

The Theory Of Evolution

Aidan Lynam Bridgestone's launch of the all new T30EVO



“We're in Portugal to test the latest evolution of the T30”

I first rode Bridgestone's T30s at Ron Haslams Race School in Donington. I didn't know at the time that I was riding the company's latest sport touring radials as they hadn't told us beforehand. All the riders on the launch that day were blown away by the levels of grip afforded by the new tyres. With each bike being used constantly throughout the day, we were equally impressed by how little wear the abrasive race surface caused. The school has continued to use the T30's on all their track bikes.

Fast forward two years and we're in Portugal to test the latest evolution of the same tyre, the T30EVO. This is claimed by Bridgestone to have been “created in response to motorcyclists wanting touring tyres that deliver reassuringly consistent and comfortable performance on both wet and dry surfaces yet still offer plenty of fun. It builds on the acclaimed T30's quick response and superb stability to deliver more traction and control, particularly on wet surfaces, through the use of new-formula compounds and re-engineered designs.”

I'm no scientist, nor do I pretend to be Marquez, but with more than thirty years of riding a variety of bikes on a variety of rubber, I think it's fair to say I know when a tyre is gripping and when it wants to fire me into the stratosphere! I was really impressed with the consistency of the original T30, grip was superb and I genuinely struggled to notice it wasn't an out and out sports road tyre. Bridgestone have retained the dry weather performances as they endeavoured to give even better wet weather performance in the new tyre.

The T30EVO uses Bridgestone's Mono-spiral BELT construction. This consists of a continuous single strand of cord wrapped around the circumference of the tyre. This serves as a belt, eliminating overlapping, seams and joints. Which, in turn, reduces heat generation, as well as improving flexibility and stability. The rear tyre features their Three Layer Compound with a harder centre for longevity and softer shoulders for better grip. Where the T30EVO rear tyre visibly differs is the amount of extra-long grooves from the sidewall which now extend into the centre for increased water dissipation and curved grooves which are shifted outwards, creating a wider rib along the centre strip for greater tread stiffness, offering increased stability under acceleration. The front tyre is an entirely new design.

The new compounds are softer yet the carcass feels very stiff, so much so that I expected the T30EVO's to be noisy on the road and inflexible, in spite of what the press release claimed. I was proven wrong on both counts. You can feel the tyres as you turn in and hooking into the road as you get back on the power towards the corner exit. We rode a mixture of bikes on some very twisty roads with switch back after switch back and I was impressed at how well they coped with direction change and lean angles. None of us rode sports bikes on the launch, mostly a mixture of Fazer's, XT660's, Tracer's and MTO7/09's and everyone was dragging foot pegs and boots through corners with ease, testament to the superb grip levels.

Bridgestone claim that on their test track the new

T30EVO was 9% faster on a wet track and also had 9% shorter braking distance on a wet surface. Now to the hooligans reading this the former is probably like a challenge to them but to the rest of us mere mortals, a 9% reduced braking distance is huge.

As I said, I'm no scientist and Marquez's lap records are safe as houses but to say we weren't hanging around on the launch would be the understatement of the decade, we even managed to lead former Grand Prix World Champion, 'Fast' Freddie Spencer astray! I started the day on the new Yamaha Tracer but swapped, I actually stole it from Bridgestone Product Manager, Gary Hartshornesorry Gaz, at the coffee stop to the XT660 and although I dropped engine size, if anything the riding and pace went up a notch. Thankfully the T30EVO's were well up to the task and despite the poor Yamaha getting a veritable beating, the tyres never so much as flinched in protest, and remember, these are supposed to be touring tyres!

Thankfully we encountered no rain so I can't comment on the claimed improved wet grip but some of the roads surfaces were challenging the T30EVO's didn't stir off line once, inspiring confidence as the day progressed and the chicken strips got thinner.

Although the tyres are labelled 'EVO' Bridgestone see them as a new product but they say they will return the same high mileage usage as their predecessor, and even better, their price is the same at only €320 per set. Better grip, big mileage and a good price, sounds ok to me!

