

Schuberth C3 Modular Helmet Test

by Dave Searle

SCHUBERTH'S IMMINENT RETURN to the US was known before we published our comprehensive modular helmet comparison in the October 2010 MCN. We'd contacted their German home office well in advance, hoping to include the new C3 in our test, but, ultimately, it wasn't possible. Schuberth was distributed in the US previously by Fairchild Sports before that company ceased all of its distribution efforts in 2006, disappointing both Schuberth's marketing efforts and its stateside customers, who lost parts and service backup. Determined to avoid any such situation in the future, Schuberth is now handling its own distribution, its new US headquarters located in Aliso Viejo, California. With nearly 80 years of experience manufacturing helmets for virtually every application from industry to Formula One racing (it's the helmet choice of Ferrari), the C3 will be its initial US offering.

After wearing the new C3 (in XL size, which uses a larger shell than XXS-L) for approximately 1000 miles to determine its subjective comfort and functional ratings, we subjected it to the exact same tests as the 12 helmets in our big comparison. Note that the ratings for Weight, Vertical Field of Vision, Peripheral Vision, Aerodynamics (based on frontal area), and Value are comparative, relative to its competition. To determine our Value rating, a helmet's price is averaged against its total score in all the other categories. Thus, despite its superlative showing, the C3 has a Value score of zero because the Schuberth is by far the most expensive, priced at \$699 suggested retail. It also lost four points for water leakage on the sides of the faceshield. (Although this might well be correctable, we scored exactly what we received.) However, if you can wrap your head around its high price (or rather the other

way around) it actually outscored all its competitors with a total of 117 points, winning the comparison overall and earning our coveted Recommended rating!

As the only helmet in the modular category made in Germany, not surprisingly, it has long been favored by owners of BMWs, and Schuberth has also manufactured the various BMW System helmets (to BMW's specifications), which are not sold in the US.

If any single feature stands out, it is the helmet's absence of noise. Schuberth claims the wearer is exposed to just 84 dB at 62 mph, and we don't doubt this is true. In fact, it is the only helmet we've tested that could realistically be worn without ear plugs. The ventilation system is also exceptional and immediately noticeable as the bike begins to move. Further, the range of both vertical and peripheral vision is also very good, making the helmet a realistic choice for riders of sport or sport-touring mounts as well as upright models. Schuberth is also unique in offering a lady's model, designed for a female's typically narrower facial structure. The \$399 Cardo-designed headset (below) quickly installs in place of the helmet's neck roll and can be used for everything from iPod music to telephone communications, but we felt it did reduce comfort around the neck.

Best of all, with the excellent engineering demonstrated by its showing in our non-destructive testing, we can reasonably expect that its head protection is also exemplary.



Schuberth C3

MCN RECOMMENDED

Price \$699.00



SPECIFICATIONS

Sizes Available: XXS-XXL
 Certification: DOT and ECE 22.05
 Strap system: Ratcheting buckle
 Flip Face retention system: One-button release, metal-on-metal
 Faceshield retention system: 5-position, quick-release
 Sunshade: Variable position
 Weight: 3 lbs., 14.4 oz.
 Measured Frontal Area: 108.3 sq. in.
 Eyeport Viewing Restrictions: Vertical: 24°; Peripheral: 224°
 Faceshield cost: from \$89-\$129
 Made in: Germany

Notes: Complex laminate construction. Remarkably light, the fit was comfortable from the start. Its ratcheting buckle is our favorite retention system type. The sun visor is variable position; works smoothly, with no nose interference. Reflective patches aid conspicuity. The vertical field of view is very good, and peripheral vision is excellent. Venting is exceptionally good. A pin-lock, anti-fog visor is standard, although we found its edges a bit visually distracting. The flip-face locks easily with the helmet in your lap, but often required several tries to lock on the head. The absence of noise is the best we've tested, it's almost eerie with earplugs.

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Ratings:

Weight:.....	●●●●○
Vertical Field of Vision:.....	●●●●○
Peripheral Vision:.....	●●●●●
Flip Face Mechanism:.....	●●●●●
Visor Adjust Mechanism:.....	●●●●●
Visor(s) Optical Clarity:.....	●●●●●
Visor Rain Sealing:.....	●●●○○
Sun Shade/Mechanism:.....	●●●●●
Retention System Ease.....	●●●●●
Aerodynamics:.....	●●●○○
Ventilation:.....	●●●●●
Cleanability:.....	●●●●●
Interior Comfort:.....	●●●●●
Value:.....	○○○○○
Overall Score.....	117 points