

Your Next Favorite Glove?

By Ron Davis #11820

PEOPLE KEEP TELLING ME I NEED TO “simplify.” They must have seen the pile of riding gloves on my closet shelf: waterproof, cold-proof, gauntlet, fingerless, ballistic, mesh, even a pair of lobster-claw “over-gloves” and silk unders. Isn’t that a lot of gloves for someone with only two hands and one bike? For answers to gear questions like this I usually turn to my well-worn Aerostich catalog, and so, on a tip from a friend, I decided to give their Elkskin Roper Gloves a shot.

I tried out both the standard Elkskin Roper Gloves and the slightly more expensive “competition” model. Both are the same length and come with a soft visor squeegee on the left thumb. The standard Ropers have a snap closure on the wrist, so you can either tuck your jacket cuff in or close the snap to let the wind flow up your sleeves. The competition version features cleverly designed, ergonomically reversed hook-and-loop closures with TF3 impact material over the knuckles for more robust protection. I liked the competition model better since I could snug the wrist up more than I could with the snap, but I found both easy to close up while wearing them.

Elkskin Ropers are surprisingly soft and supple right out of the package, though Aerostich claims they get better with at least 1,000 miles of wear (they did). Since all my leather gloves have been bargain table specials from my local big box outlet, the quality construction on the Ropers was obvious. The medium weight elkskin is a bit thicker than on cheaper gloves (you probably won’t be texting from your Blackberry with these on), and the tightly stitched seams don’t chafe or pinch.

Uninsulated Ropers aren’t exactly cold weather issue or waterproof, but rather than wearing bulky gloves or sorting through my collection every time I ride, I look at them as the closest thing to a universal glove. Simplify, right? I rely on my handguards and heated grips to keep my digits functioning properly on cold weather commutes

and just hang the Ropers up to air dry when I get caught in a shower. In fact, Aerostich says washing the Ropers occasionally can help them last longer. Though heat usually isn’t too much of an issue in Wisconsin, the elkskin naturally soaks up sweat and is cool enough for summer wear. Hey, anybody ever hear of an elk complaining?

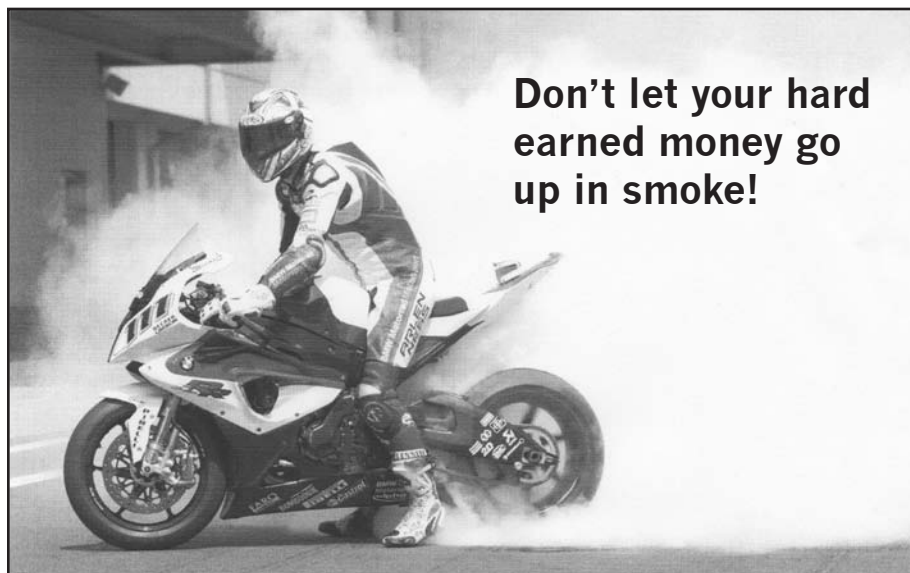
The standard Elkskin Ropers in black or natural tan can be had for \$47, while the competition style will run you \$10 more, plus shipping. Gauntlet and insulated gauntlet styles are also offered in elkskin. Sizing can be a little tricky with gloves, but Aerostich does offer a clear sizing system



Aerostich Roper Gloves feature a resilient visor squeegee on the left thumb.

on their website and in their catalog, which worked for me. Gloves that may seem snug at first will gradually conform to your hands.

More information and customer reviews on these gloves and all Aerostich products can be found at their website, www.Aerostich.com, or in their free catalog, available with a call to 1-800-222-1894.



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