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Choose the right tyre and it can transform how your car feels and performs. We put nine through our exhaustive tests to find the best

For many drivers, tyres are a distress purchase, an unwelcome but necessary expense. As an **evo** reader you're more likely to appreciate the complex and crucial role tyres play in the behaviour and capabilities of your car. The performance of those four palm-sized contact patches dictates your car's ability to stop, turn and accelerate, and determines its feel, adjustability and predictability. Fit under-achieving tyres to the most finely honed drivers' car and you'll compromise its ability.

Using Bridgestone's superb facilities near Rome, we have exhaustively analysed the performance of nine different tyres in the biggest-selling size for performance cars – 225/45 R17. In addition to objective tests measuring, amongst other things, braking distances, lateral grip and resistance to aquaplaning, we have also evaluated the tyres subjectively on wet and dry handling circuits and a demanding road route.

In each test the highest performing tyre is awarded 100 per cent and all the others score a percentage of this. We then feed the scores into our final results table, which gives a weighting to each discipline. As in previous tyre tests, the subjective scores – dry and wet handling and the road route – account for 40 per cent of the total score, the measured tests, plus price, accounting for the rest. The winner is then simply the tyre with the highest percentage score. ♡

TYRE TEST 2007

THE TYRES



- 1. BRIDGESTONE POTENZA RE050-A** £123
225/45 R17 91Y
- 2. CONTINENTAL CONTISPORT-CONTACT 3** £125
225/45 R17 94Y XL
- 3. DUNLOP SPORT MAXX** £117
225/45 R17 94Y XL
- 4. GOODYEAR EAGLE FI ASYMMETRIC** £116
225/45 R17 94Y XL

- 5. KUMHO ECSTA STP KU31** £89
225/45 R17 94Y XL
- 6. MICHELIN PILOT SPORT PS2** £133
225/45 R17 91Y
- 7. PIRELLI PZERO NERO** £130
225/45 R17 94Y XL
- 8. VREDESTEIN ULTRAC SESSANTA** £100
225/45 R17 94Y
- 9. YOKOHAMA S.DRIVE** £106
225/45 R17 91Y



Avon declined to take part because it is soon to launch a new tyre. Toyo wanted to take part but couldn't supply tyres in time. Prices (below) are the average we were quoted across a dozen retailers, incl fitting and VAT



THE TEST CAR

Volkswagen's Golf GTI was the natural choice. It has a superb chassis, offering fine steering, crisp responses and great poise, plus a torque-laden, traction-testing engine delivery, making it an ideal platform for showing up differences, especially in the subjective tests. Although we

used 'Anniversary' editions, the suspension is the same as that of the standard model.

The GTI also has excellent Recaro seats and efficient air-conditioning, keeping our testers cool and comfortable in the baking sunshine and thus helping their performances match the metronomic consistency of the cars'.



THE TRACK

Or, to be accurate, tracks. The spectacular new Bridgestone European Proving Ground near Rome, with its 4km banked oval, scenic dry handling circuit and vast 'black lake' handling pad was opened in 2004 and the final few facilities are still to be

commissioned. These include the wet handling circuit, so the wet grip tests were carried out at the nearby European Technical Centre at Castel Romano, also home to Bridgestone's R&D departments. The testers were Barker and Bovingdon, with the able assistance of *evo* regular Owen Brown.



WET HANDLING

As well as providing a variety of quick and slow corners, the wet handling circuit at Castel Romano, Bridgestone's European Technical Centre, has elevation changes which make it a tricky little affair. One left-right section drops away, testing stability, while the return gradient puts a premium on traction, and there are tightening radius corners too. Tyres were scored on lap time, average lateral g through

a fast, long right, and also on subjective performance, the parameters including turn-in, transient response and confidence inspired. This was a 'blind' test, driver Jethro Bovingdon setting the lap times and rating the tyres with no knowledge of which tyre was fitted. Lap times and lateral g were averaged from four laps.

