

Aerostich Falstaff Jacket - Product Evaluation

Waxing on about cotton.

By the CW Staff

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Pretty much even the name that Aerostich gave this jacket tells you the kind of thought that went into it. Belstaff is famous for its waxed-cotton riding apparel, but that name was already taken (and that company seems to have gone seriously haute-couture expensive). Then there's the rich, plush feel of the English waxed cotton that tells the world, like Shakespeare's famous sybarite, you appreciate life's finer things. Finally, you could spray a whole six-pack of the famed cheap suds all over this jacket and come through dry as the proverbial bone.

Feature Editor John Burns wore the Falstaff through a series of Colorado cloudbursts deluginal enough to fill his Fries and submerge his boys in a Harley Softail seat kiddie pool. Yet the portion of his body sheltered by the Falstaff stayed completely dry, turning what might have been a hypothermic bummer into a cleansing Epic Ride.

It doesn't just keep you dry, either. When it's cool outside, you stay warm inside the wind-repellent, plaid-cotton-lined, ultrasuede-neck Falstaff. And when it's hot, you open the big underarm and back vents, and enjoy the same flow-through ventilation that's made Aerostich the go-to haberdasher of serious motorcyclists everywhere. It's the miracle of waxed cotton at work, a classic motorcycling fabric that's been semi-relegated by leather (more racy) and textiles (more modern) in the past couple of decades.

Certainly, waxed cotton is not as abrasion-resistant as leather, but this jacket's for road riding, and in nearly every road accident we've witnessed, impact protection is more important than abrasion resistance. In that department, the Falstaff again rules: It's packed with Aerostich's excellent T3 memory-foam padding in the shoulders, elbows and forearms, and there's Velcro to attach an optional back protector inside. Great storage goes (almost) without saying: There are two big zippered pockets in front (the left one with a smaller Velcro-flapped pocket behind it), two zippered handwarmer pockets, another zippered one on the right sleeve and a big interior pocket, too.

Maybe the coolest thing is that instead of being stuck in a heavy (or sweaty or wet) leather jacket when you climb off the bike, you're wearing a nice, lightish, even fashionable garment that wouldn't feel out of place on a quail hunt (and if you blasted a campaign contributor, your swank jacket would help make it look plausibly accidental). Downsides are that the fit is a tad baggy and designed for layering (the torso's nicely adjustable thanks to its Velcro-adjustable waist band), so this one's more for sport-touring than crotch rocketing. Also, waxed cotton does need a little specialized periodic maintenance—but nothing too involved or even all that periodic.

After a couple weeks of break-in and a few months of wear, this one's a new favorite.



DETAILS	
Contact	Aerostich/RiderWearHouse 8 S. 18th Ave. W. Duluth, MN 55806 218/722-1927 www.aerostich.com Price...\$397
Ups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Made with all-natural ingredients • No strange smells like old-fashioned waxed cotton • People want to touch you
Downs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people who want to touch you are mostly crusty old <u>motorcycle</u> guys • Not appropriate to wear on "Stealth Riders" • You've reached the age where practical counts