good visor aperture, with a drop-down sun shield and a Pinlock anti-mist insert in the box.

The chunky vents are easy to operate with a gloved hand, and you also get a double D-ring fastener, plus a chin curtain, and breath guard for a sportier look.

With ear plugs it's perfectly quiet and I have also added the optional light purple iridium visor (£79.99), which appeals to me as a fan of all things 1990s.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.nevis.uk.com



UltimateEar earplug earphones **£289**

'Great sound and noise reduction'

30k miles

Tested by Michael Guy, four years



I got into the habit of wearing earplugs a long time ago and now find it very strange to ride without them.

Not only do they protect your hearing, but they also reduce fatigue and generally make the whole riding experience that bit more pleasant – especially on long motorway journeys.

I took this a step further nearly four years ago when I tried the UltimateEar Pro earphone earplugs. Given that I generally ride adventure bikes which, due to their size, height and screens, have very compromised aerodynamics which lead to high wind noise, I was very sceptical that they would actually work. Before trying them I couldn't honestly see how they could reduce the wind noise enough to enable me to hear music without having the music so loud that I would be damaging my ears anyway. Well it turns out I was wrong and the very affable team at UltimateEar were right. This is a top end product that is tailor made to you (you have to have an in-person fitting where moulds are taken) and they've been a game changer. Made from ultra-soft silicone they fit perfectly and as long as they are positioned properly are very comfortable. The slim design means they sit flush in your ear so there is no issue getting your helmet on or off. UltimateEar claim they give 31dB of hearing protection and this, combined with two speakers in each side, gives very impressive sound and a strong bass.

UltimateEar's latest offering is Bluetooth-enabled earphones and while the idea of not having to plug them in is tempting, you lose the ability to control what you're listening to so I opted for the wired ones. These plug into my Sena Bluetooth comms unit which is easy to use and set-up and means I can skip tracks backward and forward and change the volume. They would also work perfectly as an intercom.

They come in a neat carrier case with supplies for cleaning as well as ear comfort gel which helps the fit and overall comfort.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.ultimateear.com



KEIS G301 3-finger gloves **£200**

'Super-hot lobster claws'

Tested by Richard Newland, 1500 miles

You only need to wear these G301s once to realise that they're simply magic.

No knuckle armour means they're CE rated to Level 1, the lower standard for gloves, and do feel ski-glove-esque compared to an armoured glove, but the construction is superb. The three-finger design means fingers stay warmer than when isolated individually, and it needs to be sub-5°C before you hit the power button. They will run from a power lead to your bike (wired to the battery or

12v socket), or a battery pack option. I use 2000mAh batteries (£85/pair) that slot into the cuff, but on full day rides you'll want the endless supply of a wired connection. Three modes (Green, Amber, Red) run from 'warm glow' to 'toasty'. You'll only need Red when the temperature is below zero. They're waterproof and breathable, too. Downsides? One-finger operation of levers and switchgear is impossible; the over-sleeve nature means cables routed through your jacket arc out of the sleeves to plug in.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.keisapparel.com



Oxford Rainseal Waterproofs Jacket **£39.99 Trousers** **£29.99**

'Simple, effective, good-value'

Tested by Simon Weir, 500 miles



I'm very impressed with the jacket. Made of a waterproof material with taped seams and a simple liner, it's well designed. The soft-lined collar is low at

the front and high at the back and doesn't interfere with the helmet. The elasticated cuffs are good and seal well. There are waist and hem adjusters to keep it tight.

The matching trousers are also good, with decent zip/opening to get your feet through. The top half is lined but the waist is just elasticated, and the cut is 'MC Hammer' generous.

Both halves have quality (though bulky) stash sacks. And a pocket or two would add usefulness.

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

5 wet weeks