Waxing Authentic: Aerostich Cousin Jeremy Long Term Test

Fish (https://www.citybike.com/author/fish/) 01/02/2019 Gear (https://www.citybike.com/category/tested/gear-reviews/)

I'd like to think that everyone who reads this is familiar with the venerable Aerostich Roadcrafter riding suit. The brainchild of Andy Goldfine, the Roadcrafter is a convenient and safe solution to the problem of what to wear when riding a motorcycle as daily transportation. Until the Roadcrafter hit the market in the early eighties, leather was the answer to safety, but Aerostich's all-in-one concept employed abrasion-resistant, high-tech textiles and breathable, waterproof Gore-Tex to provide weather and crash protection that didn't require you to change clothes when not on the bike. Simply shed the suit to look like a "normie."

The Roadcrafter design has evolved through the years and we're now up to the third generation, known as the R-3 (https://www.aerostich.com/suits/one-piece-suits/r-3). Aerostich offers the R-3 in standard and light versions, and still sells the previous version as the Roadcrafter Classic (https://www.aerostich.com/suits/one-piece-suits/roadcrafter-classic), remarkably similar to the original Roadcrafter that started it all. Both the R-3 and Classic are also available as two-piece jacket-n-pants suits.

Aerostich recently added another variant: the Cousin Jeremy (https://www.aerostich.com/suits/one-piece-suits/cousin-jeremy). As with the other Roadcrafters, this one is available as a one-piece ($1,127) or two-piece ($1,154) suit in men's and women's sizing (despite the masculine moniker).

Cousin Jeremy's secret? Waxed cotton, instead of the Cordura used in other Roadcrafters. Thirty-plus years in, we're at the point where an original Roadcrafter can be considered "retro" gear, but I wouldn't label this retro so much as traditional.

Waxed cotton isn't new to the motorcycling world. Adapted from fisherman's foul weather gear, it was the go-to alternative to leather riding jackets up until thirty-ish years ago. Time and technology march onward, but waxed cotton has never really gone away and in fact has seen a bit of resurgence in recent years thanks to its "authenticity."

So, what's the difference? Well, everything and nothing (apart from the fabric). Cousin Jeremy has all the features that helped the Roadcrafter become the benchmark for commuting and all-rounder utility gear, starting with the full length zipper. I opted for the two piece version, so there are two full length zippers. Still, suiting up is a snap—nothing beats a Roadcrafter for ease of daily use.

(https://www.citybike.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Aerostitch-Cousin-Jeremy-Suit-CityBike-AR02.jpg)

(https://www.citybike.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Aerostitch-Cousin-Jeremy-Suit-CityBike-AR08.jpg)

There's the usual, versatile assortment of pockets, including my personal favorite, the zippered pocket on the right sleeve that's just right for ear plugs. There's a strap and carabiner hiding in the left breast pocket, intended as a place to clip a helmet for hands-free action. I use it to clip my key whenever I get off the bike.

Since Cousin Jeremy is based on the Roadcrafter Classic, it's lined inside unlike the exposed Gore-Tex and taped seams of the R-3. It also lacks the magnetic collar fixtures intended to hold the collar open in hot weather, but the weight of the waxed cotton keeps the collar open just fine. Also deleted are the Roadcrafters iconic Scotchlite panels on the back, breast pocket, and lower legs. The suit does get the new, more water-resistant zippers, which do a great job of keeping moisture out.

The armor situation is exactly the same as other Roadcrafters, with Aerostich's combination soft+hardshell TF3 armor in the shoulders, elbows, and knees. Optional TF3 armor includes a back protector ($87.00), hips ($45.00), and even a chest protector ($75.00).

(https://www.citybike.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Aerostitch-Cousin-Jeremy-Suit-CityBike-AR15.jpg)

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With the specs and features out of the way, here's the real deal: the Cousin Jeremy elevates the Roadcrafter to a whole new level of comfort. It goes beyond the custom fit, right to the unique way the waxed cotton hangs on your body. Ballistic nylon does have an advantage in abrasion resistance, but I'm actually willing to make that trade for the level of comfort provided by Cousin Jeremy's waxed cotton.

Why am I so enamored with this material? In short: it feels like an old friend, familiar and broken-in. Cousin Je-

remy formed perfectly, comfortably to my body the very first time I suited up.

That new gear feel is nice, but the feeling of well-worn gear is hard to beat. When you put on new gear that fits like you've been wearing it for twenty years (minus the smell of two decades of road grime), you really have a winner.

Six months later, Cousin Jeremy sets my personal standard for comfort when it comes to motorcycle gear. Much like other Roadcrafters, the suit performs exceptionally well in a variety of circumstances. Roll the collar down and open the back and armpit vents to create a cooling breeze over your torso. Should the temperature drop, fold up and close the collar to seal out most of the wind flow to cover more miles before needing to stop and zip up the rest of the vents.

Where this suit really shines is in the transitions from warmer to cooler weather. I used to carry a baselayer in case of an encounter with extended cooler temperatures, but it mostly gets left at home now. Rain and dense fog no longer chill me they way moist weather does in other textile and even leather gear.

Are there sacrifices? Well, yeah: the waxed cotton definitely feels warmer in direct sunlight when you're not rolling. It requires you to be moving above thirty-ish miles per hour before you get effective evaporative cooling. Being lined like the Roadcrafter Classic, Cousin Jeremy is a little more cumbersome to slip into than the unlined R-3.

Waxed cotton is also less abrasion-resistant than ballistic nylon (and certainly leather). I've not personally tested Cousin Jeremy's protection and resilience in a crash, but the 10-ounce waxed cotton is doubled-up in likely slide zones—shoulders, elbows and knees—like other Roadcrafters. Aerostich says the waxed cotton suit should withstand a crash under 25-30 MPH without damage, but will certainly need inspection and possible repair at speeds above that.

The only other drawback is more subjective. Waxed cotton, particularly in lighter colors, tends to accumulate and show dirt very quickly. This does help the suit develop “character,” adding to that broken-in feeling, but it doesn’t stay new-looking for very long. Individual perspective will determine whether that character is “authentic” or “funky.”

But Fish, what about style? Cousin Jeremy has it. My own R-3 is rather striking, with its contrast stitching and black on black color scheme, but Cousin Jeremy’s brown with black abrasion panels looks cool on almost any bike, from Ducati’s Supersport to KTM’s 1290 Super Adventure (https://www.citybike.com/bikes/rhymes-with-orange-2018-ktm-1290-super-adventure-s/), and even Monkeying around Catalina Island on Honda’s latest mini (https://www.citybike.com/bikes/honda-monkey-first-ride-catalina-island/).

Classical good looks, serious comfort and reasonable protection wrapped up in a convenient, easy-to-wear package: Cousin Jeremy is a kickass combination in a familiar package.

(https://www.citybike.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/hond
monkey-first-ride-67.jpg)

Fish (https://www.citybike.com/author/fish/) is Founder and President of the CityBike Society for the Preservation of Front Tires, and builder of the legendary SnoMoChop (https://www.citybike.com/tag/snomochop/).

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