

Product Comparison

Nolan N100 Total Score: 34.0 \$199.95

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|---------|-------|----------|-------|--------------|-------|----------|-------|
| Comfort | ●●●●○ | Chinbar | ●●●●○ | Visor/Vision | ●●●●○ | Features | ●●●●○ |
| Venting | ●●●●○ | Retainer | ●●●●○ | Weight | ●●●●○ | Value | ●●●●○ |



Weight: 3 lbs., 8.5 oz. **Replacement shields:** \$22.95–\$49.95
Notes: The Nolan N100 earns MCN's "Best Buy" rating by virtue of its better-than-average scores in every category, coupled with the second-lowest price of the group. The lining is removable and washable, and treated with an anti-microbial agent to prevent mildew. Field of vision is the widest of all models tested, and it is one of only two modulars that can be easily removed from the head with the chinbar in place (which could be very important if the latching mechanism is damaged in an accident). Chinbar latches are steel-on-steel and successfully resisted every attempt to force them apart. The chinbar hinge system is articulated, so it can be raised fully without carrying the weight too far back on your head. The quick-disconnect strap retainer adjusts easily into six different positions, and the faceshield seals securely and is easily replaced without tools. Venting is good, but the top vents are difficult to operate with gloves on. Also, the retaining snaps on the lining would often come loose when removing the helmet.
CIMA International; (630) 690-3162; www.nolan.it

Schuberth Concept One Total Score: 31.0 \$399.00

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| Comfort | ●●●●○ | Chinbar | ●●●●○ | Visor/Vision | ●●●●○ | Features | ●●●●○ |
| Venting | ●●●●○ | Retainer | ●●●●○ | Weight | ●●●●○ | Value | ●●●●○ |



Weight: 3 lbs., 15.2 oz. **Replacement shields:** \$50.95
Notes: Schuberth is the manufacturer of the famous "System" helmets distributed by BMW. The Concept One is an excellent quality helmet with a myriad of innovative features that would have easily earned our top honors if not for its weight (nearly a half-pound heavier than the others) and price (second-highest). It also lost a point for the chinstrap latch which, though strong and durable, is a real pain to operate. Among the pluses, though: A removable, washable lining that is available in three different sizes; the strongest, pin-lock steel, chinbar latch of the group (with one-hand operation); a built-in, flip-down sun visor; a medic-alert info. container on the outer shell; quick-disconnect, no-tools faceshield system, with special venting positions on top; and an aerodynamic lip on top that reduces buffeting and lift. Field of vision is second only to the Nolan, but somewhat restricted in the top view, which could be a problem for sportbike riders. Vents are easy to operate and highly-functional. Faceshield seal and optical quality are first-rate.
Intersport Fashions West; (714) 258-2120; www.schuberth-helme.de

HJC SY-MAX Total Score: 27.5 \$207.99

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| Comfort | ●●●●○ | Chinbar | ●●●●○ | Visor/Vision | ●●●●○ | Features | ●●●●○ |
| Venting | ●●●●○ | Retainer | ●●●●○ | Weight | ●●●●○ | Value | ●●●●○ |



Weight: 3 lbs., 9.3 oz. **Replacement shields:** \$24.95–\$29.95
Notes: HJC's SY-MAX modular offers a removable and washable lining (at today's helmet prices, we can't imagine being without this option anymore), and probably the best quick-release, no-tools faceshield replacement system of the group. The chinbar operating system—a single button operated with one hand—is the easiest to operate of all the helmets tested. Unfortunately, the latching mechanisms are simple plastic catches, and though they seem to be the strongest of all the plastic latches we tested, we'd still prefer to see steel construction in this critical area. The SY-MAX was the only modular besides the Nolan that could be easily removed with the chinbar in place, and also scored highly for noise abatement and general comfort level. The field of vision was superior to all the others at the top and bottom, but below average to the sides. Faceshield sealing and optical quality were excellent, and venting about average. The chinstrap is retained with D-rings, but they are squared-off and machined to a much higher quality than normal D-rings.
HJC America; (562) 407-2186; www.HJChelmets.com