Vredestein and Goodyear proved the class of the field on the wet handling circuit, with Continental also scoring well. The fastest tyre was the recently launched Goodyear Eagle F1 Asymmetric, its average lap time a fraction over 58sec, and unsurprisingly it also recorded the highest lateral g. However, it was the Vredestein Ultrac Sessanta that proved the tester's favourite. 'Superb,' said Bovingdon. 'Heavy steering but backed up by strong turn-in and an ability to give more bite if you need it. Very good traction.'

Like the Vredestein, the Goodyear also

found strong drive and had a neutral, unflappable poise but was marked down a little for stickier steering. The Continental ContiSportContact 3 was a second a lap down on the time-sheet-topping Goodyear but also demonstrated the characteristics necessary for good lap times on the sodden surface – bite, stability and a resistance to triggering the anti-lock – and matched them to a lighter feel through the wheel.

Heading the mid-field pack was the Pirelli PZero Nero, which was praised for its steering feel and agile turn-in but which struggled to hook up out of the corners. The Bridgestone Potenza RE050-A, Kumho Ecsta STP and Michelin Pilot Sport 2 were all covered by half a second and generated similar levels of lateral g, but subjectively the Kumho was rated much less highly than the other pair. The Golf GTI has a well-documented reluctance to swing its



tail but on the Michelin it was 'slightly oversteery', said Bovingdon, and aggressive steering inputs were required to get it to turn positively into some turns. Front-end bite on the Bridgestone was also a little soft but it gave a good overall performance and was described as 'fun' – a euphemism for loose but controllable. Although the Kumho was technically good, it delivered very little steering feel, knocking back confidence, and was summed-up as 'a 70 per cent tyre' – i.e. good up to a point.

A full 3.5sec off the pace was the Dunlop Sport Maxx, despite wide grooves that looked good for clearing water. Its lateral g wasn't far off that of the Michelin but it elicited little praise, mainly due to its sudden loss of grip: 'Poor turn-in – immediate understeer – upset into oversteer by standing water.' Even less impressive was the Yokohama S.drive, which was a woeful 7.5sec a lap slower than the Goodyear. 'No turn-in, poor mid-corner grip and hopeless traction,' said Bovingdon, adding 'chassis feels unsettled; balance shifts between understeer and oversteer. Without ESP it'd be a liability.'

LAP TIMES	SEC	%
1. GOODYEAR	58.06	100.00
2. VREDESTEIN	58.62	99.05
3. CONTINENTAL	59.02	98.38
4. PIRELLI	59.93	96.88
5. BRIDGESTONE	60.23	96.40
6. KUMHO	60.31	96.26
7. MICHELIN	60.61	95.79
8. DUNLOP	61.56	94.32
9. YOKOHAMA	65.56	88.56

Lap times on the wet handling circuit produced some surprises, none greater than the Yokohama's time...

SUBJECTIVE	SCORE	%
1. VREDESTEIN	52	100.00
2. GOODYEAR	50	96.15
3. CONTINENTAL	49	94.23
4. PIRELLI	44	84.62
5. MICHELIN	44	84.62
6. BRIDGESTONE	43	82.69
7. KUMHO	36	69.23
8. DUNLOP	31	59.62
9. YOKOHAMA	28	53.85

Subjective ratings largely shadowed the lap times, with Vredestein coming in for particular praise from testers

LATERAL G	G	%
1. GOODYEAR	0.754	100.00
2. VREDESTEIN	0.738	97.85
3. CONTINENTAL	0.734	97.34
4. PIRELLI	0.729	96.68
5. KUMHO	0.700	92.84
6. BRIDGESTONE	0.698	92.61
7. MICHELIN	0.678	89.91
8. DUNLOP	0.667	88.50
9. YOKOHAMA	0.627	83.14

Unsurprisingly, lateral G figures correlate with lap times, with Goodyear and Vredestein leading the pack

IS BIGGER BETTER?

The GTI has always felt pretty good on 18in wheels and slightly lower profile tyres (225/40 R18s), so day one of the test provided a big surprise. For familiarisation laps of the wet circuit, Bovingdon used the

GTI Anniversary on its standard 18in rims, to which Bridgestone had fitted RE050-As. On the fractionally higher profiled 17in tyres, Bovingdon noted significantly more turn-in bite and the Golf was around 2.5sec a lap faster...

