

Outdoor photo: Kathy Davis/Scarborough Coast Cycle Club



Pros & cons
 + Lightweight
 + Tailored fit
 + Inexpensive

Van Rysel

Men's Sleeveless Ultra-Light Road Cycling Windbreaker Racer

Lightweight, packable wind protection at a bargain price

£29.99 [decathlon.co.uk](https://www.decathlon.co.uk)

There's one thing I'd change about this gilet from Decathlon: the name. 'Lightweight gilet' would suffice. 'Road cycling' and 'Racer' are no doubt dropped into the description because of the close cut, which Decathlon calls Pro Fit. But it also works fine as an off-road windproof.

I bought this nearly two years ago and have, I think, worn it every month since – over a jersey on cooler summer days, with arm warmers in autumn and spring, and over thermal long-sleeve

jerseys in winter. At 88g (size M), it's one of the least bulky gilets I've used. It doesn't even fill a jersey pocket, so you don't regret taking this just-in-case layer even when you don't use it.

The sizing is on the small side because of the racy fit. With a 37in chest and 31in waist, I'm often size S. The size chart for this gilet said M. It fits fine, with enough stretch in the part-elastane side panels and mesh back to accommodate a thick winter jersey with stuffed pockets.



The front and dropped tail are lightweight, non-stretchy polyester. I can hear the wind ruffling the fabric at speed but it doesn't flap and crack like a looser-fit gilet. It keeps the wind off your torso well but won't stop anything other than the lightest drizzle; 'water repellent' is how it's described.

Elastic at the arm holes and hem keeps draughts out there, while the collar (faced with a softer fabric) is high and close cut to prevent it scooping air. The decent-quality YKK zip is backed by a flap for better wind blocking, and covered at the neck so the pull-tag doesn't tickle your throat.

There's some reflective detailing for nighttime visibility. During the day this 'fluo lime yellow' colour makes me stand out like a canary among crows alongside my almost exclusively black-clad clubmates. (This gilet is also available in ninja black.) A slot across the back of the gilet gives access to jersey pockets. There's a small internal pocket that's no good for storage while riding but ideal for packing the gilet into.

It's machine washable at 30°. Sizes: S-XXL. The women's version seems to be available only in black but is £5 cheaper. Don't forget your 10% Cycling UK discount at Decathlon! ● **Dan Joyce**

Other options



CASTELLI ARIA VEST
£110

Castelli's "lightest and most packable wind shell" is 13g lighter than the Van Rysel but nearly four times the price and only comes in brown, grey or silver. Hmm. [castelli-cycling.com](https://www.castelli-cycling.com)



LUSSO SKYLON GILET FLO YELLOW
£45

On offer for £31 at time of writing, Lusso's good-value gilet has a wind- and showerproof front, a breathable back and a rear pocket. It's made in the UK. [lusso.bike](https://www.lusso.bike)

Verdict

A lightweight, tailored-fit windproof that offers comparable performance to gilets costing two or three times the price. Mine is fine after nearly two years of regular use. If I lost it or tore it, I'd buy the same again.