Caberg Arrow Total Score: 25.5 \$199.00

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| Comfort | ●●●●○ | Chinbar | ●●●●○ | Visor/Vision | ●●●●○ | Features | ●●●●○ |
| Venting | ●●●●○ | Retainer | ●●●●○ | Weight | ●●●●○ | Value | ●●●●○ |



Weight: 3 lbs., 8.0 oz. **Replacement shields:** \$19.95
Notes: Manufactured by Caberg, the Arrow has sold in Europe for years as the "Airoh." Just recently introduced into the US by Giali, the Arrow meets the strict European EC 22-04 safety standards. The shell is polycarbonate and the lining is made of CoolMax, with removable cheekpads. The faceshield seals exceptionally well, and the unique shape of the face opening gives good side vision and the best lower vision of the group, but very restricted top vision. Faceshield removal requires a screwdriver or coin. While the chinbar latching mechanism seems very strong, it is made of plastic, and so loses some points here, even though it operates easily with a single release button. There are two separate top vents, each easily adjustable with gloved hands to three different positions. The chinbar air dam was the least intrusive of the group, and the chinbar itself sticks out farther, giving more room in front of your mouth and nose. Aerodynamics and noise abatement are both above average, and we have to mention that the fit and finish were noticeably excellent.
Giali Apparel; (919) 787-5624; www.giali.com

Shoei Syncrotec Total Score: 27.5 \$415.99

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| Comfort | ●●●●○ | Chinbar | ●●●●○ | Visor/Vision | ●●●●○ | Features | ●●●●○ |
| Venting | ●●●●○ | Retainer | ●●●●○ | Weight | ●●●●○ | Value | ●●●●○ |



Weight: 3 lbs., 9.9 oz. **Replacement shields:** \$28.00–\$57.00
Notes: It is good to see that Shoei has made significant improvements to their Syncrotec model, but unfortunately it still fell slightly short of making the cut for a "Recommended" rating, due to its price—the highest of all the modulars tested. Still, we gave it an extra point for value, due to its five-year warranty (compared to one-year for the others). The one-handed chinbar latching system is a pin-lock steel arrangement, only slightly less hefty than the Schuberth, and the helmet *could* be removed with the chinbar down, though it was difficult and painful to do so. The faceshield is removable without tools, and has good optical quality, but the field of vision is somewhat restricted at the top, and the worst of the lot at the bottom. Controls for both the top and bottom vents are tiny, and difficult to operate with gloves on. Faceshield seal is excellent, and noise abatement good. The lining, while comfortable, is not removable for cleaning or replacement. Chinstrap retention is normal D-rings, but a clip on the end of the strap is troublesome.
Shoei Safety Helmet Corp.; (714) 730-0941; www.shoei-helmets.com

Lazer Century Total Score: 25.5 \$220.00

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| Comfort | ●●●●○ | Chinbar | ●●●●○ | Visor/Vision | ●●●●○ | Features | ●●●●○ |
| Venting | ●●●●○ | Retainer | ●●●●○ | Weight | ●●●●○ | Value | ●●●●○ |



Weight: 3 lbs., 8.3 oz. **Replacement shields:** \$26.00
Notes: The Lazer Century features hypo-allergenic, removable and washable padding. The chinbar latching system uses two buttons, but they can be operated with one hand. Unfortunately, the latches themselves are plastic, and not very strong when compared to the others in this group. The bottom vents are small and not very effective, and there is no top venting system at all. Also, all the testers felt that the chinbar fits uncomfortably close to the wearer's face. The faceshield is optically clear, but doesn't seal quite as well as most of the other models, and there is noticeable wind noise. Replacement requires a screwdriver or coin. The helmet cannot be removed with the chinbar down. Field of vision is slightly below average, in all directions. The nicest thing about the Lazer was the chinstrap retention device. This seatbelt-type, steel, quick-release buckle was both the easiest to latch and to unlatch, requiring only one finger to open. We'd like to steal one and put it on our Schuberth. A fair helmet, but you can get a lot more for your money.
Lazer Helmets; (970) 221-2630; www.lazerhelmets.com

