

APPAREL PRO: RIDING JEANS

Rider tastes have changed, and for the past couple of years we've seen a renewed interest in cafe racers, scramblers and vintage bikes. Mostly enjoyed in urban settings, the popularity of these bikes is driving marketplace interest in protective motorcycle clothing with an urban flavor. The trifecta of more urban riders, motorbike clothing getting more hip and the advancements in man-made materials shows up most strongly in the riding jeans space.

Nearly every apparel brand now offers a version of riding jeans. One style of construction is jeans with Kevlar integrated into them (think Fieldsheer "Charger" denim jeans, with a retail price of \$79.99). Another school of construction are jeans with a Kevlar liner (think Scorpion Covert Jeans that include a Kevlar lining, with a retail price of \$119.95).

The general rule of thumb is that the more expensive the jeans are, the more protection they offer. When stocking jeans, if you are concerned about safety for your customers, know that some products have Kevlar-reinforced areas, but those won't help if the denim jeans themselves come apart. Look out for marketing phrases such as "Kevlar thread" or "Kevlar lined" because some brands say they use "Kevlar" but it's not DuPont Kevlar, which costs the brands more on the manufacturing level.

Draggin Jeans, the originator of the riding jeans concept (their Classic has a retail price of \$129.95), is always innovating. They have revised their previous Dyneema liner and just rolled out a new inner layer that is 30-percent lighter, yet has nearly double the abrasion wear time as their previous liner. The knit is also a much finer loop. Draggin Jeans has just developed their own jeans material that will match CE Level 1 and be a single-layer jean.

Single-layer jeans are definitely on the cutting edge this season, with companies like Saint utilizing Dyneema, which is trademarked as the world's strongest fiber. Unbreakable Jeans achieved 3.67 seconds of slide time in the CE standard tests for motorcycle jeans. They claim to be 133 times stronger than regular denim while made from 66 percent Dyneema and 33 percent cotton. They are finished with triple stitching and bound seams, accounting for their \$600 retail price tag.

Entering the U.S. market in a very strong manner, Resurgence Jeans has



The popularity of riding jeans increased with the renewed interest in cafe racers, scramblers and vintage bikes. With the growing popularity, the protection that they offer has significantly improved.

been using the PEKEV fabric in their jeans since 2013, and is now on its third generation.

"[Pekev] has unprecedented weight vs. protection," said Jessica Shine, Resurgence Jeans U.S. brand representative.

"It uses Pekev, which is stronger than leather, yet breathable, stretchable and washable without affecting its protective abilities. Plus, the price point is very competitive considering the level of technology." Retail of their Heritage Jean is \$270.

Of course, we want to protect our riders as best as possible, so how do you tell which jeans are the most protective? Look for CE Approved (not "meets" or "certified," but "approved") riding jeans. Look at independent laboratory (not brand-tested) abrasion-resistance times. Look for armor. Yes, it can be bulky, but there are new types like D3O, which are slim and lightweight and offer good protection. After all, keeping our customers comfortable and safe will keep them coming back to buy more from us in the future. 

