



WINTER GLOVES

Five very different top-of-the-range winter gloves tested.
How do they compare to the under £60 gloves tested last month?

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PART 2
£60 AND ABOVE

How we tested them

The January 2009 issue saw winter gloves priced at £60 or less tested. This month's test covers more expensive ones. Gloves have been tested using exactly the same methods as for cheaper gloves and all scores are comparable.

Road testing

Winter gloves are often bulky and awkward due to the amount of material in them to keep hands warm and dry, but they should still be comfortable. To test them the RiDE team wore them while riding for hundreds of miles in a variety of weather conditions.

We consider a good glove to be one that goes on easily, is supple and comfortable from the start, keeps your hand warm and dry, allows proper use of the controls and doesn't turn inside out when you take it off. After wearing the gloves while riding they were then subjected to several lab tests.

Warmth

To see how the gloves keep cold at bay, we put a steel rod into the middle finger of each glove and

placed it in a chest freezer. With the cuff sealed and temperature sensitive probes called thermocouples attached to the artificial finger, we recorded how far the temperature dropped over a five-minute period. Comparing results showed which gloves gave the best insulation.

Waterproofing

If your gloves leak, their insulating properties will be ruined because the tiny pockets of air separating you from the cold, will fill with water. Not only do you now have no insulation, but the water conducts away what little heat you have left.

To test for waterproofing the gloves were worn by a tester on a stationary bike and subjected to a controlled, three-minute jet-washer torrent. While the glove was being doused, the tester operated the bike's controls to aggravate seams. The tester wore satin inner gloves so leaks could be easily detected and recorded. A waterproof oversuit was worn over the glove cuffs, so cuff leakage was eliminated and wouldn't confuse the results.

Abrasion resistance

To test how well the gloves would protect your hands in a slide down the road, each one was opened flat and secured, palm down, on a metal anvil. The anvil was then dropped onto a moving abrasive belt - the time it took for the glove to wear through was recorded. The longer a glove lasts in this test, the more protection it offers.

Seam strength

Making a glove out of the toughest material is no good unless it's well-stitched together and will stay in one piece in a crash. Seam strength was measured with a burst test, where a sample from the outside edge of each glove was clamped over a rubber diaphragm that was inflated until either the material tore or the stitching gave way. The higher the pressure of the diaphragm at the point of failure, the stronger the glove seams are and marks were awarded accordingly.

Wrist restraint

The best seam strength and abrasion resistance is useless if the glove comes off in a crash. To see how effective the wrist restraints were, we used a digital

balance to measure the force needed to pull the glove off a tester's hand. The tester had the glove done up comfortably tight and kept his hand relaxed during the test. The average force over three tests was taken.



Impact protection

Rolling down the road with flailing arms will have your hands bouncing off tarmac, so without decent padding you could break a knuckle. To measure the impact protection provided by the gloves, a 2.5kg striker was dropped onto the first and second knuckles and then onto the third and fourth knuckles of each glove as it sat above a knuckle-shaped anvil. A sensor beneath the anvil told us how much force was absorbed by the glove armour and how much would be transferred to the rider's hand. The less force transferred the better.

THE PERFECT WINTER GLOVE

VISOR WIPING

Winter means water and dirty roads. A visor-wipe blade or a suede (or at least suede-effect) finger can be very useful for shifting road-grime from your visor while riding.

MATERIALS

Leather, man-made artificial leather or textile is just the start of it. Is the outer layer water-repellant? What kind of waterproof membrane is fitted? What kind of insulation padding has been used?

PROTECTION

Gloves are safety equipment. That means armour should absorb impact, outer layers should withstand abrasion, seams should remain secure when stretched.



PALMS

Should be padded for warmth, but reinforcement with a tough material like stingray skin will give good abrasion resistance if a hand is put out in a crash.

FASTENINGS

A wrist strap will ensure a secure fit, so the glove is less likely to be ripped off in a crash. The cuff fastening is more about comfort and should close securely, keeping drafts out.

FINGERS

Precurved fingers make for a better fit on the controls. Too much padding - which is needed for warmth - may limit movement and compromise feel.



Alpinestars 365 Gore-Tex £139.95

Contact: www.alpinestars.com

1 TESTER'S NOTES: Some excellent scores, with a rave review from our tester, and 10/10 ratings for waterproofing, impact protection and the wrist restraint, putting the Alpinestars at the top of the points chart. They get a Recommended triangle but miss out on the Best Buy award because of their below-par rating for warmth. Their superb comfort, feel and protection go a long way to compensating for that weakness and if your bike has heated grips you won't mind one bit.

