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LAUGHLIN RIVER RUN 2003



PRODUCT REVIEW

Keepin' it cool— Silver Eagle Outfitters Cooling Garments

Silver Eagle Outfitters
Huntsville, Alabama, U.S.A.
Classic Rider's Cooling Vest \$85
Cooling Do-Rag \$15
Cooling Baseball Cap \$16

Reviewed by Roland Haug

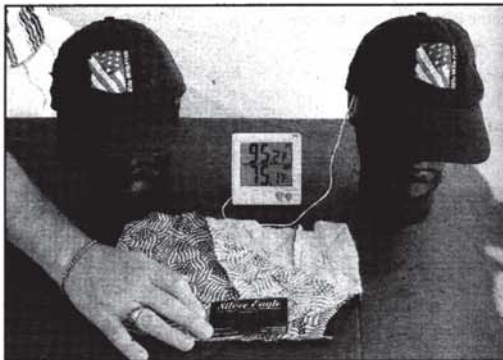
Just the other day I was watching a show about how NASA's space suits are constructed. The bulky ensemble is filled with thick insulation, with miles of tubing running through the garments and a backpack unit that switches from cooling to heating as temperatures fluctuate from hundreds of degrees above to hundreds below zero in a matter of seconds.

Watching the show, I realised that some of the technology that has been put into these life-sustaining apparatuses has trickled down into the public sector, picked up by the clothing industry. A range of new and innovative fabrics over the years has changed the motorcycle rag trade. From multiple layers and different weaves we can ride dry, warm or cool just by picking the right garment.

Keepin' it cool and staying warm is what it's all about on a motorcycle, and Silver Eagle Outfitters has come up with a unique layering of space-age materials to combat the elements. They have taken AquaTex Industry's Hydroweave, which incorporates DuPont's Supplex and Cordura, and have put them into their products.

"Add H₂O and Go," is one of Silver Eagle's slogans. Inject 16 ounces of water in the supplied plastic charge bag, wait 5–15 minutes and the garment of choice is ready to wear. With near-100 degree temperatures baking us at Arizona Bike Week, I opted for their second method of charging the clothing items—douse them in a sink, gently wring them out, slip them on and cool is your middle name.

Hydroweave's patented three-layer system combines special hydrophilic fibers (ones that attract water) and hydrophobic fibers (ones that repel water) into a fibrous batting core called PolySorb. This combo layer is then sandwiched between a breathable outer shell fabric and a thermally conductive inner



Cooler heads prevail in this test

liner. This combination separates the moisture from the rider, and acts as a conduit, exchanging heat generated by the rider with the cooler temperatures held in the garment.

When I picked up the evaluation clothing I received 12 pages of information all tucked neatly into a

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folder with numerous facts, figures, graphs, charts and research results. I've gone to motorcycle press launches and gotten less informative material. I found that AquaTex Industries, along with DuPont and Silver Eagle Outfitters, ran a gamut of tests, and also hired independent laboratories that are experts in the field of heat stress.

Auburn University's Department of Health and Human Performance and Thermal Lab conducted a barrage of tests and concluded that Hydroweave clothing reduced test subjects' dehydration by 21 percent, and body temperatures ran 0.6 degrees cooler. Endurance increased by 16.4 percent, cooler skin temperature was noted and subjects perceived work trials to be less stressful when wearing the Silver Eagle garments.

As we know, charts and graphs sometimes don't translate into the real world. The dry heat of Arizona, along with the backdrop of Arizona Bike Week, would be the true test. With the mercury hovering at the 100 degree mark I picked up the garments, charged them and took a walk. Getting weird looks from leather-clad poseurs who had escaped to the shade of vendors' tents, I strutted about like a pretty peacock in my fashionable new vest and do-rag. "Hey, this is what it must be like to be a poseur," I said to myself.

Walking around the festival grounds, the vest stayed charged, keeping me cool for two hours, while riding dropped the vest's ability to one hour. The wind generated from cutting through the air on a motorcycle compared to walking made a considerable difference. Walking, I was cool as a cucumber. Riding, I was cool as a refrigerated cucumber.

The do-rag in the desert sun lost its charge quickly, in about an hour, but with it recharged and a helmet on it lasted considerably longer. Oddly enough, Silver Eagle's baseball-



Roland chillin' in his new vest and do-rag

styled cap lasted much longer. My hypothesis for this is the beak and its support band somehow retained the moisture longer and kept charging the Hydroweave, but I don't have any charts or graphs to prove it.

Humidity plays a crucial role in charge times. Areas with high humidity increase the time between charges.

After riding in the heat for two days I was thoroughly impressed with the cooling ability of Silver Eagle Outfitters' products, but what really surprised me about the apparel happened on the return trip to Canada.

I wore the vest and do-rag into Oregon, where the temperatures dropped to 50 degrees. Stopping to fuel up, I was careful not to pull the wire plug from my electric vest. Then it hit me: "Hey, you're not wearing your electric vest." It was so warm I stuck my rather cool hands under my vest to warm them after refuelling.

Using technology handed down from NASA, we can ride the outer fringes of the thermometer—hence the new term cyclenauts.

For more info about Silver Eagle Outfitters visit: www.silvereagleoutfitters.com. ♦