



Load up for a weekend away

1500 miles ON TEST

It works best on a luggage rack

Kriega Rollpack 20 £129

‘Good, but needs a handle...’



Tested by Michael Neeves for nine months

I've used this Cordura double-end Kriega roll back for the last couple of years, firstly on a big adventure bike MCN group test in Wales and on long-term test bikes since then.

The Kriega's 20-litre carrying capacity is enough for a weekend's worth of clothes when I'm away, or a good amount of shopping. It has a useful waterproof liner, is excellent quality and after nine months of use looks like it should stand the test of time.

To begin with it took me a while to figure out how to safely secure it to the back of a bike, but now it takes me seconds to fit. It's best loaded on to a rack, but it can live on the pillion seat if you can find something to thread the straps through, such as pillion peg hangers and grab rails etc.

Also, the rolltop design means you need to pack it like a sack, so one end is always bulkier, heavier or floppier than the other. Plus, it doesn't have a handle, making it a pain to carry around when you reach your destination.

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



Talk isn't exactly cheap

Cardo Packtalk Pro £405

‘A clever way to communicate’



Tested by Ben Clarke for one month

I've used a few different intercoms now and the main area they fall down for me is the sound. I ride in earplugs and combined with road and wind noise, this usually renders them next to useless above 30mph.

This Cardo Packtalk Pro, however, with its extra-large 45mm JBL speakers works for me. I have to run it at full volume and I can't listen to, say, a quiet podcast on the motorway still, but music and phone calls cut through and are audible.

It's worth noting that I've been riding a naked bike in a comparatively noisy helmet, too, and I suspect if you wore a more cossetting lid on a touring machine you'd hear even more.

As with other Cardo units, the Pro can be controlled using your voice. You need to learn exactly what it wants to hear, though, and it's not as simple as using Google Assistant, Siri or Alexa systems.

On that subject, Google Assistant and Siri are supposed to be compatible with the Pro but I only seem to be able to get it to work with the phone unlocked, and since I keep mine in my pocket while I ride, this isn't possible.

Using the Mesh system is a doddle. On a group ride with other journalists at the product launch, we simply held two of the buttons down simultaneously on each of our units and they synchronised immediately. Then it's just a case of chatting away as the channel is constantly open.

While I appreciate that something doesn't have to be cheap to represent good value, I struggle to see past the asking price of the Cardo Packtalk Pro. There's no doubt that it's technologically impressive, packed with features and easy to fit and use, but £405 is a lot of money for what is essentially a gadget.

For my own use case, listening to a bit of music on boring rides or taking the occasional call, the Cardo is overkill. But if you regularly chat away with a pillion or your mates on a group ride then I can see the advantages.

Quality ★★★★★ **Value** ★★★★★
cardosystems.com



1300 miles ON TEST

Ideal if you ride an orange bike

LS2 Acrux short boots £114.99

‘Good, but there's stiff competition...’



Tested by Emma Franklin for six months

The L2S Acrux are a good quality pair of casual-style boots suited for urban riding or short-distance leisure rides.

They're comfortable and well made, and although they don't feature a waterproof membrane or coating, they do offer a limited amount of shower resistance courtesy of their tough, unvented Cordura fabric upper.

With padding around the ankle and reinforcement around the toebox and heel, they feel as though they offer a limited

amount of protection. The only downside is that they're not especially comfortable to walk around in, feeling almost flipper-like due to their inflexible sole. At this price point, they're also up against big competition from the likes of Alpinestars and TCX – two very well-established boot brands – meaning the Acrux would really have to appeal to you in order to choose them over those famous-name rivals; perhaps KTM riders, seeing as though they're only available in this black and orange colour scheme.

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



Ultimate Ear SoundEar Pro £289

‘I never ride without them’



Tested by Michael Guy for 9500 miles / 18 months

I didn't realise just how much I would come to depend on these earphone earplugs, which have become an essential part of my riding setup. At first I was sceptical that they would do their job of protecting my ears from wind noise while enabling me to listen to music on the go – without the volume being maxed out. But that is exactly what they do. Made from super soft medical grade silicone and tailor-made to your ears using a mould that is taken by the team at Ultimate Ear they are both comfortable and effective. I plug them into my Cardo intercom, meaning I can control music or directions through my phone. I never ride without them.

Quality ★★★★★ **Value** ★★★★★
www.ultimateear.com

9500 miles ON TEST