



Tyre Shoot Out puts tyre brands to the test

The October issue of Leisure Wheels magazine features a comprehensive all-terrain tyre shoot-out, the first independent test of its kind in more than a decade.

The test was held across a wide variety of terrain, from Witsand Nature Reserve in the Northern Cape to the Gerotek Testing Facility near Hartbeespoort Dam, and to the gravel skidpan of African Dream Adventures, also near Hartbeespoort. It included sand, wet and dry tar handling and braking, as well as gravel handling and braking.

The test vehicle, a standard Toyota Hilux 3.0D-4D 4x4 Raider double cab with an automatic gearbox, was piloted for more than 4000km by SA motorsport legend Hannes Grobler, managing director of 4.4 Mega Zambesi, who was also the brainchild behind the test.

The brands tested include (in alphabetical order): Apollo, BF Goodrich, Bridgestone, Continental, Cooper, Dunlop, General, Goodyear, Hankook, Kumho, Maxxis, Mickey Thompson, Pirelli, Velocity and Yokohama in the size 265/65 R17.

To ensure repeatable results, the team used Goodyear's Wrangler HP as the control tyre – after every three runs with the all-terrains, Grobler, the Hilux and the HPs tackled the respective test to check for any changes in conditions. A state-of-the-art pyrometer was also used to keep tabs on surface and air temperatures after each run.

"It was an eye opener, comparing these products back to back, in the same conditions, says Grobler. "Some of the tyres surprised us with how well they performed, while others fell out of the bus in certain tests. My opinion of some products has certainly changed."

Grobler believes that, in the end, it comes down to personal preferences and requirements. And compromise.

Crowned king of all terrain tyres, the Grabber AT was described as best in its class and being in a class of its own during the shoot out. The terrain covered in

THE RANKINGS

Position	Tyre	Percentage
1	General Grabber A/T	96.95%
2	Continental CrossContact AT	95.64%
3	Apollo A/T	94.49%
4	Goodyear Wrangler AT/SA	93.27%
5	Bridgestone Dueler 694 A/T	92.76%
6	Hankook Dynapro AT-M RF10	92.70%
7	Pirelli Scorpion ATR	91.66%
8	Kumho Road Venture AT	91.46%
9	Yokohama Geolander AT-S	91.41%
10	Cooper Discoverer A/T3	90.57%
11	Maxxis 700 Bravo AT	90.47%
12	Dunlop Grandtrek AT3	90.33%
13	Velocity Raptor	88.21%
14	BFGoodrich All Terrain T/A KO	87.14%
15	Mickey Thompson Baja STZ	85.59%

the shoot out included sand (Kalahari), wet handling, wet braking, dry handling, dry braking, gravel handling and gravel braking.

According to Gishma Johnson, Continental Tyre SA Corporate Communications Manager, this tyre's performance was particularly rated best in wet handling, best in wet braking and best in gravel braking. "Compared with its predecessor the braking performance on wet roads and noise reduction have been improved. This makes the Grabber AT an excellent all-terrain tyre for use on and off the road," she said.

"Its robust construction provides protection against damage to the tread pattern and sidewall area. The technology used in the Grabber AT ensures comfortable handling combined with high mileage potential. "The compound and the tread pattern were developed with a focus on maximum safety for both off-and-on-road driving," Johnson added.

"The winner of this shoot-out scored highly in most of the tests. However, this doesn't necessarily mean it's the best tyre if you want to drive from Cape Town to Timbuktu. Do you drive 90% of the time on tar, and 10% on gravel? Or is it vice versa?"

"Tyres are about compromise, and each driver has to weigh up the compromises he or she is willing to make. This test showed that you can't have a tyre that is extremely hardy and tough and provides excellent grip on a wet road. I believe the results of this shoot-out will make 4x4 drivers think twice when shopping for a new set of all-terrain tyres," concludes Grobler. www.leisurewheels.co.za

