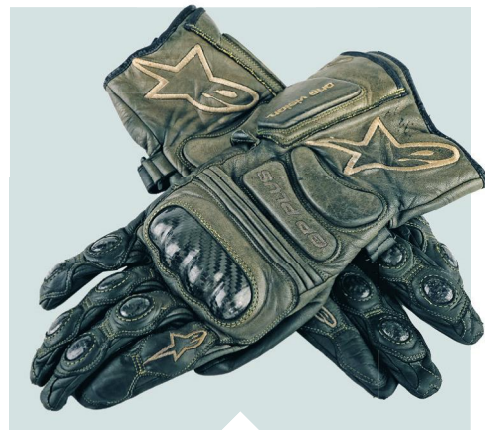


Ramped-up performer

Home-made wooden ramp is relegated to firewood as classic bike aficionado Relph goes aluminium



Alpinestars GP Plus gloves, £99.99 (modern pair £129.99)



Tester: Ian Jubb

Time tested: 35,000 miles/10 years

What's good? I've had these gloves since I did my CBT and they have seen use on every bike I've ridden. They've seen rain, snow, extreme heat and everything in between and they've coped admirably. One minor car park spill was the most crashing they have seen but they held up fine. Now looking like a vintage glove, they have a very cool colouring – the original black has washed out and produced a grey retro finish.

What's not? The Velcro closure has seen better days. I imagine it isn't meant to work so hard for 10 years.

Contact: www.alpinestars.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



TCXT-Lily Gore-tex boots, £179.99



Tester: Alison Silcox

Time tested: 1000 miles/one month

What's good: These leather boots took little time to break-in. They've proved to be fully waterproof thanks to the Gore-Tex lining. I like the simplicity of the design, with no fiddly fixings or fasteners – just a zip and Velcro. I've got solid calf muscles so my leathers don't tuck into the boots very well but the boots fit perfectly under textile kit.

What's not: An intensive weekend of riding left me with a tender big toe on my left foot because of a lack of padding on the boot. Instead of a gear change pad there's a double layer of leather which doesn't offer enough protection. This boot would be great for pillions.

Contact: www.nevis.uk.com

Quality Rating: ★★★★★

Value Rating: ★★★★★

Oxford aluminium folding ramp, £99.99



Tester: Simon Relph

Time tested: 11 months

What's good? I have had the same VW pick-up now for 24 years for carting my bikes around when they need it. During this time I have also had a home-made ramp constructed from two pieces of scaffold plank and a pair of flat steel hinges. A bit like Trigger's broom in *Only Fools and Horses*, it's had four new hinges and three new planks (apart from that it's original!)

Over the years I've always looked longingly at folding aluminium ramps, which are much more aesthetically pleasing. Made from lightweight aluminium, they're easy to cart around but still strong enough to take the weight of a bike up to 340kg (which means most bikes). I find sometimes when unloading bikes backwards off the pick-up it's easy to stray off-line a bit, but this ramp is 11-inches wide, so as long as you start wheeling backwards in the middle of the ramp there are a good few inches either side for

deviating off course. I have an old Velocette and it is very low under the front of the engine, so it has a tendency to hit the underneath and beach itself as it's pushed up the ramp, leaving the bike up in the air at arm's length and not going anywhere. The Oxford ramp is seven-feet long so it provides a nice slow incline and because the plastic-coated resting forks are much thinner than the rest of the ramp there is nothing to interfere with the underside of the bike, so no more beaching. It's a well-made and well-designed bit of kit!

What's not? Mind your fingers when you're folding the ramp up – it can bite!

Contact: www.oxprod.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★

Top 3 details

1. Each rung is strongly welded into place and has grooves along its length to provide good grip when rolling bikes down backwards.
2. A neat Velcro strap on the side of the ramp keeps the two halves together when transporting it.
3. The resting forks at one end make all the difference to loading and unloading, especially with bikes that have very little ground clearance.



Ugly Bros 2SLUB-K Kevlar jeans, £225 (approx, imported from US)



Tester: Steve Hunt

Time tested: 500 miles/three months

What's good? These denim jeans have a tailored feel, taking cues from race leathers and featuring elasticated areas above the knees and the higher waistband. Along with the expected internal pouches for hip-armour, Ugly Bros uses pockets on the outside of the knees for additional armour (provided) and it's easily removed. The slimmer, tighter fit is welcome over some brands' baggier styles.

What's not? Although the armour is CE, you always worry they won't be as tough as leather. There's no official UK supplier.

Contact: www.uglybros-store.com

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★



Sena SMH10 dual intercom, £329.99



Tester: Tony Hoare

Time tested: 1600 miles/two months

What's good? The system allows wireless communication with pillions and other riders, connects to a phone for calls and music, and to GPS for voice navigation instructions. It's easy to use and provides clear audio. It was simple to fit into a helmet, but the shell has recesses for the speakers. The battery lasts all day and charges in under three hours through the same micro USB port found on most phones.

What's not? The audio starts to become muffled by wind noise above 85mph.

Contact: www.bikeit.co.uk

Quality rating: ★★★★★

Value rating: ★★★★★