

GEARING UP: Adventure Jackets

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How on earth does one evaluate these jackets when there is no way of testing the real reason for wearing these garments i.e. protection in the event of a fall? ..!!!

I have made the assumption that all the jackets we sell have CE approved body protectors (elbow, shoulder and back). We have found that the more expensive jackets use a better quality Cordura or equivalent and hence do offer a better level of skin protection.

The other factors such as Appearance, Weight, Fit, Zips, Linings (warmth and waterproof), Air Flow qualities, Water proof pockets, Inside Pockets (quantity and depth), External Pockets, Velcro utilisation, Sleeve joiners, Colour Connectors, Colour Range, Visibility, Suitability for SA conditions, and Value for Money are all comparable within a subjective rating out of ten.

So what I've done is exactly that – drawn up a table and assessed each jacket in terms of what I've experienced whilst in the industry and prior to that as a customer. Yes, it may be biased but after all it will be a guide against which you as the purchaser may be able to assess your own feelings about the jackets.

The table shows some really interesting outcomes!

JACKETS	SUBJECTIVE RATING OUT OF 10 FOR EACH FACTOR																	OVERALL		
	Appearance	Weight	Fit	Zips	Linings Cold/H2O	Water Proof	Air Flow	H2O Zips	Inside Pocket	External Pocket	Velcro	Clips Sleeve	Colour Connect	H2O Pocket	Colour	Visibility	SA Jacket		Value for Money	Popularity
Macna	10	7	8	8	10	8	7	6	10	9	-	-	-	0	8	8	9	8	6	76%
Tourmaster Combo	7	4	8	8	10	6	10	0	8	6	6	8	10	0	6	10	10	9	8	74%
Tourmaster Enduro	7	5	8	8	5	8	5	8	9	9	6	8	10	6	6	6	9	7	8	73%
Evolution	9	5	9	9	10	7	6	5	8	8	-	-	0	5	8	5	8	7	4	67%
Richa Adventure	9	8	8	8	5	7	6	0	8	9	8	8	0	0	7	8	8	9	7	65%
Richa Deep Summer	8	8	8	8	10	6	10	0	8	6	7	7	0	0	6	6	8	7	7	63%
BMW	9	3	9	9	9	6	6	0	8	7	-	-	0	0	6	6	9	5	4	60%
Assault Evolution	6	7	7	6	5	4	5	0	8	8	8	6	0	0	9	8	8	9	9	59%
Lookwell Enduro	7	8	8	6	10	6	6	0	10	8	-	7	0	0	4	5	8	8	6	59%
Langston Racing	6	7	7	7	5	4	10	0	8	7	6	7	0	0	8	7	8	9	4	58%
Assault Explore	6	6	7	6	5	3	5	3	8	8	8	6	0	0	5	6	8	10	8	57%
DMD Safari	8	10	8	8	0	3	7	0	5	8	-	-	0	0	9	8	9	8	4	56%
Berik Cordura	8	8	8	8	5	5	5	0	8	8	6	7	0	0	5	6	8	6	2	54%
DMD (Discontinued)	5	6	7	7	5	3	0	0	5	5	6	5	0	0	8	6	8	9	4	47%
Bad Boy	7	10	4	7	0	1	4	0	4	4	0	5	0	0	7	6	5	10	4	41%
AVERAGE	8.0	7.3	8.1	8.1	6.7	5.5	6.6	1.6	8.2	7.9	4.4	6.3	1.4	0.8	7.3	7.2	8.8	8.6	6.1	65.02%

The whole exercise indicates it all comes down to the type of riding you are going to do. There is no jacket that tops out in all the categories. So the winner is the one, which scores most consistently in each of these. Similarly the jackets occupying second and third spots have also done well without dominating any area. Another person may well score these top three jackets differently and the results could be extremely different.

In conclusion: I have always said, the jacket which fits you the best, feels the most comfortable, suits your pocket and risk profile, is the one to go for. Most of the manufacturers have a top of the range jacket e.g. Richa, that sells for more than R8000-00 and no doubt would be a winner, but it is just a bit too expensive for most of us and hence I have excluded it from the survey - not having ridden in one as yet. This by the way is the "Ferrari" of jackets. So get down to your favourite dealer chat to him and please feel free to contact me should you wish to clarify any of my thoughts. As a final perspective, the role of price is significant and I'm sure would change the picture if this were categorised in terms of pricing levels – something for us to work on.

Why not email us (gearup@icon.co.za) with your evaluation of your own jacket.

