



Alpinestars Stella SR-3 Drystar £59.99

'Gloves are off'



Tested by Alison Silcox for four months

Made from a hard-wearing textile outer, with a soft leather palm and touch-screen

sensitive finger tip, they are the quality you'd expect from Alpinestars but without the hefty price tag to go with it. After being used in all manner of conditions, they are showing no signs of wear and tear.

The gloves have a Thinsulate liner and with a breathable and waterproof Drystar membrane and I have found that they have kept my hands dry but not always massively warm. I've worn these gloves through winter and into spring, they've been waterproof, comfortable. They lack warmth on the coldest days but are badged as three-season, so a little hard to criticise in that department.

The cuffs, meanwhile, could do with being slightly longer, they are not quite long enough to go over the sleeve of a jacket. They have padded knuckles and palms, and are rated CE Level 1. I have rather large hands and sometimes have issues with finger length, I opted for size XL and they fit perfectly.

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



Titanium ups the protection

Held Phantom Pro gloves £324.95

'Very well made... but not cheap'



Tested by Dan Sutherland for seven months

Once you've got through the early breaking in period where they can be stiff, you're treated

to a grown-up understated design that's produced using a beautifully soft kangaroo skin leather exterior and lined with a thin layer of shock absorbing foam.

With brushed titanium knuckle protection, fused outer fingers, and abrasion resistant stingray leather on the palms, the CE certified kit offers decent levels of protection without feeling bulky – especially important on track. There's also hard aramid protection on the two outer fingers and across the rear of the wrist area. There are also decent levels of ventilation for those scorching summertime sessions and, despite being black, you don't get much dye run off onto your hands when you're sweating or caught in a hefty downpour. And should it rain whilst you're out, there's even a visor wipe on the left index finger.

Adding to the comfort stakes are pre-curved fingers, which sit nicely on my digits off the bike, but can be slightly too long for my pinky when on the go. Fortunately, they fit like a glove everywhere else on my hand (funny that), with two Velcro adjustments allowing them to sit just right around the sleeves of a leather suit.

Having now covered 1000 miles, including a stint at Paul Ricard circuit nudging 200mph, they still look absolutely brand new and as I write this test, the only thing that gives the game away is a large bug splat on the left knuckle guard. They really do feel like they will stand the test of time.

They're quite warm too – staying perfectly pleasant combined with heated grips well into October and usable on their own without getting cold mitts above the mid-teens.

The only real issue I sometimes face is the bulkiness of the wrist area, which can make things awkward with kit other than racing suits. They are also undeniably expensive and if you're not serious about trackdays and racing, there are cheaper alternatives.

Quality ★★★★★ **Value** ★★★★★
www.shop.held.de



AGV K1 S Dreamtime £229.99

'It packs entry-level awesomeness'



Tested by Justin Hayzelden for two months

The K1 S is AGV's entry-level full-face lid, but with its race inspired shape, integrated spoiler and panoramic visor, it could easily be mistaken for a model higher up the range.

Approved to the new and more stringent ECE22.06 standard, the polycarbonate shell features a fully removable and washable spectacle-friendly interior, with a plush, high-end feel to it.

In use it is reassuringly snug, enhanced by a close-fitting neck roll and additional chin

curtain, the latter proving its worth over winter by blocking out icy draughts.

Where the K1 S does show its price point is in the lack of a drop-down sunshade, and although it comes Pinlock prepared, the insert is extra. Switching visors is a doddle though and only takes a few seconds, my only gripe being that the gap between just cracked and the first notch is a gaping 5cm.

Air vents are effective, if a bit stiff to operate, and the traditional double-D ring strap fastener is simplicity in itself.

Quality ★★★★★ **Value** ★★★★★
www.agv.co.uk



Oxford Advanced Expedition jkt £79.99

'Warmth and comfort combine'



Tested by Emma Franklin for three months

As a windproof, thermal mid layer, the Expedition provides warmth without bulk, thanks to strategic use of different materials. Chief amongst which is a soft inner fleece across the entirety of the chest, upper back and front of the arms that retains warmth but lies flat beneath outerwear. Other features include a rubberised hem that keeps the jacket in place and thumb loops on the cuffs – which work but are uncomfortable under gloves.

Although it's priced about the same as the competition, I think layering is a fairly expensive game and I can't help but feel you'd be better off just investing in a heated waistcoat instead.

Quality ★★★★★ **Value** ★★★★★
www.oxfordproducts.com

1000 miles ON TEST