

AEROSTICH

SINCE 1982

E q u i p m e n t f o r R i d e r s



A BRIEF HISTORY...

RIDER'S SUITS

Aero Design & Mfg. Co. Inc. was formed in 1983 to develop a completely new type of textile-based gear for motorcyclists. We wanted a lightweight garment offering convenience, comfort and high levels of protection in bad weather and crashes — all combined in a coverall suitable for everyday use. This garment was the Roadcrafter suit. It's now called the 'Roadcrafter Classic' and is still available. A third-generation version called the R-3 now also provides this same everyday riding usefulness, along with some functionally enhanced features.

The Roadcrafter suit needed to be quick and easy to get on and off - while being lightweight and cool to wear over regular clothing in warm weather. Two historic material advances made this new textile gear possible. Roadcrafter's combined a GORE-TEX® breathable/waterproof membrane and a highly abrasion resistant Cordura® nylon fabric for the first time, which allowed us to create the world's first successful crash and weather resistant high-tech textile riders suit.

In the beginning, many riders did not understand the Roadcrafter's unconventional coverall-inspired design, or its intended purpose and practicality. Leather gear was the standard, so the durability, strength, abrasion-resistant capabilities and crash-protective qualities of synthetics were unknown and widely suspect. To explain the new suit better we used detailed drawings and descriptions in a small mail order catalog. Each suit also

came with a four-page owners manual describing specifically how to wear and care for it. This was years before the internet existed.

Today we offer many models of size-graded riding suits, jackets and pants, and provide extensive alterations and repair services. Textile gear is protective, but is also more sacrificial in crashes than leathers, so this is important. Right from the start we had to learn how to provide a precise and correct fit by mail. More than forty off-the-rack sizes with infinite optional fitting alterations are available.

CATALOGS

In 1995 we began adding a few related items to Aerostich's mail order catalogs. The catalogs now offer over a thousand specialized products that help make riding better, safer, more comfortable and easier. Many of the catalog's items are fun, unique, or hard to find elsewhere.

We have always made Aerostich catalogs ourselves. The first (1983) was a black and white tri-folded brochure. The next one (1986) was 16 or 28 (?) 8"x8" page black and white booklet. A year later it became 32 pages. These early catalogs were illustrated entirely with black and white line drawings.

In 1994 we became Duluth's first e-commerce website. An archived version is at: <http://www.aerostich.com/files/oldsite/index.html>. In 1995 we introduced the current color photography catalog. It was 10"x5.5" and 99 pages. In 2000 the catalog went to 10.7"x6" and 168 pages. In 2005 it grew to 10.7"x7" and 196 pages and in 2007 it reached 244 pages.

The 2015 main catalog is one of the largest, with 260 pages of useful equipment for riders, numerous customer supplied photos, educational sidebars, entertaining stories and a few easter-eggs just for fun.

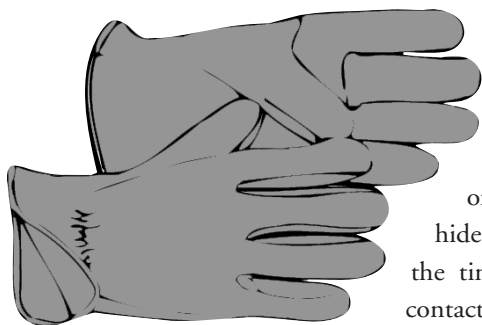
1989



GLOVES & BOOTS

Early catalogs featured a limited selection of complimentary non-Aerostich items. One was the Leatherman multi-tool, which was a brand new invention then. We were

one of Tim Leatherman's earliest retailers. Since then we've created or found many other products that became popular, and each has its own story. For example, the Elkskin gloves were found on a road trip. I was riding to the famous Sturgis event for the first time (it's 50th Anniversary year). On the way I stopped at South Dakota's famous "Wall Drug" because I'd never been there, either.

