



Alpinestars Venture XT trousers £214.99

'Kit's ready to scramble'



Tested by Ben Clarke for three months

Before I tackled any green lanes on the MCN fleet Triumph Scrambler 400 X, I thought I'd get some kit built for the job as I find touring trousers get hot on the trails and don't fit in or over my enduro boots either.

These Alpinestars Venture XTs sit somewhere between motocross pants and touring trousers – being heavier than the former but lighter than the latter. This is the in-boot version but there is an over-boot option in the range, too.

I really like the blend of comfort and practicality, you get four pockets and vents on the front, and leather panels on the inner leg for when you're gripping the bike off-road, but you also get Level 1 Nucleon Flex Plus knee armour (which is so lightweight you forget it's there) and pockets for hip protectors. As an enduro-style garment aimed at off-road, it's only got an A rating so I feel a bit vulnerable on the road between green lanes, but there has to be a compromise somewhere.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★
eu.alpinestars.com



CE A-rated but great off road

Adventure Spec Linesman £385

'Great choice on green lanes'



Tested by Nye Davis for four months

You need only peruse your local green lanes to see how hugely popular the Adventure Spec Linesman has become among certain circles. Its popularity seems justified, too as it is quite simply the most comfortable motorcycling jacket I have ever worn.

Offering just a lowly CE 'A' protection rating, the Linesman is far from the best choice if you expect to become acquainted with the ground at high speeds – but it is built with trail riding in mind after all, so tumbles should not be a regular occurrence.

It has pretty much become my go-to riding jacket, whether that's for a quick jaunt to the shops, a weekend of trail riding, or even a recent trip into Europe.

Every garment in the brand's range has been built around the layering philosophy – tailoring your clothing to specific conditions to achieve optimal performance, rather than simply throwing on an 'all-in-one' garment and hoping for the best.

In terms of features, you get zip-off sleeves, a handy attached pocket whistle and capacity to run a hydration pack (not included).

While the Linesman isn't waterproof per se, it is constructed with a hydrophilic middle membrane, and I've found it to do an admirable job shrugging off the odd shower. It also dries quickly, should you find yourself unexpectedly out of talent while fording a river.

It's not perfect though and at £385 it's a significant chunk of cash for what effectively amounts to a softshell jacket, a smattering of Kevlar panelling and some armour.

Despite substantial venting, the Linesman doesn't flow a huge amount of air, meaning it can get rather toasty during summer use – but pairing it with Adventure Spec's own 'Super Shirt' would solve this.

The elasticated sleeve cuffs do an admirable job of keeping cold air out, but equally prevent cooling air from entering on hot days too, so it would be nice to see some adjustability here on future versions.

The abrasion layers on both sleeves have pillled slightly after charging through many an over-grown, gorse bush-covered green lane. But after 3000 miles there are no holes or tears to report.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★
www.adventurespec.com



Yamaha MT-09 Urban Tank Bag £242 (+Tank Bag Ring, £53.81)

'You're paying extra for the badge'



Tested by Carl Stevens for four months

I have never been a huge fan of tank bags as I've always felt they get in the way a bit.

Whenever I've tried them previously, I've binned them off near enough straight away. But Yamaha's Urban Tank bag has been seriously impressive on my long-term MT-09.

Not only is it easy to fit but it's a nice design too, sitting narrow enough to not be in the way, while still offering a good amount of space (from 11 to 14 litres), especially with the expandable zip that gives a little more room.

The magnetic lock makes for easy removal and reinstallation at fuel stops and the side pockets are really handy too, being a nice size for essentials that need to be grabbed on the move. The whole bag feels seriously robust as well, from the durable nylon to the chunky zips, and the way it sits securely on the tank.

However, and this is one big however, at nearly £300 with the mount it is not cheap by any measure, especially as it's essentially a re-badged SW-Motech bag that you can get from them for less.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★
www.yamaha-motor.eu



Stylish for summer but only A-rated

LS2 Bullet Lady jacket £149.99

'Almost perfect...'



Tested by Emma Franklin for six months

I'm so conflicted about this waterproof summer jacket; on one hand it has the potential

to be my absolute favourite because it's beautifully cut and fits brilliantly, it's well made with thoughtful features such as magnetic tabs, an internal dry pocket for a phone, plus a clever and effective zipped ventilation panel in the main zip – which has been a godsend during the recent hot weather.

Then on the other hand, the fact that it's only CE rated to A – the lowest of the three protection levels for abrasion and burst performance, suitable only for low-speed inner city riding – is always at the back of my mind, despite the jacket having soft Level-1 armour at the shoulders and elbows, plus space for a back protector.

Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★
www.ls2helmets.com

2600 miles ON TEST