



Dude, I told you this lake was well-stocked!

Motorcycle

CONSUMER NEWS

Next Month

Motorcycles scheduled to appear in the October issue:

- Honda Africa Twin
- Honda VFR1200X

●● Innovation of the Month

Helite Turtle Airbag Vest

THE HELITE TURTLE vest is essentially a mechanically activated airbag that a rider wears over his/her usual jacket. Once on board, a nylon-buckled leash is attached to the motorcycle and snapped to a matching tether on the vest. In the event that the rider is ejected from the motorcycle, the tether on the vest is pulled, activating a piston that punctures an integrated 100cc CO2 cartridge. The released gas inflates the vest to 200m BAR, insulating the rider's torso upon landing/impact. The whole process takes place in 100 milliseconds, or about one-third of the blink of an eye.

Quality of construction and materials is superlative, as would be expected at this \$600-plus price. Three beefy, glove-actuated clips hold the vest firmly in place over any jacket from svelte to bulky, with up to 4 inches of adjustment available via the three ¾-inch straps. The left side has a Velcro-sealed flap where the adjustment straps are adjusted by hook and loop, while the right side houses the aforementioned CO2 cartridge, piston, and tether cord assembly. The rear section features an enormous, removable SAS-TEC CE-certified back protector. The exterior shell is 600-denier Cordura with very generous 2-inch-wide, 3M reflective stripes throughout, while the interior is a soft 3-D mesh fabric. The assembly, heft, and feel of this garment are of premium quality—serious rider's gear.

Out on the road, the hi-viz Turtle is a very conspicuous ATGATT status symbol, and crowds gather at every motor-



Helite Turtle Airbag Hi-Viz Vest



cyclist congregation, inevitably begging the wearer to demonstrate the inflation process. At \$25 per CO2 canister, showing off gets expensive! But once the vest is pumped up, the level of protection becomes clear, and it is quite impressive. All of the vital organs on the body's front are covered, from the chest and ribcage down to the hips and pelvic region. The SAS-TEC back protector covers a 20-inch high x 10-inch wide expanse on our size L test model. The gas also inflates an integrated neck roll, further protecting the spine, as well as preventing neck hyperextension. After triggering the canister, the vest self-discharges the gas within approximately five minutes. A hex key is included for the simple task of canister replacement. Don't worry about accidentally activating the inflation process—the pull required on the tether is enormously forceful and can't typically be accomplished by getting off the bike and forgetting to unbuckle it.

The vest configuration is extremely convenient, because it allows the rider to use whichever jacket fits the specific riding occasion. Likewise, the vest is fairly breathable, and did not block significant airflow during hot summer riding with a mesh jacket worn underneath. As long as riders remember to clip the tether to the bike on each ride, they can rest assured of a significantly higher level of protection in the event of

the unexpected. The French-made Helite Turtle Airbag Vest is available in black for \$629, or hi-viz for \$649.

—Moshe Levy

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