

► TROY LEE DESIGNS BLAIS JACKET

WHILE psyching himself up for the rigours of the recent Yamaha SA 24 Hour Trial, Murray McLerie got a sniff of the brand new Troy Lee Designs Blais jacket and decided he just had to have one for his upcoming round-the-clock torture-test with the boys from the SA Dirt Bikes Kawasaki team. So faster than you can say, 'Add to Shopping Cart,' Muzza had the credit-card out and the boys at SCP had one of the first Blais jackets to arrive in Australia winging his way. Now, the TLD Blais jacket definitely slots in at the premium end of the market, as indicated by the \$499 retail price. That's a lot of coin for a jacket in anyone's language, but the flipside is you get a lot of jacket for the money. Designed in conjunction with leading American rally/raid racer, Chris Blais, this jacket is aimed at rally and Safari racers, as well as hardcore trail riders, who want protection from the elements thanks to a durable waterproof polyester construction, yet still demand the versatility of plenty of cooling airflow when riding conditions demand it. Multiple air vents via waterproof zippers on the upper arms and chest combine with a large zippered exhaust vent on the upper back to help the rider get plenty of cooling airflow when required, which Muz found certainly was the case in the daylight sections of the 24 Hour. In the cold of the night sections the zips could be closed off again, but where Muz did battle the cold was around the neck, as he removed the detachable collar to run his KTM neck brace, and while this was extremely comfortable and is a specific feature of the Blais jacket, Muz soon discovered one neck warmer but no collar on a jacket on a freezing Barossa winter's night just wasn't enough. Size-wise Muz opted for a 2XL jacket so as to run it comfortably over his body armour, and then played with the wrist, bicep and waist adjustments to get the fit just right. At the end of 24 hours Muz ranked the jacket as plenty comfortable, and after battling his mousse tube woes and binning the KLX plenty of times, had also come to appreciate the elbow and shoulder protection, while the rear cargo pocket was plenty large enough to carry a set of wet weather pants and top. The TLD Blais is a high-quality jacket that shows its race-bred pedigree.

Retail price: \$499 Web: www.stevcramerproducts.com.au
Contact: Steve Cramer Products (03) 9587 1466



Full Metal Jacket

Are you in the market for a new riding jacket? Then check out this selection of popular jackets that have been copping a workout recently in the hands of the TRAIL ZONE team.

Story by Clubby

◀ HONDA ENDURO JACKET

STOP the presses! This brand new Honda Enduro jacket touched down just in time to meet our deadline for this issue and after one ride in it, we just had to squeeze it into this story. Why? Take a look at the price: at \$275 this jacket is great value for money, especially as it's the first jacket we've seen at that price-point that's compatible with both Leatt and Alpinestars neck braces. That's right, check out the neck, which not only offers an adjustable gusset but can also be removed to accept both types of leading neck braces. That feature alone will draw neck brace wearers like Pee Wee riders to a Chad Reed autograph signing! With more riders wearing neck braces, you can bet plenty of them will be checking out this jacket, whether they ride a Honda or not. As for the rest of this jacket, it's great to see the sleeves are removable, which is a must for Aussie conditions, plus there's venting in the rear to help you get airflow through the jacket when required. There's a cool mesh liner which is always a nice touch for improved comfort, while the wrists have adjustable closures and drawstrings on the waist help to tailor the fit of the jacket to your body. The jacket size itself is roomy, allowing plenty of space to wear armour underneath. There are pockets on the front of the hips, additional weatherproof pockets on either side of the main zip on the chest, and there's a nice and roomy rear pocket across the backside where the sleeves can be comfortably stashed when not in use. Like we said, we've only had time to wear this jacket once, but given the multitude of features for the price, we know we'll be wearing this jacket plenty more in the future.

Retail price: \$275 Web: www.hondamotorcycles.com.au
Contact: Honda Australia (03) 9270 1111



► YAMAHA RACING ENDURO JACKET

DR PHIL stuck his hand up for this Yamaha Racing Enduro jacket just before we jumped on the plane at the start of the year to head across the Tasman for the annual Yamaha NZ Safari ride in the South Island. The jacket came through the NZ Safari with flying colours and the Doctor has been wearing it ever since. Resplendent in Yamaha's factory blue and black race colours and logos, this jacket is aimed at trail and enduro riders who want a mid-price jacket that's loaded with features and creature comforts. As shown by the photos, this jacket has removable sleeves, which is a popular feature for Aussie conditions, as is the ventilated inner liner and venting zippers that allow you to enjoy plenty of cooling airflow when the going gets hot under the collar (get it?!). There are a myriad of pockets that offer a more than reasonable amount of storage capacity for goodies like your wallet, sunnies and trail snacks, there's a water bladder compartment in the back and a route card holder located conveniently on the left sleeve. Adjustable waist bands allow for a comfy fit, while the wrist closures are also velcro adjustable and the high neck is comfort-lined and velcro and button fastening for a good fit. The Yamaha Racing Enduro jacket is available at Yamaha dealers everywhere or you can check it out online at Yamaha's Y-Shop web site.

