

APPAREL PRO: RAINSUITS

By Alisa Clickenger

There are a lot of good reasons to ride a motorcycle to the airport here in Southern California. If not to beat the hellish LA traffic, there's always the free parking perk to consider. These two pluses definitely cancel out the awkwardness of balancing a piece of roller luggage on the pillion pad of my bike. In my case, these were more than enough to overcome the fact that rain was predicted for the day of my return.

You wouldn't think that I'd have much need for a motorcycle rainsuit living in Southern California, but this year we've had record rainfall. Luckily, I had the foresight to throw mine in the pannier and wasn't lamenting the lack of a rainsuit this morning as I hopped and pulled and shimmied into my rainsuit in the short-term parking lot just in front of the terminal. The irony was not lost on me that it was the same day this article on rainsuits was due.

Rainsuits are the gift of the Gods for those who don't have the means to afford a high-end motorcycle travel suit, or those who don't want to always wear Gore-Tex gear. When I first started riding my one-piece rainsuit lived on the bike. I lived in a wet climate back East, and the rainsuit was always left in the saddlebags. One cold day, I put it on anticipating rain, and inadvertently learned of its thermal properties as well.

A couple of the times I got stuck riding in extreme cold and threw on the rainsuit jacket and pants so I could keep riding safely. Those same features can backfire, however, if it's hot and rainy you can find yourself as wet on the inside as the outside from body heat and condensation. That's why I prefer the rainsuits with liners as well as some venting.

All manufacturers have the waterproofing dialed in these days, so as Steve Blakeney, marketing director for Joe Rocket says, "It's the motorcycle friendly bells and whistles added to them that really make one suit better than the other." Comfort liners made of mesh or nylon, help ease the garment on and off and keep it from sticking to you. Vents help the garments breath and keep the rider from becoming soaked from the inside out.

Jamie Goodson, owner of Brooks Leather Sportswear agrees with the lining and breathability of the rainsuits, and suggests that they have adjustability at the waist for a better fit. The Brooks Leather rainsuits have optional elastic stirrups to keep the pants from riding up. Goodson claims that, "Rain jackets should not be just for rain, but comfortable and functional for everyday use." Brooks has a wide size range up to 5XL.

When stocking rain suits look to stock products with Velcro (hook and loop) cuff closures like the two above, waterproof pockets and burn resistant leg inserts to prevent melting or burns from hot exhausts. Try them on yourself before buying a whole batch because rain pant legs should fit over riding boots easily. Many customers like High Visibility reflective highlights for their rain wear, even if they normally don't ride in Hi Viz apparel. Also, look for specific ladies sizing, rather than "one size fits all." Then the only thing left to do is to remember to pack the rainsuit. ↙



Both Joe Rocket (above,) and Brooks Leather Sportswear (below) offer different, quality options for men's and women's rainsuits. It's not enough to simply repel water these days. Rainsuit manufacturers must offer additional features to make them more motorcycle-friendly.

