

GEARLAB

Shoei Qwest Helmet

SHOEI'S LINEUP OF FULL-FACE STREET HELMETS HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE: X-TWELVE FOR TRACK ADDICTS, RF-1100 FOR SPORT-TOURING RIDERS, MULTITEC FOR FANS OF FLIP-UPS AND HORNET DS FOR DUAL-SPORT RIDERS. THIS NEW HELMET, THE QWEST, WAS DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY FOR TOURING RIDERS.

Compared to the RF-1100 (*Rider*, January 2010), the Qwest is heavier (59.2 oz. vs. 56 oz.) and has fewer vents, but it's quieter and is \$30-\$50 less expensive, depending on paint/graphics. On the street, a few extra ounces won't contribute noticeably to fatigue; with the helmet on, I couldn't detect the 5.7 percent difference in weight. But a quieter helmet can greatly reduce fatigue, as well as the risk of hearing loss. Extensive wind-tunnel testing allowed Shoei to refine the aerodynamic shape of the shell and how the helmet seals around the lower part of the rider's head, reducing audible wind noise by a claimed 2.2 decibels—60 percent quieter than its other models, according to Shoei. Around town, on a Ducati Multistrada 1200 with stock windscreen and barky exhaust, the Qwest was acceptably quiet. But out on the highway, wind noise was an issue unless I wore earplugs. Of course, this is true of any helmet on almost any bike; I simply can't ride very long at speeds over 50 mph without earplugs.

Ventilation comes courtesy of a good-sized chinbar vent (with a large, easy-to-adjust shutter), a single top-of-head vent and two back-of-the-head exhaust vents. The latter are built into a subtle, integrated rear spoiler that takes advantage of negative pressure to extract hot, humid air. Airflow felt adequate to me, but one tester remarked that the Qwest feels warmer than other Shoei helmets.

The AIM+ shell, which combines fiberglass with organic fibers, is DOT and Snell M2010 approved. The shell also comes in five different sizes to accommodate the full XXS-XXL range of helmet sizes. Introduced on the RF-1100, the Qwest also features the patented Quick Release Self-Adjusting (QRSA) base plate system, which uses a spring-loaded design to ensure a tight seal between the face shield and eye port bead. Shield changes are a cinch, and the scratch-resistant CW-1 shield blocks 99 percent of UV rays (an optional Pinlock-equipped anti-fog shield is available).



I'm fortunate that just about any medium-sized helmet fits my melon. The Qwest fits me perfectly and comfortably, as do other Shoei helmets. The liner is plush, removable and washable; cheek pads of various thicknesses are available for best fit. Retention is by way of tried-and-true D-rings, with a handy snap to keep the long end of the strap from flapping around. A chin curtain helps keep cold air from entering below the chinbar; I always toss those because I get claustrophobic without fresh air flowing in from below the chinbar.

Being geared toward touring riders, who are known for maturity and refined taste, the Qwest is available in solids (\$349.99), metallics (\$369.99) or pleasantly adorned with stylish but understated graphics (\$469.99). **Greg Drevenstedt**

For more information:

See your motorcycle dealer or visit
www.shoei-helmets.com