



Quick and easy to adjust the waist

1500 miles ON TEST

Merlin Tewkesbury jacket £329.99

'It's retro but properly modern



Tested by Simon Brown for six months

British brand Merlin are making a name for themselves with modern takes on old-school riding gear – and this Tewkesbury jacket is a fine example. It might look like the sort of waxed cotton my dad used to sport on his Royal Enfield Flying Flea but instead it is a technical waxed fabric and is approved to the AA CE standard, which guarantees a decent level of protection at road speeds and isn't just for round-town use. Your money gets you D30 Level 1 armour at the shoulders and elbows and there is a pocket for a back protector – shame that's not included in the price. Styling and comfort are hard to beat. The popper-adjustable collar works a treat and instead of a belt there are drawstrings inside to ensure a snug fit around the middle. The two main pockets on the front have a zipped section under the flap so you can carry essentials such as a wallet securely and keep them dry, too. The tartan lining is welcoming but note that it is not removable for super-hot days.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.merlinbikegear.com

Ready for all weathers



Rukka Ladies Comforina jacket £689.99

'Top notch quality'



Tested by Saffron Wilson for 16 months

As an all-weather rider, I know how important it is to have the correct kit, and this Rukka

Comforina jacket definitely ticks all of the boxes. Suited to cooler temperatures, it keeps you warm and dry, but if the weather were to suddenly change, simply take out the thermal lining and open the vents and you'll be comfortable in the spring too.

I'm not usually a massive fan of textiles, but for this jacket I've made an exception. The non-fussy black fabric is great for an all-round jacket and the reflective piping has been placed in a non-disruptive but effective way. I also quite like the reflective detailing on the arms. Of course, you still have a few logos dotted around the jacket (Gore-Tex, D30, Cordura Stretch, Rukka) and while I think they do slightly detract from the overall impression, I don't think they are a deal-breaker and, of course, they are helpful if you're looking for a jacket on the rack.

It's rated as CE A for abrasion and burst protection, plus it comes with the highest rated CE Level 2 D30 armour in the back, elbows and shoulders as standard. The fabric itself is thick and seems like it would handle taking abrasion well, but thankfully I haven't tested that to its full potential!

But the big plus point for the jacket is the quality – it's impeccable. I've lived with it for over a year now and battled through the British weather throughout winter, and it hasn't let me down.

The quality is top notch, from the cuffs to the zips and even the internal liner has decent fastenings to keep it in place. It's waterproof, even in the worst weather, and the addition of the stormproof collar means that you'll even stay dry from those pesky raindrops that try and get in through the top of your zip.

I can see this jacket lasting for a good few years yet – a sentiment shared by Rukka, as with a six-year warranty you've got that extra peace of mind that you really need when you're parting with this much cash.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
bikerheadz.co.uk

4728 miles ON TEST



They've been great in all road conditions

2250 miles ON TEST

Bridgestone T32 (120/70 17 and 180/55 17) £462.86

'They're outstanding in the wet'



Tested by Justin Hayzelden for four months

New rubber rarely fails to impress, but the Bridgestone T32 has proved outstanding – especially in the wet. I've been through a ton of different tyres using my trusty Triumph Sprint ST as a test mule, and the T32 is the best suited across the board for the kind of riding I do, from fully loaded touring to the regular commute or just carving up B-roads for the joy of it.

The stiff carcass provides rock steady

stability at all lean angles, and the silica rich compound clings to the tarmac like a limpet. Under braking the front end oozes confidence, and although slower to steer than a sportier option, the trade off is a feeling of unwavering dependability whatever the conditions. Wet weather grip is exceptional and after 2k+ miles they barely look worn. Sure, the T32 is an expensive tyre at full price, but shop around and it's not hard to find deals knocking a sizeable chunk off.

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



UMUVKIU 20-piece carbide milling cutter set £17.99

'A bit of a grind'



Tested by Simon Relph for four months

Odd brand name, but great kit. Broken bolts, I hate them! When I reach the point of no return, having tried everything from penetrating oil, heat, easy-outs, drilling, hammering, and banging, there is only one thing left. This 20-piece carbide burr rotary tool bit set fit into Dremel tools and come in a range of shapes and sizes. I had a pinch bolt sheer off in the bottom of a set of forks, after trying every removal procedure, I drilled a hole right through, then using different sized bits, I was able to remove the unwanted metal of the broken bolt to a point that the remaining thread wrapped around the bit and came out like a coiled spring.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.amazon.co.uk

4 months ON TEST