



OMM INFORMATION BULLETIN SPECIAL ISSUE 25

Dressed To Ride : Useful Tips for Safe Biking Gears

September 2001 second edition by PAOLO VOLPARA (COPYRIGHT © 2001 OMM)

Eight month ago we issued the Special Edition of OMM Information Bulletin dedicated to Riding Gear. Over this relative short period new fashion developed, new brands were introduced, new and fancy accessories became available to the motorcycle riders. So may that in producing this revised edition we were confronted with a sizeable amount of information collected during the period: we started categorizing all the new items by type, occasion for uses and type of riding putting together more than 200 new entries.

Then, one morning of May this year, I had the opportunity to “visit the wardrobe” of a friend rider and I was quite surprised by the large amount of gears present.

You see, after 40 years of riding and with a fanatic approach to bike I considered myself an “over-equipped” rider with an abundant choice of gear to choose from depending on weather, bike types, mood. Still my collection was just a small fraction of what was included in my friend closet.

This fact made me think and the thinking progressed while preparing this issue: the result is the guide to the selection I am presenting and it can be title “Essentials”.

Testers and Editors of motorcycle magazines are in the enviable position of receiving free of charge all the latest products: not only bikes to trash but also jackets, gloves, pants, suits, booths, helmets and all accessories designed to make riding comfortable and safe. We, simple mortal individual passionate with bikes, have to open our wallet every time necessity or desire pushes for a new piece of gear: money, like Ducati engines, is volatile and its use requires attention and consideration. Like the old say goes “I am too poor to buy cheap” or if you prefers “I am too poor to buy cheap and follow the fashion”.

If you want more proofs, away from pecuniary and materialistic consideration, I will pass you a constant personal experience.

Although limited my collection of riding gears offers several alternatives: still when planning a short or long ride I noticed that the hands go almost automatically to the same pieces. Monotonous habit? Lack of fantasy? Lack of choice? I prefer to think that this constant use of the same items comes from **trust and confidence**. Trust on the fact that “sun or rain”, “hot or cold” the clothes selected will provide unequalled comfort and confidence on the same items to provide protection already experimented in previous difficult situations.

This, maybe long, introduction gives you the guide for reading the following chapters: different from last year this new edition reflects a personal choice and, as mentioned, it focuses on elements that I personally consider “basic” and “essential”. Your reaction and your advises are welcomed.

The Three Principles presented on the first edition are worth the repetition. All

professional riders we meet in our OMM activity confirm them in words and in practice:

- “When Skin and Asphalt meet, Asphalt wins”. We are fanatical about wearing protective gear when riding and this attitude covers also small rides (from your house to your favorite bar). Until we will receive from Supreme Authority an absolute guarantee that “that car” will not hit us in the first 10 miles of our trip **helmet, jacket & trousers, boots, gloves must go in before starting the engine.** “*It is hot, very hot (after all we live and ride around the 40th parallel) and we may be excused for not wearing protective gear*” Although understandable, this objection has no practical ground. Hot asphalt is as abrasive as cold asphalt, hot bikes can damage your legs as, if not more than, cold bikes. In hot weather selecting the right gear becomes more important and the available choices may help in enjoying riding in hot climate with full protection.
- “Form follows Function”. When selecting a piece of gear do not be attracted by the appearance. Think about the function that the item has to perform and buy the best performing one. You do not need an extra pocket if you cannot reach it comfortably... you do not need an extra strap that will fly when riding... you do not need a super-gadget that will malfunction during the trip. Typical examples: Helmets with fancy ventilation systems appearing recently in the market and useless when tested “on the road”. Jackets with so many “dedicated pocket” that you spend most of the riding time searching through them in the vain hope to locate your keys. Jackets, pants, suit offering fashionable material like Kevlar, Aluminum, Carbon fiber, etc. never tested in real crashes. When comes to choose we always trust Firms presents on the market from long time, expert in repairs and ready to learn from these repairs, companies involved in racing and testing the gear in difficult riding situations. The H. Ford say applies here” What is not in, will not break”
- “Buy quality and keep it well”. A good set of leathers will last for decades if properly kept, a good helmet will cover the rides of three years if you dedicate time to maintenance. A Professional Rider can be judge by the way he keeps his own gears. It is worth to spend money in good products specifically design to re-proofing, protecting, washing and conditioning your gear.

Before going ahead, please note that this issue does not replace the original version of "Riding in Gear" published in OMM web-site. More indications (especially for the new bikers) can be found there and the following points should be seen just as an updating of that article.

