

SCALA RIDER G4 POWERSSET

Ken "Hawkeye" Glassman

PRODUCT REVIEW



Over the years, I've tested several motorcycle communication systems from various manufacturers, and have been disappointed with every one, including the first generation of Scala Rider equipment. In fact, I never used a single one of them after I tested them for a review. But after spending several weeks with the newest Cardo Systems Scala Rider G4 PowerSet, I won't be removing it from my helmet any time soon.

As the name implies, the PowerSet comes with two complete sets of equipment for two helmets. Everything you'll need is there to get them working immediately. Since I wear either modular or open face helmets, I chose the set with a boom microphone, but you can buy a set with a wired microphone that is easier to adapt for full face helmets.

Installing the fairly compact device to the side of your helmet is rather easy, along with the two speakers that fit into the recesses of the ear pockets of most helmets. The units are already paired to communicate with each other. Then you must "pair" the device by Bluetooth to your cell phone. Here's where I have a philosophical conundrum. Since I'm a huge critic of drivers distracted by yakking on cell phones who threaten my safety and life while I'm riding and sharing the road with them, I can't in good conscience condone motorcycle riders doing the same thing. The Scala Rider allows you to place a call through the voice command system of your cell phone, and to answer (or choose not to) an incoming call by voice activation as well. So I choose not to use the cell

phone feature; first, because when I'm riding, I want to get away from my cares and business activity, and second, because I almost killed myself once before while riding and chatting on the phone while testing another product. So while I don't recommend using your cell phone while riding I will only say that the Scala Rider makes it easy to do, and the reception and quality is excellent.

What I really wanted from this system was two things: I paired it up with my Bluetooth GPS unit, so I could hear the voice directions from the unit without looking at the GPS screen, which in so many cases can be hard to read with the sunlight shining on it. And the second thing, of course, was to be able to communicate with my riding buddy when we rode through the Smokey Mountains on a recent motorcycle trip. Again, on both counts, the G4 worked excellently. And the unit will prioritize the devices you use if they compete with each other. For example, if I'm talking to my riding buddy, and the GPS has a voice command, it will automatically cut that conversation off, so I can hear the turn directions, and then re-open the conversation line. You can also pair the headset to a Bluetooth MP3 player for music, (or plug in a music device if it isn't Bluetooth) and the Scala Rider sets have a built-in FM radio that you can tune with presets if you wish to listen to music on the radio. My GPS allowed me to download music into it, so I got my tunes through the GPS and could hear them wirelessly. And the Scala Rider will automatically adjust the volume, so that when you come to a stop, the volume goes down and you don't get your ears blown out. Then when you ride off and wind noise starts to increase, the volume increases so you can hear the music. You never have to manually adjust the volume.

For me, the best thing about this product is how well it worked in bike to bike communication. The headsets come already paired to talk to each other, and your Full Duplex conversations (i.e., like a telephone conversation) can be fully voice activated. The volume for the intercom also adjusts automatically

depending upon ambient noise, so you don't have to do anything except talk. The sound quality is outstanding, even with the microphone out in the wind rush. Scala Rider claims a 1-mile range, with an asterisk stating that the distance can be affected by mountains and tall buildings. On a straight and flat road, I believe the one mile range is fairly accurate. Since almost all of my test riding was done on the curvy and twisting mountain roads, the reception distance was lessened to about ½ mile. And while riding the Dragon at Deal's Gap, with its 318 turns in 11 miles, the distance may have been reduced even a bit further. But when my buddy who was riding a sport touring bike (I was on a cruiser) got several blind turns ahead of me, the Scala Rider told me that I was now out of range. When I caught up, it automatically reconnected and gave a tone in my earpieces to let me know that. But on the sweeping roads leading to and from the Dragon, we remained virtually in communication at all times, even when he was out of sight and a good distance ahead of me. The G4 PowerSet also allows you to easily link up with any other Scala Rider devices, even older models, so you can use these sets with multiple riders in a group.



For all of the thousand miles I rode with my buddy, we almost never had to physically touch the helmet unit while riding. And if you do have to adjust the volume, or if you wanted to listen to the FM radio, and change the stations, the buttons are fairly large and easy to operate while moving, and with summer gloves on. We put in two, 12-hour days in the saddle, and the units had plenty of juice to keep them running.

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Each headset comes with its own AC charger, and after the initial charge, only takes about 2 hours to re-charge. The units are also waterproof, which unfortunately, we had the chance to test in two real world torrential downpours, and we had no problems.

So to conclude, if you are looking for a rider to rider or passenger to rider

communication system that does not require any plug-in cords to operate, and also have the ability to easily Bluetooth to other devices, this is the one to buy. The Scala Rider G4 PowerSet lists for \$489.85 on the company web site store. They also have other less expensive options with fewer features that you should consider based upon your needs, and

they also sell single headsets for those who just want to be able to connect with friends who already have Scala Rider units. Visit their web site at www.cardosystems.com

PROLONG WATERLESS WASH & SHINE

PRODUCT REVIEW



that you could scratch your paint if the tank or fenders had tiny bits of grit on it, and you rubbed them into the finish as you cleaned the bike. But Prolong claims that its formula encapsulates the dirt and is picked up by the cloth, so it won't scratch the paint. And it works. You just spray on the product, and with a soft terry cloth rag, wipe it off. Then with another fresh towel, wipe the surface until it's dry. Prolong leaves a protective film that is glass smooth to the touch, and makes the paint color pop.

it will make the bike sparkle without the need for additional waxes, and without the hassle of dragging out the hose and drying everything off. Five minutes and you're done.

You can buy the product online at www.prolong.com, or look for it in most auto parts stores and Walmart. A 17 oz. spray bottle retails for \$7.99 and will probably last a whole riding season if you're just using it on your bike. Prolong is marketed as an automobile product, and is great for cars as well as motorcycles.

I've always been skeptical about waterless washing products, and I've had mixed results with various products in the past. I mostly worried

The product is not for heavily caked on grunge, but it's perfect for dissolving bug goo, bird droppings, tree sap, or water spots from riding in the rain. And

PROLONG SUPER PROTECTANT

PRODUCT REVIEW



This is the sister product to the Wash & Shine. This keeps vinyl, plastic rubber and leather looking brand new. It's great for the rubber on the brake lines, for the saddle and saddlebags, and will revive the black plastic pieces all around a motorcycle. Again, just spray it on and wipe it dry. It won't feel as slick and oily as Armor All, but if you're using it on your seat, please remember that it will make the surface slick for a day or two. You'll want to be careful on that first ride after applying, so you don't grab a handful of front brake, and go sliding up the fuel tank. And NEVER,

NEVER, EVER use this product on your motorcycle tires. It will make them dangerously slick and can cause you to lose traction and have an accident. It's great for the sidewalls of car tires, but never put any kind of tire shine or lubricant on a motorcycle tire.

Prolong Super Protectant sells for \$8.99 for a 17 oz. spray bottle, and you can order it at the same site listed above.