

TRIED & TESTED

MCN STAFF RATE THEIR RIDING KIT



They're sturdy boots that pass at CE Level 2



Sole has plenty of grip but they aren't that supple

Oxford Valentina boots £119.99

2000 miles ON TEST

'Functional not fancy'



Tested by Alison Silcox for six months

For me, a good outfit always starts from the bottom up. That means boots are a vital part of any rider's wardrobe. These well-priced, full leather, waterproof boots from Oxford have been put through their paces, over what's been one of the wettest winters in years.

Thanks to a combination of a stiff toe box and firm edges around the shin, they aren't the most comfortable boots I've worn. They don't feel plush on long journeys or when off the bike, but they have become more supple with miles and after getting soaked through more than a couple of times. There's a concertina panel at the front of the ankle and the calf, which does improve comfort and flexibility.

They look more practical and functional than trendy, but then are black, leather, waterproof touring boots supposed to be capable of cutting a dash on the catwalk?

I don't want style over substance, I want them to do the job. Boots like these are generally worn under textile kit, so there's no need for them to be funky anyway.

I've worn the boots through the winter, which has resulted in many wet rides, and the Dry2Dry waterproof membrane has never let the wet creep in. The zips are chunky and the Velcro adjuster, at the calf, shows no sign of wear. With a breathable membrane and chunky winter socks, I've not had cheesy feet, even on the longest riding days.

There isn't a gear change pad and the left boot is showing signs of wear as a result. This is all the more annoying because for around half the miles of my test I've been on either the Zero DSX-R test bike or a Honda NC750X, with a DCT gearbox.

Approved to CE Level 2, there is protection at the toe, ankle and heel, they also have a reinforced insole. While the leather feels sturdy, the toe box has remained stiff and

feels like it's trapping my toes. That said, I'm confident that if I did have a mishap, the Valentinas would stand up to the job as well as any other boots I've worn in this price bracket.

At £129.99 these are well-priced boots and, if you want a basic touring boot, offer decent value for money. I've previously worn Sidi Gavia boots, which are a good alternative that benefit from full Gore-Tex membranes, but are almost double the price of these items from Oxford.

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

PROS & CONS

- + Practical, watertight and decent value. CE Level 2 protection
- Tight around chunky calf muscles, no gearchange pad

Concertina section aids movement and the zips are suitably rugged



The waterproof membrane is also breathable