

SHOEI X-TWELVE HELMET



THE REPLACEMENT FOR SHOEI'S PREVIOUS TOP-OF-THE-LINE X-ELEVEN helmet, the new X-Twelve is intended to improve upon one of the best hard-core sport/racing helmets on the market, and one of the *SR* staff's favorite lids. As far as venting, the X-Eleven was easily the benchmark in our experience, and one of the most aerodynamically stable helmets on the market; improving upon it would be no easy task.

The X-Twelve uses Shoei's AIM+ fiber technology that is claimed to produce a lighter and stronger helmet shell, now configured to meet the new Snell 2010 standards. A new, larger plastic spoiler adorns the rear of the X-Twelve, and the new shell-forming technology developed by the company and also used on the new RF-1100 allows the X-Twelve to come in an industry-leading five different shell sizes to cover the range of head sizes from XS to XXXL.

The new X-Twelve also incorporates Shoei's new patented QRSA (Quick Release Self-Adjusting) base plate system that pulls the shield evenly against the helmet's eyepoint seal once the shield is in the closed position, ensuring a wind and waterproof seal. The new wider and taller CW-1 faceshield is also used on the X-Twelve (with a likewise larger eyepoint); an additional benefit is that the new CWF-1 racing faceshields with tearoff buttons can be used without requiring readjustment. Plus, the CWF-1's new tearoff buttons permit tearoff tension to be adjusted without tools. Both shields are also available with Shoei's optional

Pinlock inner lens fog-free system, utilizing a new design that now sits above the upper edge of the eyepoint so that it no longer obscures vision as with the previous version.

Shoei engineers made use of the company's wind tunnel to design the new X-Twelve's ventilation system, with a total of five intake and 10 exhaust vents making the X-Twelve the most aggressively ventilated helmet the company has ever produced. New side extractor vents (with development help by the company's MotoGP racing service) help clear warm, humid air from the racer's face to increase comfort and reduce fogging. Working with the new ventilation system is a fully removable, washable, and replaceable 3D Max Dry liner, claimed to absorb and dissipate sweat two times faster than traditional nylon interiors. Cheek pads are available in variable thicknesses to allow riders to customize the fit of their new helmet, with the liner featuring eyeglass channels and an integrated neck pad.

Shoei also equipped the X-Twelve with its EQRS (Emergency Quick Release System) that allows emergency medical personnel to easily remove the cheek pads from an injured rider's helmet. Pulling on bright red tabs next to the cheekpads pops them free, enabling the helmet to be more easily removed from an injured rider's head.

As with the new RF-1100, the QRSA base plate system is the most noticeable improvement to the new X-Twelve. Changing shields without having to readjust the base plates for an optimum seal is a major convenience, and helps make the helmet quieter (although the number of vents still generate considerable wind noise when open—that said, the helmet is intended for racing, so noise was not a primary consideration), as well as reducing bothersome drafts in the facial area. Swapping faceshields is still as easy as ever; pushing down on a lever releases the existing faceshield, and then simply lining up and pushing down snaps the next faceshield into place.

Aerodynamics are excellent, with the X-Twelve demonstrating stability and an absence of buffeting and lift at speed that is lacking in other helmets. Some helmets have numerous spoilers and wings to resist lift but aren't as clean aerodynamically, resulting in some buffeting and strain on the rider's neck.

As far as ventilation, a slight improvement over the previous benchmark X-Eleven can be felt in the lower portion of the rider's head, but everywhere else feels about the same. It's definitely not a dramatic, night-and-day difference—but then again, the fact that Shoei engineers were able to improve on the X-Eleven's outstanding cooling properties with the X-Twelve while still meeting helmet safety standards can be considered an achievement.

The Shoei X-Twelve is backed by a five-year warranty, and is available in solid colors for \$649.99, metallic colors for \$659.99, and various graphics for \$769.99.

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