

Roadgear Cocona Socks

ATTENDING MOTORCYCLE SHOWS without taking a stroll by the Roadgear booth is like visiting Paris and skipping the Eiffel Tower. Checking in with Mansoor Shafi is a required stop. A dedicated rider himself, Shafi is passionate about finding products that enhance the riding experience. Short, with dark flashing eyes and a quick smile, Shafi never seems to stop moving. At a recent show he put some socks in my hand while simultaneously helping a customer try on a jacket and ringing up a sale for another. "Here, you can wear these for 10 days in a row, never wash them, and they won't stink," he told me. "Sure, right!" I thought. Although Shafi is typically reliable, I found this claim incredible. He went on, "And after you do wash them, just put them in the dryer on high and they'll reset."

Okay, I was intrigued. Socks, along with underwear, take up a good bit of travel space on multi-day trips. Any opportunity to save a bit of room is highly desirable. Who wouldn't welcome having to pack only one or two pairs of socks for a two-week trip? Would they really work? Wouldn't they reek after extended, day-in, day-out boot confinement, without washing? We set up a totally unscientific test to find out.

On a recent seven-day ride, I recruited three volunteers to join me in wearing their favorite sock on one foot and the new "coconut" sock on the other, washing neither sock for the full seven days of our trip. We kept notes on sweat elimination, odor resistance, comfort and general feel. To move the test beyond pure anecdotal reports, we submitted the socks to nightly blind "sniff tests," to make sure we had no cheating. Sniffing the bouquet of someone else's dirty socks is clearly beyond the call of duty, so let no MCN subscriber doubt the lengths we go here in service to our readers! Testers in this case made me swear not to reveal their names and if I did, promised they would kill me.

Technically, what makes these socks work, according to the manufacturer, is a fabric content of 48% Cocona. Cocona fiber is a waste byproduct taken from discarded coconut shells, infused with activated carbon and blended into a yarn which is then used to make the socks. The socks also contain



Spandex, nylon, silver yarn and a good bit of cotton.

Test Results

With the caveat that this seven-day test was not done in very hot weather, and this one fact may have led to very different results, every tester came away impressed with these socks. Two testers compared them with a standard cotton athletic sock, and reported that Cocona trounced the cotton. It wasn't only that they had no seriously objectionable odor (while the cotton socks

began getting rancid on day three), it was that the life seemed to go out of the cotton socks. On repeated wearing without washing, the cotton socks did not hold their shape or elasticity and tended to slip down in the boot; not so with the Cocona socks, which appeared (and smelled) on day four and five, just about like day one.

Our other two testers contrasted them with TechSox which we've reported on before (MCN, Nov. 2006, Holiday Buyers Guide). While we still like the TechSox a lot and they clearly overwhelmed the plain cotton socks, they gave out after three days on the odor tests. According to one pedantic, MIT-schooled chemical engineer, it is quite likely that the small amount of activated carbon blended with the yarn has a good deal to do with pulling moisture away from the skin and into the fabric where it can evaporate. The carbon also absorbs odor molecules and traps those odors in the pores of the carbon. Washing the socks and then drying them on high heat should, in theory, release the odor and renew the carbon.

Summary

These socks worked as claimed, for us, at least for seven days. They're comfortable and seem to effectively fight odor. We were also happy to see that the magic fiber is not some combination of complex chemicals, but natural and eco-friendly.

—Steve Larsen

Roadgear, Inc.—206 W Elgin Drive, Pueblo West, CO 81007; 800-854-4327; www.roadgear.com Price: \$19.95; Sizes: men 8-15 and women: 7-10. Color: Army Green.