Retail price: \$297 Web: www.yamaha-motor.com.au/yshop
Contact: Yamaha Motor Australia (02) 9757 0011



► DRIRIDER RALLYCROSS PRO 2 JACKET

WE'VE been real fans of the Dririder Rallycross jacket since its introduction. Myself, Dr Phil and Russ have all worn the various incarnations of the Rallycross jacket over the years and it's been impressive to see the evolution of this Aussie-designed jacket as McLeod Accessories has taken onboard a feast of customer and dealer feedback. And if there's one thing the McLeod's design team appreciates, it's feedback. What sets the Rallycross Pro 2 apart from its rivals is that it's a 'system' jacket that can be adapted to meet the rider's demands and varying weather conditions, thanks to clever zip-in/zip-out fleece cold weather and waterproof liners. When it's cold or wet, you zip the liners into place; when it's warm, you take the liners out. And then when the temperature really heats up, you can detach the sleeves altogether and run the jacket as a vest, which is a popular option with many Aussie riders in warmer climates. Another stand-out feature of the Rallycross Pro 2 jacket is the inclusion of CE-rated inner and outer elbow and shoulder protective armour, which is a large part of the appeal of the jacket for me on high-speed, big-mile adventure bike rides. Thankfully I've never put the CE armour to the ultimate test, but desert-master Ron Grant has - check out his report on page 91 of this issue of how his Rallycross Pro 2 jacket fared after throwing his bike down the road! Another plus of the Rallycross Pro 2 jacket is the inclusion of a hydration-bladder in a specific pocket on the back of the jacket, while there's a feast of pockets on the hips, chest and inside of the jacket, with the hip pockets doubling as hand-warmer pockets. There's also a large storage pocket across the lower back of the jacket, which I use to carry the wet weather liner. Adjustable velcro wrist closures and sleeve adjustments on the forearms and biceps help to tailor the fit of the jacket. I've been using a Rallycross Pro 2 for over a year and it's been much abused but come back asking for more. The only failing has been the stitching around one of the diagonal chest pocket zippers, but a quick trip to a tailor had that fixed in a jiff. This really is a jacket that can do it all.

Retail price: \$399 Web: www.mcleodaccessories.com.au Contact: McLeod Accessories 1300 300 191



◀ SCOTT ENDURO JACKET

IF MONEY matters and you want an enduro jacket that's on the mark for typical Aussie trail and enduro riding conditions, then you could do a lot worse than take a long, hard look at the latest Scott Enduro jacket. Check it out: you get change out of 200 bucks! Sure, it might lack big-dollar features like CE-approved shoulder and elbow armour, or a fleece cold weather liner, or a hydration bladder pocket or a removable neck to allow neck braces to be worn easily - but you can't expect all that for this price. This jacket is light yet durable and still offers enough features to make it a worthy inclusion in your gearbag for those days when the weather gets iffy and just running a jersey will leave you battling the elements. You can wear this jacket in true enduro conditions without overheating, and when the heat does increase, there are vents on the chest and back to let cooling air-flow through, or you can zip-off the sleeves altogether and wear the jacket as a vest. Chest and front waist pockets offer handy storage capacity, while there are no less than three more pockets on the rear tail of the jacket where you can stash the sleeves when not in use, yet still have two pockets available. Many of the pockets feature storm flap closures, which is a good touch. The waist band is adjustable to make for a tidy fit, as are the wrist cuffs, while another feature we like is the comfort neck liner and the wide velcro closure on the neck that keeps it snugly closed when the going gets real cold. The Scott Enduro jacket is available in sizes S through XXL and while we scored the basic grey version, it's also available in blue, orange and red colour schemes. Check it out at better bike shops.

Retail price: \$199 Web: www.candr.com.au Contact: C&R Imports (03) 9587 5077



◀ BMW RALLYE 2 PRO JACKET

WOULD you spend a lazy grand on a new jacket? Crikey, that's big bucks! But you know what, get along to a BMW GS Safari and you will see these genuine BMW Rallye 2 Pro jackets (and matching pants) everywhere. Clearly BMW riders are not feeling the impact of the current GFC - so good luck to 'em! Anyway, BMW Australia has kitted-out ORE webmaster Lance 'Russ' Turnley with a Rallye 2 Pro suit and he's been putting the gear through the wringer. First impressions are this gear is top-shelf all the way. The jacket is made from Cordura 500 (which is a long wearing

air-permeable material) and includes a removable Gore-Tex inner with fleece lining where it counts. CE-approved protective armour is included in the shoulders, elbow and spine, while ventilation zippers down each arm and vent panels on the chest allow you to get cooling airflow when required. There are numerous pockets for storage, as well as a handy route card holder above the left wrist. One of the trickiest features of this jacket is a removable bum-bag on the tail, which can be used for extra storage space, or to carry the Gore-Tex liner when not being worn. Two colour schemes are available: grey/blue (shown) or grey/black, while there's a huge range of sizes to choose from. Steer your GS to your local BMW dealer and check out the Rallye Pro 2 jacket and matching pants.

Retail price: \$1,070 Web: www.bmwmotorrad.com.au
Contact: BMW Motorrad Australia (03) 9264 4150



► SCOTT EXCEL JACKET

IF YOU thought Scott only made goggles, think again. Sure, the company might be best known for its hugely popular range of goggles, but Scott also offers riding apparel, including jerseys, nylons, gloves and boots, as well as jackets. The Scott Enduro jacket featured above has been around for a while and has won a lot of fans with trail and enduro riders, whereas this Excel jacket is a newer addition to the Scott range and is a sport-touring jacket aimed at adventure bike riders. It's available in blue or black (shown) colour schemes and features a Polyamide clear-coated construction with waterproof and breathable TriPhase membrane and zip-in/zip-out polyester sport mesh liner. It's certainly a heavier, warmer jacket well suited to adventure bike riders, who will appreciate features such as the comfort collar, front and rear ventilation, multiple weather-proof chest and hip pockets, elbow and shoulder tech protectors, pre-shaped sleeves and waist, hip, sleeve, cuff and collar adjustments. The cut and shape of this jacket is obviously more close-fitting than other more dirt-oriented enduro jackets, but the choice of S through XXL sizes should cover the bases for the majority of riders. You can check out the Scott Excel jacket at better bike shops around the country - to find your nearest dealer, call C&R Imports.

Retail price: \$349.95 Web: www.candr.com.au
Contact: C&R Imports (03) 9587 5077

