

**TRIED & TESTED**

MCN STAFF RATE THEIR RIDING KIT



Boots like this aren't just for nice days...

8000 MILES



**Alpinestars J-6 Waterproof Shoe £179.99**

## 'They've seen some action!'

**Tested by Michael Neeves for 8000 miles / seven months**



Having started my biking journey in the late 80s and 90s, it still seems strange to be wearing anything other than full-blown bike boots on a ride. But things have moved on. Not only are there a far more diverse choice of machines out there, but the evolution of riding kit has rocketed. There's still nothing better than a dedicated, fully armoured shin-height bike boot to save you in a spill, but ankle height boots like these can still offer a high level of protection.

It's the first time I've tried lace-up trainer-boot riding boots and they've been impressive so far. I wear them with riding jeans and chose the all-black versions, so they don't show up the dirt. They're also available in four other colours: black with a gum sole, a brown with a white sole and two that look like basketball shoes. I've only been wearing them since the summer, but they've seen the equivalent of a few years' worth of action already. They've

circled our MCN250 test route, visited overseas bike launches, shuffled through airports and squeezed between budget airline seats. Most of all, they've done two 3000-mile-plus road trips down to southern Italy and Sicily, where they've been subjected to thousands of gear changes and pounded miles of pavements around historic cities.

With their soft, padded interior and thick Alcantara-like ankle support, they are as comfortable to walk in as they are on the bike and feel sturdy without being restrictive or clumpy. I like their flat sole, which makes it easy to move your feet around on the pegs, but best of all they've proved to be as meaty as they look. The thick and grippy vulcanised rubber soles show little sign of wear, other than slightly around the big toe area, which makes them far more durable than the thinner-soled car racing-style riding boots I usually use. The leather uppers are just as hard wearing and although they've been splattered with flies and road debris, they're still in perfect condition and don't look

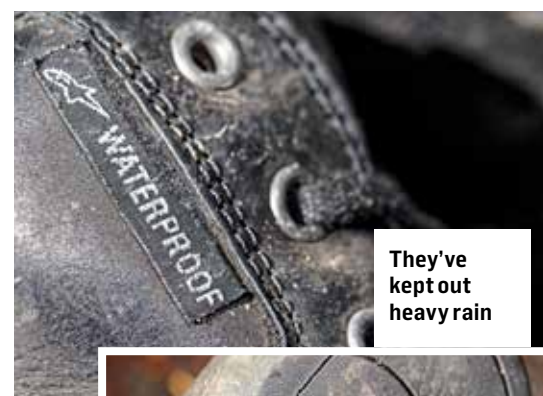
over 8000 miles old. The leather that touches the gear lever is unscathed and the stitching still all perfectly in place. Designed for use all year round, they feature a waterproof membrane.

Crash protection comes in the form of reinforced leather around the toes. Ankle and heel protection is derived from Astars' off-road boots, conforming to CE 89/686/EEC-CAT 2. For robust, good looking riding boots you can wear for all kinds of road riding, they're great value.

**Quality ★★★★★ Value ★★★★★**  
[www.alpinestars.com](http://www.alpinestars.com)

### PROS & CONS

- +** Comfy, waterproof, hard wearing and stylish riding boots
- Pricey, but great value



They've kept out heavy rain



They've seen 8000 miles of wear