

Quick and cheap wheel fix keeps project rolling

Expert straightening service avoids buying a costly repayment

Maidstone Motoliner alloy wheel straightening, from £72

Tested by: Ped Baker

Time tested: One wheel

What's good? There are now an estimated 295 square miles of potholes on UK roads* and I suspect the front wheel of my 1990 Harley-Davidson FXR fell victim to one of the blighters some time ago. The damage to the aftermarket Custom Chrome front wheel happened before my ownership, but two fairly deep dents in close proximity suggests a pothole was the culprit.

This particular pressed and welded wheel is 25 years old and no longer available, but a similar, machined billet replacement would cost over £600. And the budget for my project bike does not run to that! Luckily, the damage is cosmetic, and thanks to Maidstone Motoliner, it's repairable. Repair prices start at £72 if you deliver the wheel naked to them, rising to £150 for a ride-in-ride-out service. Rear wheels are a few quid more.

Maidstone Motoliner can repair cast, forged and even magnesium wheels on their bespoke truing jig, and use hydraulic rams to gently press the wheel back into shape. However, if the wheel is cracked Motoliner judge it to be irreparable.

The repair is flawless. I had to check photos of the wheel before the repair to judge where the two dents were. Motoliner also offer a repainting service.

What's not? With a £1 billion gap in funding for road repairs* the pothole problem is only going to get worse. Motoliner is going to get busy.

Contact: www.motoliner.com, 01622 790705

Quality rating: ★★★★★ **Value rating:** ★★★★★



Before repair: a pair of nasty dents close to one another indicated prior pothole damage

QUICK BUYING ADVICE WHEELS

1 Carbon-fibre
Pros: Very lightweight, up to 50% lighter than cast aluminium wheels.
Cons: Hand-built so expensive and very difficult to repair, were prone to catastrophic failure in their early days. Biggest advantages are seen on track.

2 Forged
Pros: Forging increases strength as the process deforms the internal grain of the metal to follow the contours of the part. Less metal can be used, so the wheel is lighter.
Cons: Expensive, but can be repaired.

3 Cast
Pros: Cheap to mass produce and easy to repair.
Cons: Die casting (injecting molten metal into a mould) produces a durable wheel but unlike forging, the metal grain is random so more material is needed to achieve a similar strength.

4 Billet
Pros: Machined from a large single piece (billet) of aluminium on a CNC mill. Almost any design is possible so ideal for custom bike one-offs.
Cons: Expensive, and minimal gain in terms of performance.

5 Forged component (eg Astralite)
Pros: Rims and hubs forged independently then riveted together producing a light wheel at lower cost than a one-piece forged wheel.
Cons: Rivets can loosen or fracture.

*SOURCE: POTHOLES.CO.UK



Draggin' Twista jeans, £209.99



Tester Emma Franklin

Time tested: 12 months/3000 miles

What's good? These skinny-fit Twista jeans tick all the boxes when it comes to fashion and, as they're made by Draggin', the quality is second to none. There's Kevlar lining in the seat, hip and thigh area and also the length of the upper leg to just below the knee. There are also pockets for optional knee armour and a mesh lining for comfort.
What's not? They're bulky and hot so I'm reluctant to keep them on all day if I'm not riding. Then there's the price; despite being extremely well made, it's a phenomenal amount of money.

Contact: www.dragginjeans.net

Quality: ★★★★★ **Value:** ★★★★★



Auritech custom earplugs, £119



Tester: Andy Downes

Time tested: One month/1500 miles

What's good? This is my first set of custom earplugs and, once I learnt how to fit them snugly, I'm a total convert. The ceramic filter insert – the bit that cuts out the damaging sound waves – also allows you to hear sounds without the muffling you get from foam, so I can hear my helmet communication system better. They are super-comfortable, too.

What's not? The cost is significant and is the same as buying 1000 pairs of foam plugs. However, having tried both, I can see why anyone riding high miles would splash out.

Contact: www.auritech.info

Quality rating: ★★★★★ **Value rating:** ★★★★★



Segura Tom textile jacket, £199.99



Tester Simon Brown

Time tested Three months/2000 miles

What's good? It's the retro looks and snug fit that made me go for the Segura. Most of my miles in it have been commuting during spring and early summer and I've not had any water come through so far, while the removable lining has kept me warm on colder trips. There is CE-approved shoulder and elbow armour and loops to attach the jacket to a belt on your jeans.
What's not? A lack of vents mean warm days can be clammy, even with the lining removed. Also, there's no zip to connect to leather jeans and there's no back protector – although there is a pocket to take one.

Contact: www.tranam.co.uk

Quality rating: ★★★★★ **Value:** ★★★★★