



Kit developed by Alpinestars' Dakar riders



4 YEARS

Alpinestars Venture R Jkt/trs £219.99/£129.99

'It's survived the odd crash'

Tested by Michael Guy for 6500 miles



First up is the excellent fit. The jacket is well tailored, which means pre-curved sleeves and no excess material. It's a great combination of being lightweight yet substantial enough to use on the road – just not in the winter. There is ample airflow thanks to big vents on the sleeves, chest and back, plus if it gets really hot the sleeves can be removed completely and you can use it as a vest. There is even a large pocket on the lower back where you can stash the sleeves. At the other end of the temperature scale the high neck keeps draughts out. It has a waterproof pocket accessed from the outside for your phone, two big easy to access front pockets. You can fit a water bladder for hydration and it's compatible with a neck brace.

I've used this set-up a lot and despite the miles and odd crash they remain in excellent condition. The only negative is that it is showerproof but not fully waterproof.

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



Held Safer SRX jacket and Grind SRX trousers £545

'Sporty and slim-fitting'



Tested by Gareth Evans for 3000 miles

I've worn these textiles through all weathers and they've always been up to the task. I've never felt water come through, even in heavy downpours, but with the removable wind- and waterproof linings in it's a pretty snug fit for me, feeling much tighter than other kit of the same size. However, it's not uncomfortable as such, and still does up fine.

Take the lining out (the fabric on the popper tabs could be slightly more robust) and the jacket fits me far better, with loads of venting for warm summer days like the ones we had earlier this year. When it's warm it feels light and loose but doesn't flap around in the wind.

There are two inside pockets alongside the two exterior ones, while there is provision for optional chest and back protectors.

The zips are high quality, and double stitching helps the jacket feel pretty substantial, which means I'm never slow to throw it on quickly and head out for a ride.

I've found the trousers great, too. They're also snug, and as a result it can be difficult to swing my leg over the R7's high tail at times, but I love the way they connect to the jacket using a seriously strong zip, creating a watertight seal and keeping me and my nether regions well insulated from inclement elements.

My only real complaint with the trousers in particular is that I'd prefer more pockets. There's only one on the left-hand thigh and it's located pretty close to the beltline, which makes it awkward to put things in there.

However, they're really nicely padded and protected, with zip vents in the lower thighs for decent airflow. They even have hard plastic knee slider/protectors, although I'm pleased to say I haven't had a reason to test them...

Considering the very reasonable price, overall I'm very pleased with the quality of this outfit. Just make sure you try before you buy to make sure the sizing works for you.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.sportsbikeshop.co.uk

3000 MILES



2 MONTHS

Roadskin Taranis jeans £179.99

'I'd wear them anywhere'

Tested by Ben Clarke for two months



Saying these single-layer jeans from British firm Roadskin look and feel 'just like jeans' may seem obvious, but it's high praise. Apart from the CE Level 2 armour, there's nothing to give these away as anything other than a comfy pair of denim trousers – and yet, they achieve the highest CE rating of AAA. And that's not just the rating for the fabric, either, it's for the jeans as a whole. Given that a triple-A rating was until quite recently largely reserved for leather garments, this is impressive.

The fit is slim enough to look cool without being overly restrictive and they've got a Lycra component in the fabric that means you can move freely on the bike. They're perfectly comfortable and I could easily sit and work in them all day after wearing them to commute. They look the part, too, and you could easily wear them to ride to the pub and not feel conspicuous. The fabric is thin enough to keep you cool on warmer days and I've been wearing them into autumn with a baselayer underneath.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.roadskin.co.uk



RST S1 CE gloves £69.99

'They're robust and great value'



Tested by Emma Franklin for 2000 miles

RST are kings of producing robust, great-looking yet super-value gloves. The S1 CEs are sports-style summer gloves for road riding but packing features you'd expect to see on a race glove. They're leather and feature an Amara suede reinforced, double-thickness palm and carbon-fibre knuckle protection, but also pack a palm slider, wrist restraint and padding at the cuff. As you'd expect from leather sports gloves, there's plenty of feel, although you're always aware of the thick seams on the fingers. I tested the women's version, and although I got my usual size, I found that the fingers were a little baggy. But other than that, these 1KP-rated gloves make my hands feel properly protected.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.rst-moto.co.uk

2000 MILES