Bridgestone's superb test tracks proved the perfect venue for evaluating our nine tyres. Right: wet handling circuit wetted consistently by a regiment of sprinklers. Below: total focus as Bovingdon writes out his lunch order



STRAIGHT LINE	MPH	%
1. DUNLOP	73.90	100.00
2. BRIDGESTONE	73.05	98.85
3. CONTINENTAL	71.69	97.01
4. GOODYEAR	71.49	96.74
5. VREDESTEIN	71.40	96.62
6. PIRELLI	71.13	96.25
7. KUMHO	70.72	95.70
8. MICHELIN	69.37	93.87
9. YOKOHAMA	65.55	88.70

In the straight-line aquaplaning test we measure the speed at which the tyres lose drive in standing water

CORNERING	LAT ACCEL (m/sec ²)	%
1. VREDESTEIN	20.09	100.00
2. BRIDGESTONE	16.75	83.37
3. GOODYEAR	16.09	80.09
4. PIRELLI	15.81	78.70
5. CONTINENTAL	15.55	77.40
6. DUNLOP	15.19	75.61
7. MICHELIN	14.69	73.12
8. KUMHO	13.91	69.24
9. YOKOHAMA	13.60	67.70

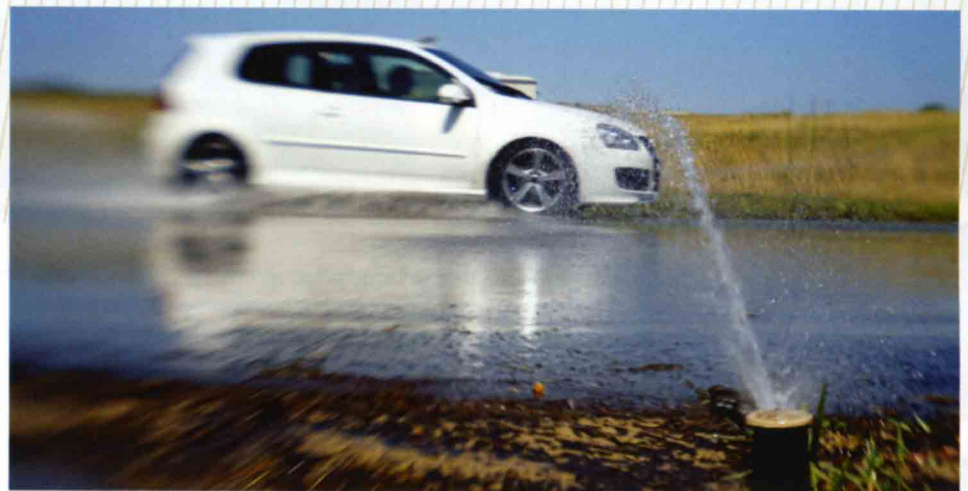
For the curved aquaplaning tests, we're measuring the lateral acceleration, i.e. the cornering force generated

AQUA-PLANING

There are few more frightening driving scenarios than aquaplaning. When the car's tyres lift clear of the road surface you can't steer or brake – you're a passenger until the speed drops and the tyres regain contact. Our aquaplane tests effectively determine the speed at which the tyre loses grip in standing water.

In the straight-line test, a specially adapted Alfa 166 guided by a rail is used. It is driven into the test area where the right-hand tyre encounters 7mm of standing water, and accelerated hard. Ever-higher entry speeds are used until the right-hand tyre is spinning 20 per cent faster than its counterpart on the dry surface.

The curved aquaplane test, performed in the Golf, involves driving onto a corner flooded to 4mm at 5kph increments from



60kph, accelerating hard and measuring the lateral acceleration achieved. The results (above) represent the overall performance across the speeds.

Tyres with wide channels between the tread blocks are best at evacuating water from the footprint. That's what the Dunlop Sport Maxx has, and it tops the straight-line aquaplane test. However, proving that tyre design is a complex business full of trade-offs and compromises, in the curved aquaplane test the Dunlop is only an average performer. In the straight-line test, the majority

of the tyres are within 5 per cent of the Dunlop's performance, only the Michelin and Yokohama falling below this, but on the wetted curve the spread is much higher, though this is largely due to an exceptional performance from the Vredestein. A star performer in the wet handling tests, the 'Giugiaro Design' Ultrac Sessanta leaves the rest in its wake, the Bridgestone being the best of the rest some 17 per cent down. The Yokohama props up the tables once more, over 30 per cent behind, with the Michelin and Kumho also off the pace.

