

# ALL-WEATHER BOOTS

Twelve pairs of boots you should be able to wear all year round, giving you comfort, control and dry feet

Words **Ollie Crick** Pictures **Mark Manning**

## HOW WE DID IT

### Abrasion

Samples were taken from the outside leg area of the boot. These were dropped on to a moving abrasive belt with a force of 100 Newtons acting on them. The time taken to wear through the sample was then measured. The longer the time, the better the protection offered.

### Impact cut

To measure impact cut resistance (stabbing) we dropped a weighted blade onto a sample taken from the front of the boot considered to be the area likely to give the least protection. The length of the blade protruding

through the boot was then recorded. The higher the blade penetration, the lower the stabbing resistance.

### Sole crush

The soles were crushed between two parallel plates using a compressive test machine, the peak force being recorded as the structure of the boot gradually deformed. The higher the recorded force, the greater the protection offered by the boot.

### Sole durability

A sample from the sole was lowered onto an abrasive drum, and travelled 40 metres under a load of 10 Newtons.

The lower the amount of abrasion, the more durable the sole.

### Warmth

To find out which boots keep feet the warmest, each had a temperature probe inserted and was filled with steel ball bearings before we recorded the initial temperature. The boots were then placed in a freezer at -17°C for 30 minutes. The temperature decrease in the foot area was measured. The lower the drop, the better the insulation.

### Waterproofing

We recreated front-wheel spray by

giving each boot a four-minute drenching with a pressure washer. Socks were worn underneath and any leakage noted. Then we soaked each boot in ankle-deep water (65mm) for 12 hours, studied where the boots had leaked and scored accordingly.

### Road testing

Each boot was worn for hundreds of miles in all sorts of weather. We studied the ease of putting them on and whether they were as comfy to walk in as ride in. We asked testers if soles were slippery, if feet were warm and if they had enough feel for gearchanges and braking.

## TCX Infinity GTX £189.99

Contact: 01425 273344 or [www.nevism.co.uk](http://www.nevism.co.uk)

**1** **TESTER'S NOTES:** A clear victory, thanks to a combination of full marks in most tests and no Achilles' heel. The weakest of the protection test results, the sole crush, resulted in a perfectly respectable score of 7/10.

The uppers lasted for over two minutes on the abrasion rig; nothing else came close, not even the overall runners-up. Full marks in the warmth test suggest the Infinity GTX will be warm in winter, and the boots were utterly dry in both the pressure washer and soak tests. When our road tester experienced monsoon conditions, not a drop got through.

They fasten with Velcro and adjustable clips; the clips are a little fiddly to use. The sole is grippy and sufficiently flexible, which is a boon for both riding and walking. The various reinforcements on the upper made the boots stiff at first, but they soon started to wear in.

OVERALL  
80/90  
RATING



### RiDE VERDICT



## Alt-Berg Clubman Roadster £179.99

Contact: 01748 850615 or [www.altberg.co.uk](http://www.altberg.co.uk)

**2** **TESTER'S NOTES:** Alt-Berg boots are renowned for their great construction, reflected here in the best score in the sole crush test and top marks for sole durability. They lasted an impressive 75 seconds in the upper abrasion resistance test, although that pales next to the winning TCX boots' time. A poor impact-cut test result also shows room for improvement.

They remained completely dry throughout both waterproofing tests, and a good warmth test means they should keep your feet warm in most conditions. A fiddly Velcro strap conceals a huge heavy-duty zip.

They have a reassuringly sturdy feel, but at first our road tester found them to be too stiff, especially around the ankles, although they became softer with use.

OVERALL  
70/90  
RATING



### RiDE VERDICT



OVERALL  
68/90  
RATING**BMW Santiago £205**Contact: 0800 777 155 or [www.bmw-motorrad.co.uk](http://www.bmw-motorrad.co.uk)

**3** **TESTER'S NOTES:** Our road tester loved them, finding that they were comfortable to both walk and ride in, and roomy without being too bulky to fit under winter trousers. They stayed completely dry in the pressure washer test but the whole foot area became damp in the soak test. But the abrasion and warmth tests let them down.

They fasten with Velcro and adjustable clips, with gearshift reinforcement on the left boot only and very subtle BMW badging.

**RiDE VERDICT**OVERALL  
59/90  
RATING**Sidi Vertigo Gore £229.95**Contact: 01384 413841 or [www.feridax.com](http://www.feridax.com)

**4** **TESTER'S NOTES:** These Sidis proved to be great for riding in, giving loads of feel, and they stayed completely dry throughout both waterproofing tests, but scored poorly for warmth.

They're designed for slender feet, and have an adjustable calf and toe sliders, plus hard plastic protection in all the vulnerable spots.

The protection test results are a mixed bag: the Vertigo Gores did well in the impact and sole durability tests but poorly in the upper abrasion and sole crush tests.

**RiDE VERDICT**OVERALL  
59/90  
RATING**Axo Primato £109.99**Contact: 0844 815 6571 or [www.mandp.com](http://www.mandp.com)

**4=** **TESTER'S NOTES:** At first the Primatos, which feature toe and calf sliders attached by Velcro, felt stiff, tight over the ball of the foot, and dug into the calf muscles. But they soon wore in, and from then on they were comfortable and gave a decent amount of feel, according to our road tester.

The good sole abrasion result was cancelled out by a poor showing in the sole crush.

The toe area became damp in the soak test, but the boots stayed completely dry in the pressure washer test.

