

# Held Air Stream II gloves

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**A 2008 SURVEY SHOWED THAT 17** percent of the residents of Canberra, Australia, crashed into a kangaroo with their motor vehicle. A study of kangaroo collisions further showed that about 32 percent of these crashes involved motorcycles and that 90 percent of all kangaroo-induced crashes occurred at night.

I am not saying that Held uses kangaroo roadkill to construct their gloves but I'm merely pointing out that since kangaroos are clearly hazardous to motorcyclists, it's only fair that we retaliate by using their hide for gloves – Air Stream II gloves in particular.

Kangaroo leather is highly resistant to abrasion, and despite its soft feel, light weight, strength and flexibility, is nearly as tough as cowhide. It's more costly than other leathers, which informs the price of these gloves – about \$120, depending on where you buy them. Kangaroo leather is used in the Air Stream II gloves for the palm and undersides of the fingers, so its soft feel and high strength gives the rider excellent feel on the controls of the bike. After several weeks of sweaty

riding (and even getting caught in some rain showers), the lighter shade of the kangaroo leather still looks good. The black leather didn't run, fade or stain my hands, either.

The entire palm side of the glove is perforated, which allows a lot of cooling air flow, but as it's the palm side, the efficacy is somewhat limited. When air does get to the palms, though, you can really feel it. Ventilation also comes from a plastic ridge along the knuckles; the purpose is to protect your knuckles, but the vents ram air in on the back of your hand. It's a nice feature.

My favorite aspects of these gloves are the three other hard features – one on the palm, one along the pinky and one along the outside of the wrist. If you come flying off your motorcycle, the palm-side triangular pad reinforced with SUPERFABRIC® will not only cushion the impact, but allow smoother sliding as well, which should minimize injury. Even better than that, though, is the hard armor on the gauntlet that should do a pretty stellar job of protecting the fragile bones on the outer edge of your wrist. Take a look at your wrist – see that little knob? The Air Stream II is designed to protect that protrusion. The leather-covered plastic armor on the outer

edge of the pinky will also protect that delicate digit from impact and sliding injuries.

Outside, the gloves are totally pro looking. The hard knuckle armor and long(ish) gauntlet give them a semi-racing look. The simple black and gray color scheme keeps them subdued and classy looking. Inside, they look a little less refined, but the KEVLAR® and COOLMAX® linings couldn't really do their jobs (protection and sweat wicking respectively) if they were encased in an additional lining. The COOLMAX® feels nice on the skin and does a good job of keeping the hand dry.

The single Velcro adjustment strap is nicely positioned and allows the rider to snug the gloves effectively. Due to the design of the gauntlet and the width of the opening, these gloves are best suited for wearing inside the cuffs of your riding jacket.

A myriad of other small details round out the features of the Air Stream II gloves: a bug goo/water wiper on the left forefinger, seams designed to prevent awkward pressure on critical parts of the hand, mesh finger joints to flow more air, and the option to get them with either short or long fingers. The Air Stream IIs fit most of my fingers perfectly fine (standard length, size XXL/13-13.5), but I did have to have my tailor shorten both thumbs and both pinkies a bit (apparently I have very short thumbs!).

Until I got ahold of the Air Stream IIs, I was using a variety of short-cuff (no gauntlet) summer gloves. No more. The Air Stream IIs are hands down now my go-to summer gloves. (No pun intended!)

## Pros:

- Great air flow
- High quality and useful armor
- Snug fit and fast break-in

## Cons:

- A little bit racing styled
- Unrefined looking interior
- No color options beyond black/gray ☹️