THE ESSENTIAL

We come now to what may turn to be a controversial approach. Still, in my experience, the essential items for comfortable and safe riding can all be found in one catalogue: “RiderWearHouse & Aerostich Riderwear” (www.aerostich.com)

Let me first dispel any doubts: I am not shareholder in the Company nor I have any commercial connection with Andy Goldfine's enterprise. I do not get a cent of discount even if more than 50 riders in Turkey wear Aerostich products on my suggestion. I never met Mr. Goldfine... My recommendation comes simply from long and constant use of the products in different climatic conditions, on any kind of roads, under sometime

dramatic circumstances.

RiderWearHouse Catalogue in the last 15 years has put on weight moving from a simple “black & white drawings” leaflet to a glossy 100 pages four colors affair. Mr. Goldfine and his partners placed on it a lot of items of doubtful utility but... the essential is still there... better than ever. Better because in all this time Aerostich kept offering to customers the best after sale service bar-none. Replacements, additions, repair and guarantee claims are all managed in an unflappable way: punctual, courteous and surprising when you consider the distance Turkey-USA.

This is why the opening of this Special Issue focus on indicating what OMM experience considers the **SEVEN ESSENTIAL ITEMS IN RIDERWERHOUSE CATALOGUE**. Spend money on them (all items are quite competitive in price) and you will not regret it: your eyes and your hands will always go to this selection when preparing for a short or long trip. More: under normal circumstances, you will not need any alternative in the category for long, long time.

1) ROADCRAFTER TWO PIECE SUIT. (Cat. No. 125 at USD 697.00).

This is the foundation piece and the suit that made Aerostich famous. 500-denier Cordura nylon with integral multi-layer Gore-Tex laminate makes this piece comfortable, safe, and indestructible. Mine has gone through 12 years of everyday use, all seasons, in Istanbul combined with almost half million kilometers of rides in the continent. I suggest the “two piece” versus the “one piece” because when separated jackets and pants can be worn after riding as casual gear while when connected the suit performs as the “one piece”. Fast and easy to wear over formal or casual clothes this suit offer a remarkable safety: shoulders, elbows and knees are protected by custom shaped TF2 soft impact pads while hip pads (Cat. No. 123 at USD 30.00) and back protector (Cat. No. 129 at USD 60.00) can be ordered as accessories. To list all the features of this suit will take too long: enough to say that you will use all the nine pockets, you will be dry in heavy rain, you will be fresh in hot weather and you will be safe in crashing (all this from personal experience).

2) DARIEN JACKET WITH LINER (Cat. No. 150 at USD 487.00)

Darien is not an alternative but a complement to the RoadCrafter. A high performance all-weather jackets perfect when you use a more “seated” position and as light in summer as protective in winter. The Liner Jackets will immediately become your favorite in and out of the bike. Reversible, it has one side in fleece and the other in nylon is totally waterproof: you can pack the liner in his own pocket and it will take little space ready to come out in millions of occasions. This jacket can be worn with the RoadCrafter pants or with leather pants: the Darien pants, in my opinion, are not in line with Aerostich quality and convenience.

3) FLEECE PANTS (Cat. No. 630 at USD 67.00)

O.K., you can get fleece pants from any casual/sport wear catalogue or shop but these ones are specially designed for biking and in the last years became my favorite item to wear under the Aerostich suit or under a leather pants. It combines perfectly with the Darien Jacket Liner with minimum bulk, zip from top to bottom, special design at knee articulation, a back pocket and a strong waistband.

4) ELKSKIN ROPER GLOVES (Cat. No. 420 at USD. 37.00)

When they stole my pair in Ankara during the 75 years celebrations of the Turkish

Republic I had nobody but myself to blame. After 30.000 Km. the Roper Gloves looked too good to be left unguarded on the cockpit. I admit it, these gloves are not designed specifically for biking but they are at the same time so tough and so supple that I keep using them every time: originally considered as “emergency gloves” are now with me in any trip (especially in summer). Just remember to snap them closed before dropping the clutch

5) TERMAX LONG UNDERWEAR (Cat. No. 646 (top) and 647 (bottom) at USD. 52.00 (both).

Combined with RoadCrafter suit and the fleece Jacket/Pants this underwear combination took me through the coldest winter rides in total comfort. In middle season is the easy to pack solution for changing climate. It absorbs and dispels moisture efficiently and it can be used on long trips as a night pajama

6) COURIER BAG (Cat. No. 904 at USD. 70.00)

The best way to carry things around on bike during your working day. This bag is looking as new after years of continuous use in difficult situation: thanks to the cross section shape it stay on your back without slinging around, it can be used as inner bag for your hard cases and, with a simple net, will take the place of your passenger. Big, very big, strong incredibly strong with a set of features well designed (inner pocket, key ring, large Velcro closure, additional straps, generous shoulder pad) As written on catalogue “as simple to put on as a guitar and easier to learn”.