**RiDE VERDICT**OVERALL  
58/90  
RATING**Hein Gericke Tour GTX £139.99**Contact: 0800 165165 or [www.hein-gericke.co.uk](http://www.hein-gericke.co.uk)

**6** **TESTER'S NOTES:** Fine if you're confident you'll never fall off your bike, because the Tour GTX's protection test scores were all disappointing. They're thermally below par too.

They have a zip and Velcro fastening, and the zips occasionally snagged the lining. They were generally comfortable but on some bikes the upper dug into the rider's toes.

They remained completely dry throughout both the pressure washer and soak waterproofing tests, and the sole stood up very well in the durability test.

**RiDE VERDICT**OVERALL  
57/90  
RATING**Alpinestars SMX3 R Gore-Tex £199.95**Contact: [www.alpinestars.com](http://www.alpinestars.com)

**7** **TESTER'S NOTES:** As is often the case with Alpinestars boots, these were very comfortable on and off the bike, helped by an adjustable calf - although our tester's usual Alpinestars size proved to be slightly too tight.

There's good feel through the upper and sole, with toe sliders and hard plastic protection in the vulnerable places. That said, the protection test results were at best ordinary.

They passed the soak test but the pressure washer left a damp patch on the lower shin.

**RiDE VERDICT**OVERALL  
55/90  
RATING**Spada Thunder Boot £54.99**Contact: 01384 413841 or [www.feridax.com](http://www.feridax.com)

**8** **TESTER'S NOTES:** They'll keep you warm and dry, and they're reasonably comfortable on the bike, but they dig into your heel painfully when you walk in them, even after they're been run in.

Passable sole crush and sole durability tests were let down by poor upper abrasion and impact cut results. Fastened by zip and Velcro, the competitively priced Thunder Boots demonstrated good thermal characteristics, and stayed absolutely dry in both of our waterproofing tests.

**RiDE VERDICT**OVERALL  
53/90  
RATING**RS Performance Protection Eagle Pro £69.99**Contact: 0191 232 5700 or [www.motohart.co.uk](http://www.motohart.co.uk)

**9** **TESTER'S NOTES:** Flexible and comfortable boots that were good for riding and walking around in, but the Velcro fastenings wouldn't stay closed on our pair. Despite that, they remained completely watertight throughout both waterproofing tests.

The Eagle Pros returned above average sole durability and impact cut results, but weaker upper abrasion and sole crush scores.

They managed only four out of 10 in the warmth test, which is below average.

**RiDE VERDICT**OVERALL  
48/90  
RATING**Forma Arrow SX Dry £129.99**Contact: 01933 411525 or [www.lewisgear.com](http://www.lewisgear.com)

**10** **TESTER'S NOTES:** These boots were comfortable right from the start, and that's indicated in one of the highest road testing scores. They're flexible and easy to get on, whether you're in leather or waterproofs, and Velcro secures them well.

Although their hard plastic styling makes these boots look very protective, we saw poor protection results across the board and only average thermal insulation. They stayed completely dry in the pressure washer waterproofing test, but became damp throughout the foot area during the soak test.

**RiDE VERDICT**

OVERALL  
44/90  
RATING

## Frank Thomas Aquatec £99.99

Contact: 01933 410272 or [www.frank-thomas.co.uk](http://www.frank-thomas.co.uk)

**11** **TESTER'S NOTES:** The test results show these to be the least warm boots here, and the waterproofing qualities are below par. The whole foot area became damp in the soak test and there was a damp patch on the lower shins after the spray test.

The road testing found them to be comfortable and reasonably flexible, with toe sliders and hard plastic in vulnerable places.

The sole durability was good, but the sole crush and upper abrasion results were not.

### RiDE VERDICT

OVERALL  
40/90  
RATING

## Oxford Bone Dry £59.99

Contact: 01993 862300 or [www.oxprod.com](http://www.oxprod.com)

**12** **TESTER'S NOTES:** Our road tester found these Oxford boots to be comfortable, flexible and generally OK for the price. But that was before the protection tests were carried out; they make sobering reading. They scored bottom in all but the impact cut test, which was average.

Although thermally they're slightly above average and were completely dry in the waterproofing spray test, they became completely waterlogged in the soak test. They scored worst in the sole durability test too.

### RiDE VERDICT



## ? VERDICT

This is not a test of how waterproof a boot is. When all's said and done, if keeping your feet warm and dry was all that mattered we'd all be wearing wellies in winter. But with a great all-season riding boot, equal emphasis is on the last part of the description: it's a riding boot. Being waterproof and warm extends its useability, and protection is always important, but a boot must be good to ride in. That's why our scoring is weighted so that road testing counts for as much as waterproofing and more than the other tests.

We have a clear winner: the TCX Infinity GTX gives the best balance of protection, riding performance and weather resistance. Their solid construction means they'll take a bit of breaking in, but it also makes them superbly protective and they'll withstand the elements admirably.

RiDER Power favourites Alt-Berg turned in a strong performance with their Clubman Roadster.

## NEXT MONTH

### MOTORCYCLE INTERCOMS TESTED



## TOP TIPS

- Check compatibility with your leathers, waterproofs and winter suit. You need to get jeans inside boots, while your waterproofs or winter trousers go over the top. The boot should be tall enough so waterproofs don't ride up and allow water in. Too long, though, and they may clash with knee armour and be uncomfortable.
- Allow wet boots to dry naturally or you'll damage the leather. Alternatively use screwed-up newspaper to absorb moisture from the boots overnight.
- Feel inside boots for any intrusions by toe sliders etc that could irritate. Remember, boots will give a bit and mould to the shape of your feet with use. Boots that are too loose will chafe, particularly on the big toe when you're changing gear.