



Stretchy and warm comfort

5000 miles ON TEST

## Oxford Advanced Base Layer top £24.99

### 'Hidden comfort'



**Tested by Emma Franklin for 10 months**

Part of Oxford's Advanced layering system, this base layer top is designed to be worn next to the skin and below a mid layer and outer garment to provide comfort all year round.

Made from a polyamide/polyester mix, it's stretchy but isn't a tight compression fit. There are also comfort boosting details, such as flat-locked seams and printed-on care labels. This slightly more relaxed style boosts comfort under textiles, but can result in bunching under tight-fitting leathers.

When worn as part of a layering system the top definitely helps keep you warm, but I wouldn't say it's as toasty as a dedicated winter base layer, so you'll need some sort of mid layer over the top for chilly weather.

During warmer weather, Oxford claim the fabric is wicking – and to a certain extent it is as it carries moisture away from the surface of the skin. However, on particularly hot days when I was sweating a lot during sporty riding the Oxford Advanced gear did start to become a little overwhelmed and left my skin feeling damp, too.

**Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★**  
www.oxfordriderwear.com



Feel the cold? Step this way

## Alpinestars Frost Drystar Textile Jacket £369.99

### 'Feels as warm as heated gear'



**Tested by Michael Neeves for 15 months**

All you really need to know about this quilted textile laminated jacket is it's warm... and I mean, unbelievably warm.

I got it last autumn and even in temperatures down into the low teens, it was still too way hot to use. And that's coming from a lizard-skin southerner who needs a jumper in anything less than 20 degrees. It was eventually cold enough to wear during the depths of winter and if you add in a few carefully chosen base layers it's every inch as warm as wearing a heated jacket, even when there's ice on your visor. Think of it as wrapping a 13.5 tog quilt around you and you'll get an idea of just how cosy it is.

A synthetic down filling gives the jacket its warmth and it's long enough to cover your lower back when you're leant over to reach the bars. The waterproof 'Drystar' inner layer staves off wind and heavy rain, too. It's full of well thought out features, such as a retractable waterproof hood to keep your bonce dry off the bike, large pockets (two inside and three zippable outside), a protective flap for the main zip, elastic cuffs and with thumb holes, a drawstring waist and pocket for a small back protector. The jacket has a CE certified 'A' rating (AAA is the highest), so I'd expect it to hold up to a slip-off at city speeds rather than anything higher on the open road. Impact protection comes in the shape of rubbery plastic shoulder and elbow armour, but I also wear a separate full length back protector or Alpinestars Tech-Air 5 airbag vest for extra protection.

It's robust, reassuringly weighty, extremely comfortable and there are very few CE-approved quilted puffer-style jackets like this out there. Mine's in black, which isn't the best to be seen in on the bike, but it's also available in a brighter pea green or light blue.

Shop around and you can find them selling for around £100 off list price. It's still expensive, but if you want a jacket that's hard feel cold in, it's an investment that'll make you feel very warm inside.

**Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★**  
www.alpinestars.com

2000 miles ON TEST



3000 miles ON TEST

## Alpinestars AMT-10 AIR HDRY gloves £194.99

### 'Not cheap but loaded with features'



**Tested by Michael Guy for nine months**

Given that you control so much of a motorcycle with your hands, having the right feel and the right gloves is vital. I ride a lot of off-road and adventure bikes and these latest offerings from Alpinestars have become indispensable. They are lightweight enough to give excellent control and feel, whilst being tough enough to protect your hands and withstand a fall.

The gloves form part of Alpinestars' new AMT range and are designed for everyday riding from anything from hot humid

conditions through to wet weather thanks to the separate laminate over-glove that packs away neatly and is easily put on when the rain comes. Since getting these gloves at the start of the year I've used them on launches in Greece, Sardinia, South Africa and India as well as numerous days green laning here in the UK. Standout features include the fit and narrow cuff, goatskin palm, touchscreen-compatible index finger and thumb, and hard knuckle protection. They're not cheap but are loaded with features and built to last.

**Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★**  
www.alpinestars.com



## Dream Machine Fairing Repair Service £330

### 'Worth the wait'



**Tested by Joseph Wright for three months**

After a week of futile searches for replacement panels following a spill on my ZXR400, I turned to Dream Machine, a recommended paintwork specialist. Despite my initial scepticism and a nerve-racking three-month wait, the results are truly remarkable.

The repaired panel seamlessly matches the original. The repair was not straightforward and involved multiple colours, stickers and text but somehow it looks as good as new. Although the job cost me over £300, the impeccable outcome reflects the investment. For anyone seeking top-notch motorcycle restoration, I highly recommend Dream Machine for their excellent quality and craftsmanship.

**Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★**  
dream-machine.co.uk

3 months ON TEST