‘While you may never push a tyre to the limit of its cornering grip, at some point an emergency will force you to call on all its stopping power’



BRAKING

Maximum retardation from 55mph down to 5mph, with anti-lock engaged, determined the stopping distances, the wet braking carried out on a surface covered with a 3mm film of water. Approaching the braking area at a little over the target speed, the Golf was slipped into neutral before the brakes were hit. For consistency, the average of five runs was taken, and 5mph rather than zero was chosen to negate any possible discrepancies caused by the anti-lock cycling.

While you may never push a tyre to the limit of its cornering grip, it's almost certain

that at some point an emergency will force you to call on all its stopping power. In the wet the Goodyear proved the best performer, managing to haul up the Golf in a little over 39m, while the worst, the Yokohama, took almost 52m – that's 12.5m/41ft more, or about two and half car lengths.

It's another good result for Goodyear's Eagle F1 Asymmetric, which is proving consistently good in our wet tests. So too are the Bridgestone and Continental, and here they are close behind the Goodyear, while a couple of metres adrift are the Pirelli and Kumho, with the Vredestein a further half metre behind. Beyond this you begin to notice a tyre's lack of bite – it actually feels like the surface is more slippery. The Michelin takes a fraction over 43m for the stop, almost a car's length off the best, while the Dunlop, first in straight-line aquaplaning, remember, takes over 45m. Astonishingly, on the Yokohama the Golf takes almost 7m

FRESHER THE BETTER

Our experience suggests that you should make sure you're buying the freshest tyres possible. A tyre that has been sitting on a warehouse shelf for six months, unprotected by a wrapper, will have lost a noticeable amount of its performance as its rubber compound degrades. Imagine how crumbly an elastic band is after it has been left in the sun for a couple of weeks.

We saw a big difference in wet braking distances between a fresh set

of tyres supplied for the test and a set we had purchased. The supplied tyres were just three weeks old (all tyres are marked with a production date, for traceability) while the ones we had bought were six months old, and they took 14 per cent longer – an extra 7m – to stop the Golf.

So, like fuel, you are best advised to get your tyres from a dealer with a high throughput. And always check just how old the tyres you're being offered are.



Wet braking tests provided the biggest revelations of the test. We also measured rolling resistance, to find out how much extra energy (i.e. fuel) each tyre consumes

further for the stop than even the Dunlop.

There's a much smaller spread of braking distances in the dry, best and worst separated by less than 2.5m, with the Michelin Pilot Sport 2 coming out on top at a fraction over 28m. Fractionally behind are the Vredestein and Bridgestone, the Potenza RE050-A

proving the most consistent performer in the brake tests, impressively getting within 2 per cent of the best tyre in both the wet and the dry. Next up are Kumho, Pirelli and Continental, all within a metre of the Michelin, then Goodyear and Dunlop, and, finally, the Yokohama.

BEST AT THE PUMPS

As a rough guide, a six per cent increase in rolling resistance equals a one per cent increase in fuel

consumption. So the Vredestein could add around four per cent to your fuel bill next to the Yokohama.

WET BRAKING METRES %

1. GOODYEAR	39.26	100.00
2. BRIDGESTONE	39.98	98.19
3. CONTINENTAL	40.29	97.44
4. PIRELLI	41.20	95.29
5. KUMHO	41.30	95.04
6. VREDESTEIN	41.84	93.84
7. MICHELIN	43.03	91.24
8. DUNLOP	45.10	87.05
9. YOKOHAMA	51.78	75.82

DRY BRAKING METRES %

1. MICHELIN	28.06	100.00
2. VREDESTEIN	28.32	99.08
3. BRIDGESTONE	28.36	98.94
4. KUMHO	28.63	98.00
5. PIRELLI	28.82	97.36
6. CONTINENTAL	28.85	97.26
7. GOODYEAR	29.17	96.19
8. DUNLOP	29.19	96.12
9. YOKOHAMA	30.51	93.07

