

TYRE TALK - The Numbers - Part 5

By Gary Bexley

And now for the Small Print - and you know you should always read the “small print” as that’s the only way you will really know what you’re signing up for, or, in this case buying.

Smaller Print and towards the outside of the side wall is some useful info that again is a worldwide Industry standard that must be declared so that consumers can make an informed choice but not many shops will tell you about.

That is; **Treadwear** (the most important), Traction and Temperature ratings.

For **Treadwear** the number is again just a rating but is an indication of the kilometre expectation comparing apples with apples. (Refer photo) e.g.; going from a TWR of 200 to 300 should give 50 % more k’s. This is because of a harder more durable tread compound but the trade-off could be a lower speed rating.



At 300 kph you need a soft compound tread but don’t expect a lot of k’s. For an F Type “Y” rated tyre you could consider a “V” or “W” rate and still be quite safe and save some money – the higher performance normally costing more. So, if you’re tossing up between two replacement options then have a look at the TWR rating. If one even cost ten percent more but has a twenty five percent higher mileage rating then you’re best to go with that as it will give you more K’s for your dollar – which is really the bottom line. As I said before, I don’t mind paying more if I’m going to get more.

The Traction doesn’t change much across the brands, size for size, and therefore not an issue. Most have an “A” grade but the soft compound high traction are “AA” rated.

The Temperature rating again doesn’t change much and we have no choice.

Interestingly, up until about 2010 tyres were made here in NZ but they did not declare this info. The Dunlop and Firestone marketing people claimed their tyres were made to suit NZ conditions but we found a Chinese could easily outrun them. I suspect they had a TWR of 200 or less whilst the Chinese were 300 – 400.

Hence tyres are no longer made in NZ.

Towards the rim on one side is the date of manufacture set within an oval circle (refer photo - 3118) . Again an Industry mandatory requirement so consumers can assess the age of a tyre if required. The first two digits relate to the week and the last two to the year of manufacture. e.g. in our example 31 = thirty first week and 18 = 2018.



Small Print and towards the rim the Country of manufacture must be shown. Not really an issue but could be relevant if a problem developed. E.g. refer photo - “Engineered in Australia“ then in real small print below “Made in China “. Again, this is not a problem as all the major manufacturers are having tyres made to their



specs in countries with lower manufacturing costs. e.g.; Asia, Mexico, Eastern Europe etc. This also then saves them shipping stock to those same countries were the cars are being made and in turn saving greenhouse gasses. The maximum load and pressure are also shown but please refer to the vehicle manufactures handbook for the correct inflation specifications for your own vehicle and the placement of the wheel (front or rear)

General Info; In the groves running around the circumference of the tread you will see small blocks of rubber moulded in and spaced around the groove. This is the Tread Depth Indicator, or TDI, and is set at 1.6 mm (minimum WOF tread depth) from the bottom of the groove. This is to allow for a quick visual check of the minimum legal depth and to assess for even wear across the tyre. When changing wheel / rim sizes you must use the OE bolt type / pattern and PCD. If diameter is larger, then check for body clearance particularly when on lock and the bottom of the spring mount on McPherson Struts. Also check the offset. That is the distance from the centre of the rim well to the mounting face of the rim as this moves the wheel in or out and will affect the steering geometry and body clearance. Check also the bolt or nut type. Most have a tapered seat but some have a ball seat and a few have a flat seat. It’s most critical to use the correct fixing to suit the rims.

I trust this blurb has been of interest and helps to keep you safe and save some money.

Gary