

HIGH-PERFORMANCE MOTORCYCLE WEAR

When suiting up, bikers have to consider comfort, style, and surviving a 70-mph skid on asphalt.

by STEVE NATT



▲ THE JACKET

LOOK FOR: Durable textiles that breathe, as well as armor in critical zones such as elbows and shoulders. If you opt for a leather jacket, make sure it's at least 1.3mm thick.

WHY THIS ONE: The **Alpinestars Ricard Drystar's** tough

600-denier nylon preserves your skin in a skid, and a second waterproof layer lets sweat escape while keeping rain from getting in. On warm days you can leave the removable thermal liner at home. [[\\$250; alpinestars.com](#)]

▶ THE BOOTS

LOOK FOR: An oil-resistant sole and protection for your heel, shin, and toes from truck-kicked rocks and unscheduled exits from the bike.

WHY THIS ONE: Italian cobblers can do more than just loafers, as evidenced by a **Sidi On Road Gore-Tex** boot that rings all the right bells. It keeps out the weather yet breathes so you don't get trench foot. Armor is integrated into the top-grain leather, but it's not so stiff that you'll be walking like Yosemite Sam. [[\\$325; motonation.com](#)]



▶ THE BODY ARMOR

LOOK FOR: A basic spine protector at least, though a full torso vest covers more. A Level 2 Certificate of European Conformity (C.E.) marking means it's the best possible protection.

WHY THIS ONE: Unlike hard plastic body armor, the **Force-**

field Pro L2 back protector will survive multiple falls, and it fits far better, too. Wide straps hold it tightly in place, and the flexible, aerated padding conforms to the body but still lets your skin breathe. [[\\$150; johnsonleather.com](#)]



▲ THE HELMET

LOOK FOR: A lid with D.O.T. certification; better yet, an additional endorsement from independent tester Snell.

WHY THIS ONE: Relatively affordable for a helmet, the full-face **Scorpion EXO-900** sports luxury features such as an inte-

grated sun visor and an air pump that inflates cheek and neck pads for a better fit. The detachable flip-up face section keeps it from being Snell-certified, but it will let you feel the wind in your face and the gnats in your teeth. [[\\$250; scorpionusa.com](#)]



▲ THE GLOVES

LOOK FOR: A balance of protective armor, padding, and enough "feel" to control the bike. Get a snug fit with leather: If the gloves become too loose as they break in, you'll get blisters.

WHY THIS ONE: **Lee Parks DeerSports** gloves are made

from soft deer- or elkskin, which mold to your hands beautifully and are more durable than cowhide. Only four seams per glove means fewer weak points. We like the gauntlets for keeping the wind out of your sleeves. [[\\$110; leeparksdesign.com](#)]