

# BIKER GLASSES



We have a strange regulatory system in this country, whereby visors are subject to stringent safety tests and sun glasses aren't, which means you can wear the cheapest, nastiest seafront shades on your motorcycle, and they can even be sold as biker shades without fear of prosecution ...

just duck if you see a stone chip heading your way.

All glasses aren't created equal, you see, and many that are said to be shatterproof or unbreakable, or suitable for use on a motorcycle don't live up to their billing. It's not even that you can go on price, because some are priced to look kosher, but are krap.

One company that stands by its quality is Biker Glasses, run by Steve and Avril Federanko, who I bumped into at Fuengirola, and I've been wearing a pair of their TR90s ever since. I've stopped short of trying to blow holes in them at point blank range with a shotgun – maybe he'll might try that at Bisley – but that was only a minor consideration: his pitch, level of knowledge and attitude was enough to reassure me, as well as comments from return customers. I was more concerned with finding a pair of shades that would fit inside my open-face helmet without discomfort, and found them in the flat and flexible arms of these vented but not windproof shades. I opted for the high-contrast lenses because I'm completely converted to their practicality – even if it does make me look a little too much like I've got a thing for Bono – which

have enough tint to reduce the glare of the sun, but come into their own at dusk and in the rain.

I've sat on them, inadvertently used them as a pillow (inside my leather jacket), dropped them countless times, sometimes with a theatrical flounce, and they remain unmarked on frame or lens. And they fit inside my lid easily, and I'm barely aware that they're there, which is a vast improvement over most of their predecessors.

One of a full range of glasses to suit most peoples tastes, they'll set you back £20 which compares very well against poorer quality competition, and come with a no-quibble warranty.

**Biker Glasses, 01278 420241  
www.bikerglasses.co.uk**



## HOOD K7 ARAMID-LINED DENIM JACKET

Last issue I was given the chance to test a couple of pairs of Hood's armoured jeans: spring had been unusually mild – hot and dry – and I was already tired of sweating in my leathers, and it was great not to be carrying so much weight. And then, before the unexpected monsoon season started, I got the news that it was only going to get hotter, because I was off to Fuengirola with Harley-Davidson.

I wondered what the chance of a matching K7 jacket was, and the answer arrived in the post a couple of days later. The seventies lived again, and I was denim man. It could've been worse, there could've been an Aramid lined suit jacket: at least I wasn't Clarkson. Of course, I hadn't previously considered this possibility because I couldn't remember the last time I saw a grown man in brand new denim jacket and jeans: beaten up denim has a very different look to it.

Did I care?

Did I hell: I was going to be cooler than I would have been in my leathers, and that was the primary aim. And the joy of denim is that it develops a character of its own over time, depending on who's using it. It could have been destined for a life of ironed creases and pressed panels, but these were going to grow old disgracefully with me as their clothes horse. They'll be a little rough round the edges in time, and I can live with the 'new denim look' until that happens.



And it was cool, substantially cooler than my regular jacket would've been even with the inner jacket – an almost complete lining in Aramid weave. The same holds true of the debate between weave and knit as with the trousers, but the Jacket only comes in K7 form, so it's a weave.

Like the jeans, it's not 'a get out of jail free' card, but it will provide significantly more protection than denim alone, and can be reinforced with Knox armour, like the jeans, to give greater protection at major joints – elbows and shoulders in this case – with the only omission being a back protector. If you're concerned by that, Knox produce a protective vest but that starts to defeat the object of a lightweight, unrestrictive garment.

A lot of the appeal of armoured denim for me, however, is that it isn't a suit of armour. If you hold with the concept of 'Risk Compensation', and I do, you'll be aware that the safer you feel, the more chances you will take, and vice versa: it's the reason why we hated Volvos in the eighties and nineties, reckoning their drivers took more chances than most others, secure in

their steel cocoon. We got over it, and I'd argue fairly strongly that we did because we now assume that everyone in a car is trying to kill us and factor that in. Vulnerable riders are generally those who feel safe: they trust their fellow road-users' competence, wear the most protective suits and ride technically advanced bikes with excellent brakes, ABS, traction control and super grippy tyres: they're immortal right up until the unexpected happens. In armoured denim you don't feel invulnerable and so you don't take chances, but you are comfortable: that's where I would rather be.

**ANDY**