

TechNiche Hyperkewl Evaporative Cooling Sport Vest

September 21, 2010 by **Greg Drevenstedt - Road Test Editor, Rider Magazine**



In his “Road Tales” column for our upcoming December issue, Clement Salvadori waxes poetically about riding in bitter cold or oppressively hot weather, neither of which he enjoys. Since that issue will come out in late October, when the mercury will drop along with autumn leaves, Clem focuses primarily on the virtues of heated grips and apparel.

He was in the office earlier this week to pick up the Honda VFR1200F DCT, and he complained about how unseasonably cold it was on his ride down to Ventura. His clapped-out Yamaha Seca lacks heated grips, and Clem didn’t think he needed his heated vest. It has been a bizarre summer. Thanks to the **El Niño Southern Oscillation**, most days we’ve been socked in with fog—known locally as the “marine layer”—and

morning temperatures are often in the low 50s. But travel inland just a few miles, say, to Ojai, and the weather can be dramatically different, with clear blue skies and temperatures in the 90s or 100s. Welcome to the world of micro-climates.



Last month I attended the 2011 Victory Motorcycles press launch in Gateway, Colorado, a bend in the road (CO 141) that goes through a stunning red rock canyon near the Utah border. After a day of riding Victory’s 2011 lineup of bikes, I rode a shiny blue Cross Country back to Ventura, through Utah, Nevada and California. Knowing that the desert would be sweltering in August, before my trip I called up **TechNiche** and ordered its **HyperKewl Evaporative Cooling Sport Vest** (model 6529).

This lightweight, washable, V-neck vest is made of a quilted nylon outer layer and TechNiche’s Hyperkewl polymer-embedded fabric inside. It is trimmed in black cotton-polyester elastic with a zipper closure. TechNiche’s Hyperkewl vest is thin and not

bulky, designed to fit over a shirt and under your riding jacket.

Before your ride, just fill a sink with cool water and hold the vest beneath the surface for a couple of minutes. The Hyperkewl fabric soaks up and retains water like a sponge or diaper—it absorbs water quickly and then releases it slowly through evaporation. Squeeze the excess water out of the vest so it doesn’t drip all over the floor and then put it on. Of course, it feels awkward to don a cold,

waterlogged garment (it weighs up to 1.5 pounds after soaking), but relief is immediate on a hot day. The evaporative cooling vest will work under any jacket, but a mesh or vented jacket will provide the best results since more air flow means better evaporation. For this trip, I wore the all-mesh **Tour Master Intake Air Series 2 Jacket** (MSRP \$179.99).

Leaving Gateway early one morning, I wished I had waited to soak the TechNiche vest in a gas station bathroom after the sun had heated up the day. Avoid wearing an **evaporative cooling vest** soaked with water if you may end up riding from hot to cold weather, such as over a high-altitude pass. Hypothermia is pernicious; if it gets cold, stop immediately and put the Hyperkewl vest in a saddlebag.

Riding through the Colorado National Monument near Grand Junction, and then across Utah on stunningly beautiful Interstate 70, temperatures reached the mid-90s. After dodging cold rain on the morning of the second day (I opted not to soak the Hyperkewl vest and instead wore it dry like a quilted liner), I continued on to southern Utah where things started to heat up. At a gas stop, I soaked the TechNiche vest in the bathroom sink. After plunging down through the Virgin River Canyon, I entered

Nevada. The Victory Cross Country’s ambient temperature gauge stayed above 100 degrees F across the entire state.

TechNiche claims the Hyperkewl evaporative cooling vest is good for “5-10 hours of cooling relief.” As with anything, that depends on conditions. Riding at 70-85mph through arid deserts where humidity is minimal and temperatures reached 109F in the Mojave, I re-soaked the vest at every gas stop—the vest was bone dry after just a couple of hours. But, if you’re riding in less hot, less dry conditions wearing a jacket that isn’t mesh, you’ll likely get more mileage out of each soaking.



Having ridden in sweltering conditions without an evaporative cooling vest, I can attest that TechNiche's Hyperkewl vest provided



remarkable relief. I never got that scary throbbing-head, cold-chills sensation that is the precursor to heat exhaustion. Sure, my head was sweaty in my helmet, but I tied a water-soaked bandana around my neck and kept my Camelbak hydration pack filled with ice water and took sips regularly. My lips got wicked chapped, but my core stayed cool and I stayed comfortable. My only complaint about the TechNiche vest is that the outer fabric got a bit frayed from rubbing against the inside of my mesh jacket.

The TechNiche Hyperkewl Evaporative Cooling Sport Vest comes in many colors/patterns: Silver, Black, Royal Blue, Hi Viz Lime, Khaki, USA Flag, Army ACU Digitized Green and Marine Desert; and many sizes: XS, S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, 5-6yrs old, 7-9 yrs old, 10-12 yrs old, and custom sizes are available. MSRP is \$36.99. It is also available in a deluxe version and with removable sleeves. Available from authorized motorcycle dealerships and online retailers; order online from www.staywarm-staycool.com or www.ridecool.com. For information on TechNiche's entire line of cooling apparel, warming apparel and other products, visit www.techniche-intl.com.

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