

Review Virtus Gear Helios, Astraes and Phantom Pants

After having read about the ASTRAES jacket from Virtus Gear in a post of a TBO, I immediately ordered two jackets and two trousers.

The order went smoothly and I received the items within eleven days after paying the corresponding customs fees.

I can't say more about the company than their website (www.virtus-shop.com) gives away; therefore I save typing it down here.

The materials and the workmanship of the pieces make a very solid impression, for the technical characteristics, colours and prices I again refer to the informations given by VG.

This jackets concept is based on multiple layers which, when worn on top of each other, aime for adaptation to all weather conditions and operational scenarios.



As first layer serves the HELIOS HOODIE JACKET. The very elastic softshell jacket can also be worn as the outermost layer of clothing. It is windproof, water-repellent, quick-drying and breathable.

(On the first day I wore it, I had to practice cardiopulmonary resuscitation for about twenty minutes at temperatures below four degrees outside. For the thermoregulation aspect, this ran optimally.)

The fluffy fleece-inside keeps the warmth to the body. At the

waistband the jacket can be pulled tight with shock-cord to prevent a wind from blowing in or the heat escaping. The sleeve ends, with thumb holes, are slightly narrowed but without cuffs or adjustment.

The hood lies close to the head and follows every movement, thus positively protecting against drafts and always keeping the field of vision. When not in use, it cannot be stowed away in the collar. A soft cloth is sewn inside the collar, which either warms the neck or can be worn as a scarf or face mask.



In order to be able to carry things with you in the first layer, which should always be "at hand", the HELIOS offers four outside as well as two large open inside pockets. Both Napoleon pockets reach up to the sleeve seam and therefore offer some stowage space.



When it comes to the construction of the shoulder section, though, other manufacturers have already gone further: without a seam on top of the shoulder, pressure points would be avoided when carrying backpacks and there would be a section less where water can permeate.

The ASTRAES FLEECE JACKET is meant to be used as a next layer.

Its fleece material is slightly stiffer than that of the Helios but still quite flexible. It repels water even better, but will eventually soak in heavy rain. At least, the shoulder area is designed in saddle-shape, so that no seam can form pressure points or let water through here.

The collar of the ASTRAES closes comfortably high without a hood.

Beyond that it differs from Hoodie mainly by the adjustable cuffs and the smaller Napoleon pockets; the tiny inside pocket from mesh fabric closes by zipper, as well as the two upper arm pockets and the poacher pocket at the back.



Like the Helios' upper arms, the ASTRAES' upper arm pockets feature plenty of velcro.

All YKK zippers are only one-way, with long zipper pulls from Paracord; for



better ergonomics wrapped in shrink tubing. Also the front can only be opened top-down.

To give the possibility to regulate ventilation, the ASTRAES offers a generously dimensioned zipper opening under each arm.

When it comes to the jackets sizes, VG seems to have orientated on European standards and has taken ASTRAES as a reference. Carried "stand-alone" the one I received sizes an "L" as from the textbook.

Resulting from the system of multiple layers, the jacket intended to be worn underneath is cut correspondingly smaller.

The HELIOS therefore suits VERY close to the body and its sleeves are slightly shorter, making them fit perfectly underneath the next layer. By that the thumb holes become senseless and only allow cold and draughts to get in.

If in doubt, both jackets should be chosen one size larger.



The PHANTOM HEAVY WEIGHT PANT.

As with the ASTRAES, all pockets are made of mesh fabric. That which is positive for ventilation can become a problem with sharp-edged equipment.

The Phantom offers a total of ten pouches. Both cargo pockets have two compartments. One to be opened from above and one from the front. The "hidden" compartments behind each front side pocket close with zippers, as do the back pockets.

None of the pockets are specifically designed to carry a knife, torch or tactical pen or provides reinforcement for attaching a clip.



Both front belt loops feature a D-ring.

All loops, even the broad one at six o'clock, are wide enough even for strong belts.

The material of the trousers seems to be the same as on the

Astraes jacket, but in Ripstop quality.



It wears light and elastic like training pants, but offers robustness and warmth similar to Moleskin.



The size of the pants is exactly the US inch size for the width. The length, this to be said, goes as an US Short.

