

REVIEWS

» Forma **ADVENTURE LOW** BOOTS

I'm no Imelda Marcos, but I do love having the right footwear for each ride. As motorcycle gear becomes increasingly specialized, every conceivable niche is getting filled. Several brands offer half-scale boots for when we need more protection than a hiking boot, but serious off-road boots would be overkill. I've owned boots from other manufacturers, but had yet to sample any from Forma.

Having heard good things about this Italian marque, I chose its Adventure Low for some dual-sport riding, which usually poses less of a threat than full-on dirt adventures. It's also likely to involve some walking around and lunch in a public establishment, rather than a trailer bed.

Heavily armored and weighty motocross boots can be a bit garish for pedestrian settings, they don't fit under most riding pants and they make walking an arduous chore. The Adventure Lows, which come in handsome brown or black oiled leather, are immediately comfortable and grow even more so with wear. Though stiffer than hiking boots, they're still vastly easier to walk around in than their knee-high counterparts.

If walking takes place in the rough, their dual-density, non-slip, deeply lugged soles will deliver a much-appreciated traction advantage over most motocross boots, which tend to be relatively smooth on the bottom. Ingress and egress is extremely simple, with two highly adjustable straps, robust buckles, and a hook-and-loop fastener at the top, making the process quick and easy.



There's no external armor, but the ankles contain thick TPU cups, the shanks are steel, and sturdy plastic patches cover areas where the boots contact foot controls. Construction throughout is top-notch, and a breathable Drytex lining effectively keeps feet cozy during rain and water crossings. Obviously, these boots' low height won't allow them to maintain that state during deep plunges. But since they're worn inside riding pants, splashed water won't run down into them, as can happen with tapered motocross pants tucked inside taller boots.

Though I'd read warnings that Forma boots run small (suggesting purchase of a size larger), I found the sizing was actually spot-on; calf allowance is quite generous. At \$239, these boots are a great value. A full-height version is available for \$279 for those seeking more protection, but still less than delivered by a hard-core off-road boot.

—Mark Barnes



Forma Boots USA, formabootsusacom



» Warm & Safe **RIDER CLASSIC STYLE** HEATED GLOVES

We've been testing W&S's Rider Classic Style heated gloves over the course of this fall and winter seasons, and have come away impressed. The styling is attractive in the conventional aesthetic, as its name implies. The exterior shell is constructed of black drum-dyed cowhide, with additional reinforcement padding in the palm area and over the fingers. A hook-and-loop strap keeps the gloves secured at the wrist, supplemented by another closure at the gauntlet to seal against the jacket's cuff. The gauntlet itself opens to a generous 4.25 inches, easily stretching over bulky winter jacket cuffs. Beneath the leather shell's surface, an "Aqrotex" windproof and waterproof membrane and layer of 3M Thinsulate insulation aid the soft, microfleece-like inner lining in keeping things toasty.

» Oxford **MONTREAL 2** TEXTILE ADVENTURE JACKET

With no shortage of budget-priced adventure jackets on the market, U.K.-based Oxford Products gathered feedback from U.S. dealers to redesign its product range. For a more competitive presence in North America, it toned down its top-selling Montreal 2.0 adventure jacket. Gone are company logos, stylized reflector patches and other eye-catching highlights from the handsome U.K. version. That's a pity. Web searches often pull up the more visually appealing U.K. item on certain retail sites, so buyer beware.

More subdued looks aside, the Montreal jacket is well-designed and practical. Color options: All black; black, gray and tan (desert); or black and high-vis yellow. I put the latter to the test on a five-day sojourn into California's Sierra Nevada. Some of the bar-tacked reinforced stitching ran off true, and the collar fabric was unevenly cut and frayed—unsurprising, given its \$200 MSRP. Otherwise, this rugged jacket with heaps of must-have features was hard to fault.

Sturdily constructed of a rip-stop polyester and Cordura blend, it fit comfortably. Elasticated adjusters at the waist, hip, bicep and forearm let me tailor the jacket for a satisfying bespoke fit. Concertina sections around the dorsals and above the elbow pads provided extra stretch and flexibility when throwing myself around on the pegs. Impact zones are reinforced with abrasion-resistant Nylon, but the flexi-joint CE Level 1 elbow and shoulder pads and the sponge back pad are dismal and should be replaced with CE Level 2 upgrades. Fortunately there's no fussing around with internal pad pockets: External zippers make inserting and removing the pads easy.

Twin eight-inch aquasealed vents opening diagonally across the chest shoveled heaps of air under my armpits. Since I live and ride in the desert, I also appreciated the double-zipped wrist-to-elbow aquasealed vents atop the forearm, plus a 10-inch-wide vent atop the back. All can be locked open with press-stud flaps.

The Montreal also satisfies another ADV jacket requirement: plenty of pockets. Large twin waterproof top-loader waist pockets feature hook-and-loop flaps, with rubber grips for an easy while-riding grab. A rear pocket is large enough to stuff the detachable, three-layer, breathable, waterproof Hipora liner. The liner zippers to the shell and secures by a loop and press-stud to the rust-colored synthetic suede collar, which doubles as a zippered pouch for an under-helmet rain hood with waterproof neck. Nice touch!

It's an eye-pleasing and ergonomic jacket, brimming with thoughtful functional details, and an exceptional bargain. Still, the U.K. version is superior, and also available in orange or blue.



—Christopher P. Baker

Oxford Products, oxfordproducts.com



The left glove has a rubber faceshield wiper, which was useful in rain and light snow conditions, though we do wish it was a bit more pronounced from the glove's surface. Overall construction of these Pakistani-made gloves is very good, with no loose threads, blemishes or defects detected.

Power for the glove is via standardized female coax connector on a 4-inch long lead, which can be plugged directly into the sleeve-mounted male coax connector of most heated jacket liners, or run separately if no liner is used. Depending on the heat controller used, the glove heat can be adjusted separately or in conjunction with the main liner.

We still recommend the Warm & Safe Dual Remote Heat Troller (MCN 2/11) as a good choice for separate glove and liner control. These gloves are rated at approximately 18W each (or 36W for the pair) total power consumption.

The gloves are comfortable and immediately feel “broken in,” thanks to pre-curved fingers and pliable leather material. They reached peak temperatures in roughly 4 minutes, at which point all the advantages of heated gear are realized. In the case of gloves, that means vastly increased feel in any temperature into which a sane rider would dare venture.

Likewise, the waterproof claim was verified in some biblical downpours that lasted for hours, with no leaks detected. With a relatively low MSRP of \$130 and an admirable performance over the course of our sub-freezing testing regimen, W&S's Rider Classis Style heated gloves represent a solid functional choice for the winter rider.

—Moshe K. Levy

Warm & Safe Heated Gear, warmnsafe.com