7) AEROSTICH FLEECE BAGS (from Small to XXL Cat. No. 720/721/722/723/724 from USD. 6.00 to USD 10.00)

If you ever left your mobile phone in your trunk without protection you know why I rate “essential these fleece bags. They are a great help in packing small and delicate items in your bike’s cases and protect the content from vibrations and abrasion.

Do you need more than this? Of course you do! Helmets, Boot, Gloves and other Gear can be found on the RiderWearHouse Catalogue but for these items we prefer to enlarge our vision, abandon our favorite Catalogue and look at new indications coming from last year experiences.

Leather Suit

Few items are more useful in biking than a good set of leathers. Leather provides comfort and protection unequalled by any other material... but... it has to be selected with attention and care. Too many brands of cheap, thin leather are around and one should rely on manufacturers with good reputation and long experience. Looking at brands involved in racing can be a good system: these producers draw from the results of the sport activities to offer to all bikers tested suit. Look around and you will see:

Dainese (available in Turkey)

AlpineStars (available in Turkey)

Spidi (available in Turkey)

BKS (on mail order only)

Spike (available in Turkey)

and few others. These brands are supporting racers and racing activities gaining valuable insights and giving back to the biking community a lot of entertainment. Worth to choose

from them. Worth, again in my opinion, to choose a two pieces suit if the pant and the jacket are linked completely with solid zip. The two pieces offer more versatility with the choice of wearing them independently: for this same reason I stay away from flashing colors and graphics preferring a more “Sedate & Banal” black or gray. Here, combined with the Aerostich gears, you have an ample choice of combinations to match all kind of rides.

Helmets

A recent research among a large sample of American Bikers shows that the three favorite brands of helmets are:

1. **Arai**
2. **Shoei**
3. **AGV**

I tend to agree with this list and I just would like to add few considerations. Over the last years (pioneered by BMW) helmets with flip front (converting from full face to open face) became more and more popular. The convenience is obvious: at stopping points you can just lift the front to be in full communication with the outside world, on hot days you can get plenty of fresh air and... smoking does not requires a long unzipping maneuver.

Still these helmets are in my opinion much noisier than the full face ones and the temptation to keep them open represents a serious safety risk. If you go for this choice, friend's experience suggests these two brands:

1. **Schuberth** (with the advantage of sun shield)
2. **Nolan** (with excellent ventilation and light weight)

One must remember that after three years (or after an impact) the helmet must be check by the producer. This service is provided free of charge in all European Countries while in Turkey is not (in my knowledge) available therefore we must be more careful about the sign of helmet's aging. On last note for the lovers of personalized helmets: if you plan to have a special paint and design apply make sure that the chemical used are compatible with the helmet's material and ask not to remove the protections or deflectors for internal ventilation. These should be covered with mask tape in order to avoid any infiltration of paints in the inner parts of the helmets. It does not matter how well ventilated a helmet claims to be... it will always have fogging problems in cold and/or wet weather. The best solution so far is “**Fog City**” (www.fogcity.com) a plastic shield to fix on the inside of the visor creating a “double glazing” effect that effectively prevent visor condensation and mist. Fog City is surprising available in Istanbul at this sale point:

Tayfun Emanet Aydin Motorlu

Eski Duyunu Umumiye Sok. Sirkeci - Istanbul, Turkey

Fax: [90] 2125222176 Phone: [90] 2125111321

Worth to remember that Nolan and BMW offer special visor already equipped with “double glazing” system: their price can push you back to a simple and cheaper Fog City. Take good care of the helmet by cleaning the external surface with neutral soap and abundant water after every ride, clean the visor with water and soft cloth and once a month dismount the visor for a complete cleaning and lubrication of the lifting mechanism. Dark visors are illegal in several European countries and they are, in any case, a nuisance obliging the rider to bring an extra clean visor for low light visibility.

Replacing the visor after a long riding season is a good precaution and, if you have difficulty in finding the spare you can visit www.TheVisorShop.com

Boots.

In addition to the suggestions offered in the first Edition of “Riding in Gear” we invite riders to take a good look at the Daytona Boot (available in Turkey). Touring and Sport riders can find in this collection quality products with a proven record of durability.

WHERE TO FIND: SOME USEFUL ADDRESSES.

As before two essential catalogs: the RiderWearHouse at www.aerostich.com. and the MPS catalogue for spare parts, accessories and a good selection of clothing (including Sub-Zero thermal underwear and gloves) at www.thefastone.co.uk.

For all other producers check on the link page of www.ommriders.com: this correctly organized section offers one of the most complete lists of links for bikers divided by categories.