

Product Comparison

The North Face VaporWick Tee

\$28



Appearance	●●●●●	Durability	●●●○○	Value	●●●○○
Cut/Comfort	●●●●●	Effectiveness	●●●●●	Total	21

Notes: Initially, this was a standout favorite due to the relatively thick fabric's rich, cushiony, luxurious feel. However, despite the garment's sturdy construction (i.e. reinforced seams), the 100% polyester fabric proved rather vulnerable to routine hazards. It was by far the most likely to snag a rough fingernail or develop a pulled thread from leaning against or brushing by a coarse surface. And it showed the most noticeable pilling (though still minor) of any shirt in this group after several wear/wash cycles. Sizing is average and fit is very comfortable. Available in a wide range of colors. If you won't be exposing this shirt to scratchy surfaces (don't forget the Velcro on your riding gear), or if you couldn't care less about maintaining its original appearance, this is a very functional and extremely comfortable piece of gear, at a not-quite-terrible price. However, we're reluctant to recommend it because it's just too expensive and too fragile for the rigors of riding.

The North Face, Inc.—www.thenorthface.com; 2013 Farillon Dr., San Leandro, CA 94577; (800) 447-2333.

Patagonia Capilene Lightweight Long-Sleeve Crew

\$32



Appearance	●●●●○	Durability	●●●●●	Value	●●●○○
Cut/Comfort	●●●●●	Effectiveness	●●●●●	Total	23

Notes: Definitely the most silk-like of all the fabrics reviewed here, the tightly woven Capilene used in this shirt is amazingly thin and smooth. It's made of 57% spun polyester and 43% microdenier polyester, and is almost sheer when held up to a light source. Detailing is very refined. No pilling was visible after several wear/wash cycles. Like the Ex Officio shirt, this one really showcases the technological superiority of synthetics over cotton, with outstanding airflow (the most here) and moisture-wicking capabilities. Sizing is a bit on the large side, and effective wicking is possible only when capillary material is in contact with skin, so those who fall on the border between sizes will probably want to go with the smaller option. Also, with any long-sleeve model, excess length in the arms leads to bunching, which in turn partially defeats the purpose of using long sleeves to begin with. Fit is very comfortable, and there's no tag at the neckline. Available in black, gray, blue and green. Recommended highly for riding, although it ranks higher in quality than in value.

Patagonia—www.patagonia.com; 8550 White Fir St., P.O. Box 32050, Reno, NV 89523; (800) 638-6464.



Appearance	●●●○○	Durability	●●●○○	Value	●●●●●
Cut/Comfort	●●●○○	Effectiveness	●●●○○	Total	17

Notes: Developed specifically for motorcycling, this one was an obvious choice for our sampling. Although its 100% polyester fabric is noticeably coarser on the outside, inside, it is as smooth and silky as any of the others. Note that it has a mock turtle neckline, which none of the others have; that's either an asset or a liability, depending on personal taste. This shirt evidenced significant vulnerability to snagging (though not as much as the one from The North Face), and the sleeve ends were quickly defiled by accidental contact with jacket cuff Velcro tabs. The other shirts, being short-sleeved, didn't get this sort of abuse. It also held wrinkles the most of this bunch. The level of construction is definitely lower than that of the more expensive shirts in this review—it does, after all, have a low price point—but functionally it works well in allowing air flow and transporting moisture. Sizing is average, fit is unremarkable, and you'll probably want to cut out the stiff neck tag. Available in a wide range of colors. We'd recommend it for riding, especially in terms of value.

RideHide—www.ridehide.com; P.O. Box 855, Oaks, PA 19456; (484) 433-6802.



Appearance	●●●○○	Durability	●●●●●	Value	●●●●○
Cut/Comfort	●●●○○	Effectiveness	●●●○○	Total	19

Notes: Think of this one as the middle ground between the bargain basement model from DuoFold and the super value play by Columbia. This Wickers item is a no-frills model, like the DuoFold; but it's definitely a step up in terms of appearance and feel. Some will consider it too plain for use beyond underwear. The 100% polyester fabric has a cotton-like texture almost as plush as the Columbia's, and it's better tailored than the DuoFold (less boxy). Very minor pilling is barely visible after several wear/wash cycles. Sizing is average. Available in black, white, gray, green and blue. We'd definitely recommend it for riding, especially if you buy several and get the better price (\$16/each if you buy three or more). But if you're going to buy just one, go ahead and spring for the Columbia.

Wickers America, Inc.—www.wickers.com; 340 Veterans Hwy., Commack, NY 11728; (800) 648-7024.