Bell M200 Total Score: 20.0 \$165.00

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| Comfort | ●●○○○ | Chinbar | ●○○○○ | Visor/Vision | ●○○○○ | Features | ●○○○○ |
| Venting | ●○○○○ | Retainer | ●●●●○ | Weight | ●●●●○ | Value | ●●○○○ |



Weight: 3 lbs., 6.7 oz. **Replacement shields:** \$32.95
Notes: It is sad to see the once-great name of Bell attached to such a shoddy piece of safety equipment. When we lifted the M200 out of the box for the first time, the entire chinbar liner fell out. We had to glue the helmet back together just to photograph it. The chinbar itself is made from thin plastic that flexes badly, with sharp edges that can cut your hands, and the latching system is so weak that a moderately sharp rap from your hand can break it loose. The faceshield doesn't even come close to sealing at the bottom edge, and the top vent assembly is so poorly fit to the shell that you can see under it, and it jams when you try to use it. The lining is NOT removable or washable or sizable, and the testers unanimously agreed it was by far the most uncomfortable of the lot. The faceshield is flimsy and doesn't latch properly in the detents. We could go on and on, but what's the point? We're going to destroy this helmet as soon as possible, to keep it from falling into the hands of someone who might mistake it for an actual motorcycle helmet.
Bell Helmets; (714) 570-4620; www.bellhelmets.com

PICKING ONE FOR YOU

Despite our ratings, any one of these helmets (except the Bell) might be the more correct helmet for your own use. What you need to do is determine which features and functions are most relevant to your body, your bike and your riding style. For example, if you ride a fully-faired, luxury touring bike, the venting feature should not be a high priority for you. You'll probably never have the kind of air pressure or flow required on the front of the helmet to make the vents work properly, anyway. But if you ride a naked streetbike, or sportbike, the venting function could be of primary importance.

Likewise, for a sportbike rider, the upper field of vision in a given helmet can be critical. If you ride in a tuck position, having to crane your neck upward to see the road ahead can be not only fatiguing, but downright dangerous. Yet a cruiser rider would want the exact opposite—a helmet with a good downward field of vision, to be able to read his instruments without having to nod his head down, and consequently take his eyes off the road.

Then there is the question of fit, and comfort. No two people have the same shape head, yet helmet manufacturers tend to make their products to fit one shape

or another better. The Arrow, for example, seems designed for someone with a long, narrow face, while the Nolan and HJC seem better suited to a rounder, shorter head. The Schuberth, much to its credit, has linings available in three different sizes, and several others have replaceable cheekpads in varying sizes.

But above all else—all of our testers agree—is the factor of comfort. A helmet that gives you headaches, or makes your ears burn, or causes you to sweat profusely, or in any other way makes you uncomfortable, is a detriment to your health and well-being. A distracted or uncomfortable rider is an unsafe rider, because his concentration isn't fully on the ride. Our opinions, observations, comments and ratings herein are merely meant as a guide to help you in making your own, informed choice of the helmet that is right for you. But they are still only a first step. You need to decide which criteria are most critical to you, and apply our information accordingly. Then you need to go to a reputable dealer, look at the helmets, and most importantly, try them on. Then go sit on a motorcycle (preferably your own), and make note of how the helmet meets your field of vision requirements, whether you can operate the vents and chinbar mechanisms with your gloves on, etc.

A quality helmet, chosen to meet all the right requirements for you and your riding style, that is comfortable, cannot only make you a much happier rider, but a much safer one, also.