RESISTANCE CO-EFF %

1. YOKOHAMA	10.200	100.00
2. MICHELIN	10.421	97.88
3. KUMHO	11.001	92.72
4. GOODYEAR	11.518	88.56
5. DUNLOP	11.939	85.43
6. BRIDGESTONE	11.939	85.43
7. CONTINENTAL	11.967	85.23
8. PIRELLI	12.105	84.26
9. VREDESTEIN	13.292	76.74

Great results for the top three in the wet braking. At the other end, a disturbingly bad show from Yokohama

Much less to choose between the tyres in the dry, as the percentage scores show. Bridgestone excels again

Rolling resistance refers to the amount of drag the tyre generates, and thus impacts on fuel consumption



DRY HANDLING

The challenging and unusually picturesque handling circuit at the new Bridgestone European Proving Ground allows a variety of track lengths, and we chose one that gave a lap of about a minute. It starts with a long, fast right (used to glean the lateral g scores) which is followed by a fast, fall-away right with a very late apex that snaps into tight left and a cresting right. The remaining corners are a medium radius hairpin, a tight hairpin and a fast right that begins to rise after the apex. As in the wet, this was a 'blind' test, Bovingdon setting the lap times and appraising the tyres without



knowing which he was driving. Here, ESP stability control was disengaged to show up the differences more clearly, and the lap times and lateral g were calculated from the second and third flying laps.

While the wet circuit gave a wide spread of results, things were much closer on the dry track, with less than 2sec covering the field. Fastest was the Goodyear Eagle F1 Asymmetric on 67.67sec, fractions ahead of the Michelin Pilot Sport 2 on 67.81. It was a clean sweep for the Goodyear, which also recorded the highest lateral g (0.890) and was adjudged the best tyre subjectively. 'Great turn-in and lots of mid-corner grip,' said Bovingdon, 'plus plenty of adjustability and agility through the direction changes. Solid.'

The Michelin backed up its lap time with the second highest lateral g but subjectively it was behind the third fastest tyre, the Bridgestone. Bovingdon reckoned that while the Pilot Sport 2 had 'good turn-in and traction', through the composure-testing right-left-right it felt a bit loose. Although the Bridgestone had a softer turn-in, Bovingdon said it had better steering feel and while it also exhibited transient oversteer, he said it felt 'very predictable'.

Fourth fastest, within a second of the Goodyear's time, was the Continental. The ContiSportContact 3 also scored well on lateral g and subjectively was rated only a

fraction behind the Michelin: 'A good tyre,' said Bovingdon, 'both turn-in and balance are strong.' The Pirelli was fifth fastest, half a second down on the Conti and a mere two tenths faster than the slowest tyre, and also recorded the lowest lateral g of all at 0.815g, yet the PZero Nero was rated as highly as the Michelin. 'Every element is

WHERE YOU BUY

Does anyone buy replacement tyres from the dealer who supplied the car? You'd think not, given the cost. But anyone who has run a modern Porsche 911 will know that only specially marked 'N2' Michelins are approved, and other quick cars have a specifically developed 'tune' of a tyre too.

So what happens if you replace the originals with some that look identical but cost half the price because they haven't come from the main dealer? Will the ride be less

supple, the grip less impressive, steering less precise? From what we can glean, the differences are likely to be subtle. One tyre maker did reveal that the 'tuned' versions of one of its most popular performance tyres supplied as OE (Original Equipment) to many car makers have a quite different performance profile to the after-market version stocked by tyre dealers. It also told us that wet weather performance is higher up its own list of priorities than it is for most car makers...