RiDE VERDICT	
Road testing	9
Warmth	3
Waterproofing	10
Abrasion	9
Seam strength	6
Wrist restraint	10
Impact protection	10
Total	57/70



OVERALL
55/70
RATING



OVERALL
53/70
RATING



Dainese Jerico-R Gore-Tex £119.99

Contact: 01438 317038 or www.bikestop.co.uk

2 TESTER'S NOTES: Lots of top scores here, with a total only two marks behind the Alpinestars and a price £20 less.

These gloves proved to be completely waterproof during testing and are thermally above average too. The seams are the strongest of all the gloves tested over the past two months and the protection is generally excellent. The wrist strap is the only weak part - there's not enough Velcro overlap for thin wrists. The gloves don't give quite as much feel as the Alpinestars, but they're comfortable and high quality.

RiDE VERDICT	
Road testing	9
Warmth	6
Waterproofing	10
Abrasion	6
Seam strength	10
Wrist restraint	4
Impact protection	10
Total	55/70

Racer Pluvio £99.99

Contact: 01425 620580 or www.tranam.co.uk

3 TESTER'S NOTES: The all-round wrist strap is one of the best we've ever tested: when used properly, these gloves will not come off your hands. They're completely waterproof and impressively warm, our on-the-road impressions being confirmed in the lab. Our road tester reported that the leather on the palm was a little slippery but otherwise the gloves were fine on the go. The abrasion test result, however, brings the score down.

RiDE VERDICT	
Road testing	9
Warmth	9
Waterproofing	10
Abrasion	3
Seam strength	6
Wrist restraint	10
Impact protection	6
Total	53/70

OVERALL
43/70
RATING

Ixon Pro Special £64.99

Contact: 01923 772273 or www.thunderchild.co.uk

4 **TESTER'S NOTES:** Very warm and totally waterproof, these Ixon gloves don't need any breaking-in at all, being really comfortable from the start and offering fairly good feel. The road tester's only negative comment concerned the cuff, which catches on some winter jackets. The good wrist restraint is let down by poor protection tests - these gloves rate below average for abrasion resistance, seam strength and impact protection - the hard-looking knuckle armour actually has a soft rubbery texture.

RiDE VERDICT

Road testing	██████████	9
Warmth	██████████	8
Waterproofing	██████████	10
Abrasion	██████	2
Seam strength	██████	2
Wrist restraint	██████████	9
Impact protection	██████	3
Total		43/70

OVERALL
42/70
RATING

Hein Gericke X-Trafit Leather £69.99

Contact: 0800 165165 or www.hein-gericke.co.uk

5 **TESTER'S NOTES:** Featuring a visor wipe to the left thumb, the Gericke gloves are completely waterproof, but lack thermal insulation, making them one of the least warm gloves we've tested over the past two months. Their lightness equates to loads of feel, but they feel more like a waterproof summer glove than serious winter wear. The wrist restraint will keep them on your hands in a crash and seam strength is above average, but the gloves are let down by below average abrasion resistance and impact protection.

RiDE VERDICT

Road testing	██████████	9
Warmth	████	1
Waterproofing	██████████	10
Abrasion	██████	3
Seam strength	██████████	6
Wrist restraint	██████████	10
Impact protection	██████	3
Total		42/70

? VERDICT

All the scores in this test are directly comparable with last month's test of cheaper winter gloves.

This month's two triangle winners - the £140 Alpinestars and the £120 Dainese - both outscore last month's winner, the £45 Spada Enforcers, by four and two points respectively.

So result is clear: if you can afford either of this month's top two, you should - you owe it to your hands, in terms of comfort and protection. Which ones you choose will depend largely on how much

the Alpinestars' disappointing warmth rating bothers you. The Dainese gloves got a poor score for their wrist restraint, but all RiDE's tests are tough and if your wrists are anything other than very thin, the Dainese should be OK here too.

But things get very interesting if your budget is tighter, because you need to check out last month's winner. The Spada gloves scored the same as this month's third-placed glove, the Racer Pluvio - and cost £50 less.

✓ TOP TIPS

- Try gloves on before buying and check they'll work with your winter jacket. Some riders prefer to wear their gloves over their cuffs, others like them inside the sleeve. Whichever you favour, make sure your jacket and gloves are compatible, or you could end up in the crazy position of replacing your jacket to suit your gloves.
- Stuff wet gloves with newspaper to help them dry naturally - don't resort to cooking them on a radiator as this will damage the leather.
- Warmth can be improved by wearing a silk inner glove. Be aware, though, anything thicker than silk is likely to reduce your dexterity.
- Leather treatments can aid waterproofing - but avoid rubbing it into the stitching, because those treatments also attract grit that can damage threads.
- Heated grips will boost warmth and allow you to wear thinner gloves that give improved feel.
- Don't put gloves straight into your lid when you take them off without first fastening together the Velcro straps or they'll make your lid fuzzy.
- If your gloves smell, put them into a carrier bag (when they're dry) and leave them in the freezer overnight. This will kill off the bacteria that cause the smell.



Either of these gloves is a good choice, it all depends on budget

