

Sidecar sidekick Renée has a custom-made Kevlar bodysuit for when she's heading out on the highway...

# Hairy biker



**K**een motorcyclist Steve Hawley hated leaving his beloved dog Renée at home when he took to the road for weekend adventures away. The five-year-old Labrador's pitiful face when she realised she was going to be left behind was just too much for Steve to bear – so he invested in a motorcycle with a sidecar for his furry sidekick.

"When she began to try to keep up with the bike

whenever I rode away from home, then lagging behind and watching on with a heartbroken expression as I disappeared round the corner, I knew I would never enjoy a motorcycle mini-break again unless Renée was there to enjoy it with me," explains Steve from Shipston-on-Stour, Warwickshire.

Not that Renée was ever left on her own. She would stay in the capable hands of Steve's wife, Kay, and the not-so-capable paws of bossy

puss Arty. But Renée longed to be with Steve and feel the wind in her face. Steve, too, missed Renée, having adopted her from when she was eight weeks old. So he set about finding a suitable vehicle for them both.

## Sidehead

But that was only half the story. Human bikers have a wide choice of heavy-duty clothing to protect against the elements, and, more importantly, an accident,

but Steve could find no such accessories for Renée – other than a pair of dog goggles to prevent her eyes drying out in the wind.

"I started looking for suitable onesies for dogs and found a couple of things that would have maybe kept her warm but not protected," explains Steve. "That's when I stumbled across K9 CleanCoats. I saw that Aileen Toynton, the owner, was handcrafting each of her onesies to specifically fit



Aileen Toynton designed Renée a protective Kevlar undersuit to wear under her K9 CleanCoats onesie.

each of her canine clients. I had a pair of motorcycle jeans in my wardrobe that were Kevlar-lined to protect a rider's skin in the event of a crash and I wondered if it would be at all possible to make a CleanCoat out of that material.

"I sent Aileen an email and she set about sourcing a sample of Kevlar to make sure she was able to work with it, and once she was confident that she could, it wasn't long before she was letting me know that Renée's Kevlar suit was ready for collection."

## Sidehead

Kevlar isn't the easiest material to work with. Aileen admits she went through at least a couple of pairs of scissors when making the suit, and had to invest in some Kevlar shears instead. It's also not the most flexible material to wear; being so tough, it can restrict movement. Aileen has had enquiries in the past from owners in Australia wanting such suits to protect against snakebites on dog walks, but it just wouldn't be practical, as the dog's movement would be so limited. But for a dog sitting still in a sidecar, it's perfect!

"Since buying the Kevlar CleanCoat, Renée has been showing a lot more

confidence in the sidecar than on the couple of occasions before where we went on little test rides around our quiet village," says Steve.

So far, they've had a couple of mini adventures to get used to the sidecar experience – visiting the Shell Grotto in Margate, Kent, and taking in the Severn Bore in Gloucestershire. But

weekends away together are currently on hold, as the bike has broken down and needs to be rebuilt.

"But once it's back on the road, we plan to head up to Scotland and spend a week or two exploring the North Coast 500 itinerary," says Steve.

"And I can now load up the motorcycle with tent, sleeping bag and dog, and set off into

the world with my best friend, knowing that she is as safe as she could possibly be." ★

★ Follow Steve and Renée's travels on Facebook at: [adventuresofanenglishhack](https://www.facebook.com/adventuresofanenglishhack)  
★ CleanCoats can be found at [www.k9cleancoats.co.uk](http://www.k9cleancoats.co.uk) or via the Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/K9CleanCoats](https://www.facebook.com/K9CleanCoats)

## Across the pond



News of Renée's Kevlar bodysuit spread in motorcycle circles, eventually reaching the States. Davey Beaton's Patterdale Terrier, Wilson, was Aileen Toynton's first trike customer.