

'A handy thing to have when riding in winter'

Acerbis handguards keep chills at bay and protect levers from damage

Acerbis X-Tarmac, £74.95 (£99.95 with LED lights)

Tester: Andy Downes

Time tested: Four months/1400 miles

What's good? My Yamaha MT-07 doesn't have heated grips so these Acerbis X-Tarmac handguards take the sting out of winter riding by deflecting cold wind and rain – and they do a great job of it. They are so simple to fit I actually thought I'd done it wrong, assuming I'd left a stage out. Fitting was simply a matter of undoing the bar end weights and bolting the guards onto the thread inside the handlebar tube. You then adjust the angle of the guards to make sure the brake and clutch levers are clear of obstruction. There are optional extra parts that make the frontal area larger for better weather protection too. Better still, they offer a level of crash protection for levers in the event of a spill. You can get more expensive versions with LED strip lights, which need to be wired into the bike. Additional fittings for bars outside of the 13.6mm to 19mm range are provided in the fitting kit.

What's not? They aren't cheap, but the quality is first rate and the potential to save damage to mirrors, levers and the bar ends may make up for that. Some bikes are going to require a different fitting kit. They don't fit bikes with fairings, but that's not much of an issue as faired bikes offer more wind protection anyway.

Contact: www.acerbis.it (01582 491076)

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



INDETAIL

1. Front sections are adjustable to suit your bike and the clearance needed for the levers. They also protect levers in a spill.
2. Transparent and removable spoiler adds to the wind-protection on offer and takes seconds to fit.

GOOD WINTER MODS

1 Hugger
Only sensible kids had mudguards on their pushbikes, but sensible kids don't have to watch their bike corrode. A hugger covers the back wheel and stops it flinging crud all over your swingarm and shock. You can always take it off again in summer.

2 Bar muffs
About as cool as a Mick Hucknall haircut, bar muffs – like handguards with warm curtains – are great for insulating your hands from the temperature.

3 New bulb
Standard headlight bulbs do the job, but high-performance ones do it better and make you more visible as well as better able to see ahead. Try a Ring XenonUltima (£33 a pair, www.ringautomotive.co.uk).

4 Sports-touring tyres
The last five years have seen a revolution in tyres for the cold and wet. Michelin's Pilot Road 4 or Pirelli Angel GT (both around £230 a pair) shed water quicker than a duck's back and give optimum grip at low temperatures.

5 Anti-corrosion substances
It's not a complicated mod, but a layer of corrosion inhibitor can make a big difference. Clean the bike, wipe key metal areas (not brakes!) with something like ACF50 (£15, www.acf-50.co.uk) and keep the orange at bay.



Arai ProShade Visor, £99.99



Tester: Richard Newland

Time tested: Six months/150 miles

What's good? Arai won't fit internal sun visors due to concerns over safety performance issues, so putting one on the outside is the obvious solution. The visor is very secure and has an inbuilt locking mechanism to keep the shade in the raised position when desired. It's a quality item, but that doesn't mean I'm in love with it.

What's not? I can see it being a welcome addition on an upright/naked/touring bike, but when used on sportsbikes it just gets in the way in either position.

Contact: www.whyarai.co.uk

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Alpinestars T-Jaws textile jacket, £190



Tester: Steve Hunt

Time Tested: Six months/1500 miles

What's good? As a throw-on-and-ride summer jacket this is an excellent piece of kit. There's no back protector included (although there is room for one) but CE-approved armour on shoulders and elbows adds security. Because it's waterproof and comes with a removable, 80g thermal liner, it's nigh-on perfect for UK summers too.

What's not? It feels light. Which is exactly what it is supposed to do of course, but it doesn't offer the reassurance a thicker textile or leather jacket would.

Contact: www.alpinestars.com

Quality: ★★★★★

Value: ★★★★★



Richa H2O Backpack 30L: £49.99



Tester: Michael Neeves

Time used: Six months/3000 miles

What's good? This is my second review of a Richa H2O rucksack. The strap material on my first one, which was only four months old, started to fray and I had to mark it down. Richa exchanged the rucksack for a new one, which I've been using it for the past six months with no problems. I virtually live with it on my back, it's well built (now) and has remained waterproof in horrendous rain.

What's not? There are no internal compartments so everything has to jig about in the same space.

Contact: www.nevis.uk.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★