

GEARING UP: Dual Purpose Tyres

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I have yet to come across a biker who does not want the ultimate in tyre performance i.e. one that not only sticks like glue on all surfaces but also never wears out. And by the way should also be 'cheap' or offers great 'value'!

I continually get asked the question about which tyre I should ride with and why. Much has been written about and tested in respect of super bike tyres. In this article I'll stick with the dual-purpose tyres.

Like most subjects it will be easier to discuss the pros and cons in terms of three basic categories – technical dirt (30/70 bias), light technical (50/50 bias) and district road dirt (70/30 bias). The bias I refer to is the ratio the tyre is to be used on tar to dirt i.e. a 30/70 bias is a tyre that would be used occasionally on tar but mostly technical dirt.

The 50/50 version suggests an equal spread of tar and dirt with occasional sections of technical dirt. The last mainstream category is the 70% tar and 30% light technical dirt (district roads).

30/70 COMBINED PLY

Knobbly, great grip in sand and loose technical stuff. Low km's and suspect handling on tar especially in the wet. Multiple ply sidewalls to improve overall performance.

PRICE: ± R3100

50/50 CROSS PLY

Hard, tough tyre that sacrifices on the extremes i.e. not great on serious technical surfaces and not good on tar especially in the wet. The hard compound and tough side walls result in a 'square' shape tyre with 'sharp edges'. Not quite a knobbly but more aggressive than the 70/30. The tyre life is generally twice that of the 30/70. The tyre is not suitable for sand riding – no flotation and tyre pressures must be kept above 2.2kpa to ensure the correct temperature performance and avoid separations.

There is insufficient traction offered to the rider in sand and loose technical surfaces with this type of tyre.

PRICE: ± R2300

70/30 RADIAL

Most dual-purpose tyres. Good on tar and adequate on district roads at the correct tyre pressure. Seriously compromised on any mud surface – become slicks in the wet. OK in the wet on tar. Sand is doable but is really hard work! Will just manage Sani in skilled hands but don't try Ponta sand – its really hard work!



KM performance is generally the best with up to 15000 km's on the back.

PRICE: ± R2250

In conclusion, decide on the type of riding you're going to do most of the time and buy accordingly. A colleague buys 12 rear 30/70 tyres annually and uses one a month! But fun he definitely has and is never concerned with the lack of traction – he fits the correct tyres in the dirt! On the other hand if your budget is tiny and you do some technical riding without 'scrapping' through the corners then the 50/50's will be good. Finally the last category is where most SA riders feature – mostly tar with the odd fling on a district road.

Within each of these categories one finds multiple manufacturers all offering a particular features. Tyres are also like fashions – the riders tend to talk up certain tyres but neglect the positives of others and only speak of the tyre's negative points. It is sometimes a tough call but use the big piece of paper technique – list your priorities and then try and get the best match to these by asking actual users very specific questions iro of their experience with the tyres.

Give me a call if you need any other input - Good luck!

PS. Tyre pressures are critical to safe riding! Check them sooner than later!



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