

# Motoport Marathon Air Mesh jacket

By Moshe K. Levy #108259

**OVER THE PAST 12 YEARS OF** professionally testing motorcycle gear and accessories, I've had the chance to sample the proverbial highs and lows of the industry. I've experienced "bulletproof" designs which left me stranded by the side of the road, and I've been pleasantly surprised on a rare occasion as well. After logging a full 12 months and over 23,000 miles in a Motoport Marathon Air Mesh Kevlar jacket, I can safely say that I have never tested a product which so thoroughly exceeded my admittedly lofty expectations. To put it bluntly, this is the most functional motorcycle jacket in the world.

I was fitted for it in Motoport's 5,600 square foot shop in San Marcos, Calif. There, company owner Wayne Boyer went over the garment's construction in detail. Boyer is a veritable walking encyclopedia regarding the design and fabrication of riding gear, and he expounded

at length about kevlar fabrics, abrasion strength, full coverage armor material, and the technicalities of safety stitching. Because Motoport gear is in use by over 180 police departments worldwide, there were a few examples on display showing minimal damage after motor officers had been in some horrific high speed crashes. There were also some other mid-level brands exhibited which had turned into shredded Kleenex after

minor crashes at parking lot speeds. It was a powerful presentation of just how vulnerable we are without the benefit of quality gear.

The Marathon is a custom built garment, specifically tailored to the rider's measurements and available with a plethora of

improves on the standard Tri-Armor with a ¼" layer of Dow Corning's APS silicone-laminated woven fabric sewn to the outer covers, creating what the company calls "the highest rated impact-absorbing armor in the world." The coverage is phenomenal, protecting vast swaths of the elbows, fore-arms, shoulders, back and chest. For all-season use, multiple types of liners are available. I opted for the warmest choice, namely a waterproof/windproof/breathable Aero-Tex liner with its own zip-in Warm & Safe 90W heated sub-liner (tested separately in BMW ON, February 2013), allowing the rider to mix layers as conditions dictate all year long. Many other options exist, including eliminating standard pockets, adding more cargo pockets, altering the jacket's length, and of course a multitude of colors to choose from.

The construction of the Marathon is reminiscent of an Abrams tank. There is nothing dainty or subtle about it. It's all business, from the militaristic SWAT-like appearance to the coarse Dupont Kevlar material, the tear strength of which

is rated at 1,260 pounds. (For reference, even competition grade leather is rated to 110 pounds, at best.) There is no polyurethane coating on the Kevlar, so unlike many other jackets, it will not melt if the material slides along the pavement. The critical seams are all safety stitched with heavy-duty, bonded nylon thread. Massive YKK zippers are used throughout, with thick pulls for gloved hands. Storage is plentiful; the outer layer has four oversized pockets, plus two hand warmer pockets in the waist



Motoport Marathon Air Mesh Kevlar jacket.

options to suit nearly any requirement. My test Marathon was maxed out on reflective bands, with two 1" yellow bands on each bicep area, one 1.5" band running down the outside of each sleeve, and a massive 4" stripe running across the back, all 3M® ASTM-rated Scotchlite® material. A visible "emergency information pocket" runs over the top of the right shoulder, allowing placement of a waterproof emergency medical ID card in case of the unexpected.

The optional "Quad-Armor Upgrade"

area, and another zippered pocket inside. The interior's standard liner material is a hydrophilic nylon mesh, which wicks sweat away in summertime. The collar is stretch fleece, quite soft to the touch, with dual, rubber-coated snaps to hold it shut. A removable collar to allow for a Leatt Neck Brace is optional.

The cut and fitment of the Marathon can best be described as "American," namely plenty of room through the middle. Velcro® tabs for adjustment abound, with two on each sleeve, two on the back, and two on the bottom hem. The sleeves adjust around the wrists with multi-position snaps and sturdy YKK zips. At first, as expected, the jacket is stiff and unyielding to wear, though quite lightweight considering the level of protection afforded. It took a solid week of daily commuting before it felt "broken in" and transformed to a second skin. Since then, I haven't taken it off once. For 12 months, covering over 23,000 miles, in temperatures ranging from 9 to 107 degrees, up and down the entire eastern coastline of the US and into Canada, the Marathon performed like a champion. Ottawa's arctic blasts were no match for the 90W subliner, which itself was protected by the windproof Aero-Tex overliner, without the unwieldiness typical of multi-layer winter gear. When things warmed up on a ride to Fort Lauderdale, the Marathon had adequate airflow to

remain continuously comfortable, thanks to the moisture-wicking hydrophilic liner on its interior, despite having more armor coverage than any other jacket in the industry. The armor itself is perforated and does an incredible job of blending into the background on long rides, with none of the bulkiness and shifting common in many other jackets. In short, this jacket is by far the most comfortable and functional garment I have ever tested.

As a result, there is now a genuine bond between this rider and his Motoport jacket. It fits me perfectly because it was made by hand for my exact measurements to rigorous standards with uncompromised quality. It's a very different feeling from wearing a generic, off the rack design that is exactly the same as the 5,000 that came before it. Everything about the Marathon is absolutely functional for the serious motorcyclist, from the ease of maintenance, to its superlative comfort, to its unparalleled build quality, to the peace of mind that comes with knowing you're as well protected as you can possibly be at all times. This is indeed the jacket to buy, if nothing but the best will do!

The Motoport Marathon Air Mesh Kevlar jacket is hand built in California and has an MSRP of \$514.00 plus options and shipping. Visit <http://www.motoport.com/> for more information. ☺



An inside look at the armor of the Motoport Marathon Air Mesh jacket.

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