



Kriega R16 backpack £159

‘Great but the price is high’



Tested by Al Silcox for one year

There's no getting away from it... £159 feels extremely expensive for a backpack, but as with everything, you do get what you pay for and this one is very nice indeed. This is a fully waterproof backpack with a roll-top closure and has a 16-litre capacity. It's large enough to hold my laptop, lunch and gym kit but not so capacious that I'm tempted to overfill it on my commute to work.

As with many Kriega backpacks it has the Quadloc harness system, put in simple terms, the straps clip at the sternum, are wide, fully adjustable and distribute the weight of the bag evenly across the chest, making the rucksack very comfortable.

There's a waist strap for extra security, mesh on the back pads for increased airflow and reflective panels. If you do need extra storage space there's hook on points for the modular US-Drypack bags, which start at five litres in size and cost £85.

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



Michelin Road Classic £245 (pair)

‘Getting to grips with my old BMW’



Tested by Simon Relph for six months/2000 miles

Some six months ago I pressed my BMW R100R back into service after some six years laid-up and after a bit of research, I discovered Michelin had updated their Road Classic tyres.

After a few gentle rides to scrub in the tyres, I felt confident to ride the bike properly. The Road Classics have a great profile so feel perfectly balanced as I lean into corners, making my 32-year-old BMW feel like new again.

The BMW is kitted out with non-ABS twin discs with two four-pot Brembo calipers, which again, even though they might be old, provide plenty of stopping power. So, with such an efficient pair of front brakes and no ABS, it is now critical to have a tyre that provides very good grip under heavy braking, and so far, the front Road Classic has been more than adequate in the dry. In the wet, with no ABS I tend to feel my way with front-end braking, so far, I have not run out of grip. I have been impressed with them cornering in the wet to, with no unexpected wiggles that make you sit bolt upright in an instant.

I really do think a tyre has to look right on classic bikes and with Michelin offering a comprehensive range of 20 tyres, there should be something available for most classics. The tread pattern is plain and simple so suits most machines without looking totally modern and out of place.

These tyres are a good investment if you want to keep your classic bike the right side up, with good quality modern grip. They've been a great improvement all round.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.michelin.co.uk

2000 miles ON TEST



Sidi Aria Gore £259.99

‘Pure functional simplicity’



Tested by Steve Herbert-Mattick for three months

I was looking for a simple pair of boots to use every day that would be comfortable, easy to get in and out of and work in all weathers. These fit the bill nicely and for all their technical appearance, are pretty basic: Gore-Tex, breathable, zip closure with hook & loop flap, armour in the right places and a slim leg I could get under jeans.

Breaking them in over a single-day, 500-mile ride wasn't the best idea. Even through thick socks the openings rubbed my

shins red raw. Something to do with the ergonomics of the Ténéré World Raid I was riding and the angle of my leg, but enough to make me worry I'd made a mistake.

I stuck with them, however, and the 1000-odd miles since (all far shorter rides, mind) have been fine, comfy and dry with the Aria proving themselves a well-made touring boot for daily use.

Best of all, their fully-synthetic, micro injection and mesh construction is 100% vegan-friendly.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.sidiselect.co.uk



Loop earplugs £29.95

‘Posh, potent, pricey plugs’



Tested by Gareth Evans for four months

I've been testing two pairs of these earplugs – Quiet (in Hush Blue) and Experience models – with the former offering up to 27dB of noise reduction and the latter offering 18dB.

Both are great for riding, but the £10 more expensive (ouch!) Experience ones let more sound through, which is better on a bike. The Quiet model hush things down a bit too much.

They're available in a range of colours and come with four sizes of ear tips, and there's a neat smooth plastic carry case to keep them secure on the move. And that's my only criticism: the rubber band I used to attach the case to my keys snapped while taking them out of my pocket.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★
www.loopearplugs.com

1500 miles ON TEST

