

TESTED

## SHOEI VFX-W Helmet

**\$480** (est. street price)

**CONTACT** [www.shoei-helmets.com](http://www.shoei-helmets.com)

**THE GOODS** The new VFX-W helmet is Shoei's latest off-road helmet. The helmet features a new shell design that incorporates a unique two-piece, dual-layer EPS liner. The two-piece liner features a softer EPS liner closer to the rider's head while a stiffer EPS liner closer to the helmet shell backs it up. This design allowed Shoei engineers to fine-tune the stiffness of the EPS liner throughout the interior of the helmet to accommodate varying rider head sizes.

In addition to the unique liner, the helmet also has a host of other noteworthy features: the EPS liner has special channels that route cooling air through the helmet interior; an Emergency Quick Release System allows quick and easy removal of cheek pads to speed helmet removal by emergency medical personnel if necessary; an impact-absorbing EPS liner is found in the chin bar for added protection; four different shell sizes and five liner sizes are used in combination to yield appropriate fit and sizing to suit a wide range of riders; all interior pads and chin strap covers are removable and washable; Shoei's 3-D Max-Dry system easily absorbs and quickly dissipates moisture twice as rapidly as standard nylon for a cooler, drier ride; the VFX-W comes with a larger eye port and goggle-strap retention system; a ventilated mouthpiece with a protective, reinforced mesh screen plus a removable/washable filter helps provide more cooling airflow to the rider.

**THE VERDICT** Every VFX-W is handmade in Shoei's factory in Japan, and the overall quality shows that this is in fact a hand-finished product. A number of staff members at *Quad Magazine* regularly wear Shoei helmets because of the high quality fit and finish, so we were more than happy to log in some miles out on the trail in their newest lid. Unfortunately, it's been colder than usual, but we weren't going to let that stop us from getting in some seat time (at least it would be interesting to see how the vents worked with the cold air).

We ordered a medium-size lid. Compared to other industry "mediums," the Shoei felt a little on the tight side. It wasn't necessarily uncomfortable, just tighter than others. The cheek pads are stout! Once you slip the helmet on, you can easily tell that Shoei didn't skimp when it comes to adding a ton of padding inside the helmet shell (a welcomed touch). We did notice that the helmet seemed to vent well—this is something we'll probably appreciate more in the summer than winter. By no means were we uncomfortably cold when using this helmet, but there's no way to close the vents at all. This really isn't much of a big deal at all unless you ride in sub-arctic conditions all the time...

After we rode for a few hours, we went back home and cleaned all the mud and grime off the helmet and took out all the pads and washed them (to see how easy they popped out). The pads remove easily and dry up fairly fast, too.

Overall, we got what we expected from the VFX-W: it's a comfortably fitting helmet of the highest quality. The larger lens port was well received, as well. We tried a number of different goggle combinations with the helmet and didn't have a fit issue with anything we tried. Thankfully we haven't had to rely on its safety features yet, but we feel comfortable (figuratively and literally) knowing this lid is strapped to our semi-hollow noggin.

⊕ **HITS** *Comfortable, handmade, top-of-the-line off-road gear.*

⊖ **MISSES** *Expensive (but high quality).* ⊗

**RATING** ★★★★★

