



Velcro aside,
it's been great

20,000
miles
ON TEST

Spidi Defender £259.99

'I feel naked without it'



**Tested by Dan Sutherland
for three years**

I first reviewed this Spidi Defender chest and back protector around two years ago, and since then it's become something of a daily essential – finding a home in almost any riding kit I can squeeze it inside.

At almost 260 quid, it's by no means cheap, but you do get a CE Level 2 safety rating and plenty of adjustment – meaning it can be worn under everything from one-piece leathers to bulky textiles. I have also used it inside my RST TracTech Evo 5 textile jacket throughout summer, as well as the mesh-layered RST S-1.

Once it's in, it sits just right, and I feel naked without it when I wear jackets with built-in back armour. The protection on your chest also gives an extra layer of protection from the cold on chillier commutes.

I'm still using it now – with the only major drawback now being that the Velcro waist straps have failed. It still sits in place with a jacket zipped up, but once off, it flaps about awkwardly and can become annoying.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.spidiuk.com



Great fit and
CE AA rated too

Bull-it Ladies Heron Slim jeans £174.99

'They feel just like normal jeans'



**Tested by Charlotte King
for four months**

These Bull-it jeans appealed to me for their CE AA safety rating and short leg option. I opted for a ladies size 10 with a short leg as I'm usually between an 8 and a 10 in trousers, they fit well, if not a tiny bit loose.

From the first wear they have been exceptionally comfortable thanks to the wider waist band, which sits nicely across your lower belly just below the navel, so you don't find yourself being squeezed out over the top. The bottom of the jeans fit nicely inside my boots, without an argument with boot closure zips. The fit is flattering, with tailoring around the hips and bum areas; it feels like they have really thought about women's bodies when designing these and not just tried to modify a male variant.

The fabric has a small amount of stretch and the single layer design means they feel and look pretty much exactly like regular jeans; the low-profile hip and knee protection being barely noticeable as it's flexible and discreetly thin. The lack of mesh lining also means that you don't end up hopping about after getting tangled up when pulling them on and off. They have been so comfortable that on occasion I have worn these jeans for a full day in the MCN office to save on space in my bag where a change of clothes would usually be required.

They are a nice balance of warm and cool so I have worn them in weather ranging from 33°C to 12°C, performing well throughout and I think with a thermal base layer they could be worn on milder winter days too. They still look new after being worn for pretty much every ride that I have been on this season, with all stitching remaining strong and showing no signs of discolouration or wear so far.

My only minor complaint would be that they are not CE rated to the higher AAA as some other jeans are. The armour is also only CE Level 1 rather than being Level 2, but for the sort of urban road riding that most people tend to do in jeans like these, they are a great choice and decent value.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.bull-it.com



Waterproof
zipped pocket

2000
miles
ON TEST

Oxford Aqua T-50 Roll Bag £79.99

Gym kit at the
ready for Ali

'It means I can just roll-up and go'



**Tested by Alison Silcox
for six months**

If you're after a simple, well-priced, and versatile bit of luggage, the Oxford Aqua T-50 Roll Bag could be the item for you. It's proved fully waterproof during six months of use, has a generous 50-litre capacity, and straps to the rear luggage rack or pillion seat without hassle or messing around.

There are four sets of plastic double-D rings which secure the long webbing straps to the bike, it's easy to lash to anchor points on the bike. On my Suzuki GSX-S1000GX test bike

I use the pillion hangers and rear rack, they're perfectly placed for the job.

The roll-top opening means the bag's easy to access and size is easily adjustable, it's a case of squashing contents down and then clip to close. I've never used the small, zipped outer pocket, it's a bit superfluous. When the bag's not fully loaded, it is a bit floppy, which is something to bear in mind when securing to the bike. Off the bike, it's easy enough to carry round, as there's a sturdy, padded handle on the top of the bag.

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



Stash tools for
emergencies

Kriega OS-tool roll £79

'It's tough and versatile gear'



**Tested by Michael Guy
for two years**

Having the right tools for the job is important if you're heading off the beaten track. Having somewhere to put said tools is also key and the Kriega tool roll is a good balance of size, versatility and durability. Made from 1000D Cordura with YKK zips it's a tough piece of kit and comes with a 10-year guarantee. By its very nature it's part of your kit that has a hard life – stuffed into a pannier, rucksack and then used on the ground when you need to access tools on the go. With three compartments along with an alloy rail to attach your sockets, it's easy to keep organised. It then rolls together and can be compressed using a strong outer strap.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.kriega.com

4000
miles
ON TEST