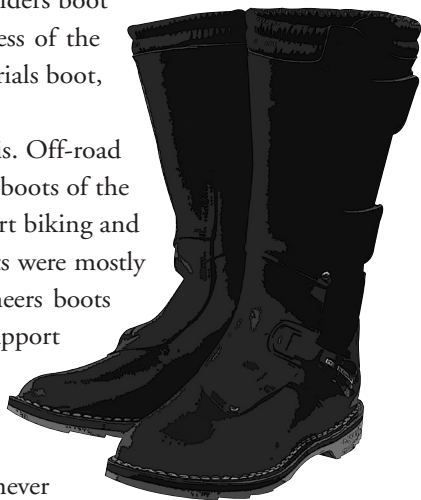


One of the stores in their complex (a much more elaborate place than a simple country drug store...) sold western wear. Saddles, hats, boots, bridles, plaid pearl snap-button shirts and the like. I loved the feel of the Elkskin rancher work gloves they sold. These seemed like a great kind of leather compared to the cowhide and deer hide I was familiar with, so I bought a pair. By the time I'd gotten home I was a convert, and contacted the maker about Aerostich selling them.

We put those gloves in our catalog (in 1987?) and they began selling immediately. Eventually, we were ordering enough and were able to design a specially modified version made specifically for riders with an added face shield thumb squeegee. We've since added created five or six different Elk Glove variations.

Another example is the CBT (Combat Touring) boots. They are, as many know, made for us by the famous Italian boot company Sidi. About twenty-five years ago I was looking for a simple, heavy-duty all purpose riders boot patterned loosely after off road boots, but with less of the plastic and armor these types had. Kind of like a trials boot, but even plainer.

At that time there were no boots at all like this. Off-road boots were heavy, clunky and armored. The street boots of the era were all zippered and thin. (Some were for sport biking and some for everyday and touring riding.) Work boots were mostly lace up styles. Ditto hunting boots. Slip-on engineers boots and cowboy boots did not provide the fit and support we wanted. Sidi was, at that time, just entering the American market and they were willing to make a simplified boot to our design, based fairly closely on one of their off-road models which was never intended to be sold in the United States.



We made a deal. Today there are four separate Aerostich CBT models, and many similar-type boots available elsewhere. But the CBT boot was the very first. They are the original.

NOW WE ARE ESTABLISHED

In 2004 I was interviewed for a story in the New York Times. The article, 'Six Entrepreneurs Look Up, and Offer Advice', was written by a journalist named Brian Alexander. Here's an excerpt:

What can big business learn from small business? Here are views of small-business operators on big companies....Andy Goldfine, 51, is the founder and president of Aerostich, a company in Duluth, Minn., that produces accessories and protective garments for motorcyclists. Mr. Goldfine started the company in 1983 after inheriting some industrial sewing machines.

"Employers want minimal investment per person. It takes a week to learn repetitive factory assembly. But our products are made start to finish by one person. It takes six months to learn. But their lives are better, and they are better at self-management. I was in a sewing factory once that used bells for break time and shifts. When the end-of-afternoon shift bell rang, and it was time for people to leave, instead of walking out normally, socially, some people ran to get out of there. This is not how we do things.

I began the business not looking for a brass ring outcome or a pot of gold. That might be the consequence, not the goal. I put products on the market the way I wanted and that's slower and more of a pain, but I like the way they are finished.

Motorcycles are a social good, and they create episodic transcendence in people and that makes better people. Ethics and business for me are indivisible. You are what you do. How can it not be?"

Every Aerostich-manufactured product is subject to a continual process of incremental refinement and improvement. Everything is intended to help make motorcycles and scooters more useful. We still sell only factory-direct because this allows us to provide the best services and pricing. Each customer receives expert answers to their questions.

These days we are considered by some riders to be a pioneer of practical textile protective motorcycle riders clothing. Today you can walk into any motorcycle store anywhere in the world and see racks full of colorful textile protective riders gear - much more than leather gear. We helped make all of this stuff more acceptable. We didn't plan or expect to do that when we started. We simply wanted to be able to ride more. Some of the passion for our work found us, not vice versa. We've been very fortunate.

Good riding,

