

# SPORTS-TOURING T30 EVO

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### What's new?

Bridgestone's road tyre range is a little easier to understand nowadays: R10 (racing), RS10 (racing sport), S20 Evo (sport), A40 (adventure) and now the new T30 Evo, the latest evolution of their excellent T30 sports-touring tyre.

Modern-day sports touring tyres have such a wide operating window you can use them on most big bikes, from naked 600s, adventure bikes and sportsbikes. They'll handle mid-winter commuting, cross-continental touring and even trackdays.

Bridgestone doesn't think there was much wrong with the out-going T30's dry grip, or durability, so they've looked at improving wet-weather performance for this new Evo version. It has longer tread grooves to disperse more water and an improved compound that Bridgestone says offers extra grip in colder conditions.

### What are they like?

We got to try the new Bridgestone sports touring tyres on a Yamaha MT-09 and MT-09 Tracer (with traction control switched off) at the T30 Evo's

### Sizes available:

120/70 x 17, 160/60 x 17 and 180/55 x 17 available now. 190/50 x 17, 190/55 x 17 available at the beginning of 2016.

### For which bikes:

600cc-plus naked, sports tourers and sportsbikes.

world launch, on the roads of southern Portugal. Although it was pleasant to ride in dry, warm conditions, we weren't able to test Bridgestone's claim of improved wet-weather performance, which is the main difference between this and the out-going T30.

But Bridgestone claims the T30 Evo laps their handling track 9% quicker than the T30 and stops 9% sooner from 18mph.

So this is more of a chance to be wowed again by the Bridgestone's behaviour in the dry. Spending some of my summers instructing at the Honda Ron Haslam Race School at Donington Park, I have a lot of experience with the current T30. They're used

on all the school's CBR600RRs and Fireblades and on the instructor's bikes. They're perfect for the race school environment, as you can use them regardless of whether it's hot, cold, wet, greasy or dry. Their dry grip on-track is impressive for a tyre you can use for touring, as are their sporty steering characteristics.

It's no surprise that here on the road we don't have any problems with the new T30 Evos. They warm up faster than a sports tyre, there's lots of front grip when trailing the brakes into corners, and no complaint from the rear when you're hard on the throttle, either. Stability is excellent, too.

Like most Bridgestones, the T30 Evos don't feel as 'dug in' to the corner as some of its rivals, so you have to trust there's grip there, rather than feel for it. Ride quality isn't bad, either, but the tyre construction is relatively stiff, which gives the T30 Evos a harsher feel than a Michelin Pilot Road 4, Pirelli Angel GT or Metzeler Z8 Roadtec.

We'll be fitting set of T30 Evos to an MCN long-term test bike this year to test durability, but we've seen the older T30s return 6000 miles from the rear, with the front barely worn.



'You can use them whether it's hot, cold, wet, greasy or dry'

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ADVENTURE TYRE

£193 A PAIR

# BRIDGESTONE BATTLIAX A40



Adventure tyres are always a compromise but these give you the confidence to push hard

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**What's new?**

This is Bridgestone's long-awaited replacement for their nine-year-old, dual-purpose Battle Wing adventure tyre. The first sizes to arrive in the UK will be the popular 110/80 x 19 and 150/70 x 17, which fit most adventure bikes, including the previous-generation air-cooled BMW R1200GS. The larger 120/70 x 19 and 170/60 x 17 sizes to fit the latest liquid-cooled GS will be available at the beginning of 2016.

Bridgestone claim the new A40 delivers improved wet and dry grip, better stability, a plusher ride and gives more grip and confidence in the corners. They also say it lasts 22% longer than the old Battle Wing, so expect modern sports-touring tyre-like mileage from the rear. That's around 6000 miles, depending on your bike.

**i Sizes available:**

110/80 x 19, 150/70 x 17 available now, 120/70 x 19, 170/60 x 17 available at the beginning of next year

**For which bikes:**

Big-capacity adventure bikes

how and where you ride.

The A40 radial has a zero-degree belt construction and new single front and rear compounds. Reshaped profiles give a 20-30% bigger footprint, depending on lean angle and a new tread pattern, with larger blocks, for extra stability. Each tread groove has differing depths, designed to create a vacuum to suck in water, giving better wet weather grip.

**What are they like?**

We got the chance to test the new A40s on the roads of southern Portugal at their world launch, on a 2015 Suzuki

V-Strom 1000. We turned the bike's traction control off to test rear tyre grip, but we left the ABS on for safety. The roads here are much like the UK's and offer decent grip, but they have their fair share of lumps and bumps.

With deep, off-road-style tread blocks that move around more than a pure road tyre, dual-purpose tyres are always going to be a compromise. So if you never plan to get your tyres muddy, you're best off fitting conventional sports touring tyres to your adventure bike when the originals wear out.

But if you are going to ride the odd dirt or gravel track, or simply like the Tonka Toy-like look of dual purpose

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rubber, which is why they're fitted to adventure bikes in the first place, the A40 acts like a road tyre and gives you a remarkable amount of grip and confidence.

On dry roads you can feel the front and rear Bridgestones gripping under braking and acceleration, and the new profiles let you roll into corners and flick through switchbacks easily.

Most impressive is the level of solid, reassuring grip at full, peg-scraping lean, which lets you really enjoy the V-Strom 1000 on windy roads. Ride quality is typical Bridgestone and on the harder side of plush.

We also took to the dirt on some dusty, gravelly Portuguese trails, which proved two things: firstly, big-capacity adventure bikes like the Suzuki are heavy and clumsy off-road, and secondly, despite this the A40s helped to keep the V-Strom 1000 upright and in one piece.

Although weather conditions were fair in Portugal, MCN's Tony Hoare has also tested the tyres on a V-Strom



1000 in the UK, in colder, wetter conditions and never had a problem with Bridgestone's claim of improved wet and cold weather grip.

We didn't get to test durability during our short ride, but to find out if they last as long as Bridgestone say, we'll be fitting a pair of A40s to one of MCN's long-term test bikes this year.