LAP TIMES	SEC	%
1. GOODYEAR	67.67	100.00
2. MICHELIN	67.81	99.79
3. BRIDGESTONE	68.23	99.18
4. CONTINENTAL	68.44	98.87
5. PIRELLI	68.98	98.10
6. VREDESTEIN	68.99	98.09
7. YOKOHAMA	69.07	97.97
8. KUMHO	69.11	97.92
9. DUNLOP	69.19	97.80

Only around one and a half seconds separate the fastest and slowest tyres around the dry handling circuit

LATERAL G	G	%
1. GOODYEAR	0.890	100.00
2. MICHELIN	0.865	97.19
3. BRIDGESTONE	0.856	96.18
4. CONTINENTAL	0.855	96.07
5. YOKOHAMA	0.847	95.17
6. DUNLOP	0.827	92.92
7. VREDESTEIN	0.817	91.80
8. KUMHO	0.816	91.69
9. PIRELLI	0.815	91.57

Pirelli may have generated the lowest lateral G but still managed a decent lap. Grip isn't everything...

SUBJECTIVE	SCORE	%
1. GOODYEAR	45	100.00
2. BRIDGESTONE	43	95.55
3. PIRELLI	42	93.33
4. MICHELIN	42	93.33
5. CONTINENTAL	41	91.11
6. VREDESTEIN	38	84.44
7. YOKOHAMA	36	80.00
8. KUMHO	36	80.00
9. DUNLOP	36	80.00

Clean sweep for Goodyear in the dry handling tests, topping the table for progression and predictability

well-balanced,' said Bovingdon, 'but the time just won't come.' Objectively, the Vredestein scored as highly as the Pirelli but Bovingdon rated it lower, saying that although it initially felt keen, there was no bite when it was pushed and it was hard to extract consistent laps. 'There's no depth to its performance,' he concluded.

Yokohama, Kumho and Dunlop brought up the rear on lap times, all of them about 1.5sec shy of the Goodyear. They shared identical subjective scores too and a unifying characteristic – an apparent lack of grip. In fact, the Yokohama recorded an almost Conti-matching 0.847g, though this may have been partly due to the fact that the Golf's tail was sliding so readily: 'oversteer, oversteer and more oversteer!' said Bovingdon. 'Fun, but too much for most.' The Kumho was felt to be a bit twitchy in the faster turns and generally lacking adhesion, while the Dunlop switched between under- and oversteer rather abruptly and 'seemed to go off quickly'.



ROAD ROUTE

The objective here was to assess each tyre primarily for steering feel, ride quality and noise – details that are of little consequence on track but which matter a great deal on the road. The roads south of Rome are generally dull but with the help of Bridgestone's coordinator of subjective evaluation we concocted a decent route. About 25mins long, it offered a wide variety of surfaces, from super-smooth to dreadfully ruckled. As in the other subjective tests, the tyres were driven 'blind', and here both Bovingdon and Barker drove.

Generally the scoring was close – the tyres from second to eighth place were covered by less than four points – but there was a clear winner. The Vredestein was five points clear at the top of the table, rated first by both Bovingdon and Barker. 'Beefy steering and excellent wheel control,' said Bovingdon, while Barker praised its absorbent ride and good poise, and added 'a fine overall

performance, and well suited to the Golf'. In second place was the Dunlop – its best result – the Sport Maxx praised by both testers for its excellent steering feel and progressive nature, which gave high confidence.

While not the grippiest or quietest, the third-placed Michelin also found favour for the way it dealt with all manner of bumps and ridges, and for its agility. Barker liked the fourth-placed Pirelli, saying although it was a little soft on turn-in, it was commendably quiet and gave reasonable confidence, while both testers enjoyed the Goodyear, particularly its steering feel and grip.

Not far behind was the Bridgestone, which scored consistently and was described by Bovingdon as a 'fluid drive', while the Kumho felt a bit lively and noisy on the rough sections and was a bit lacking in steering feel.

There wasn't much sportiness about the Continental, which scored well for ride quality but was light on grip and feel and described as a 'bit wishy-washy'. Bringing up the rear was the Yokohama, another tyre that delivered a smooth, quiet ride but which felt 'mushy' and lacking in adhesion even when pushed mildly, demanding concentration.

SUBJECTIVE	AV SCORE	%
1. VREDESTEIN	63.00	100.00
2. DUNLOP	58.25	92.50
3. MICHELIN	57.00	90.50
4. PIRELLI	56.25	89.40
5. GOODYEAR	56.00	88.90
6. BRIDGESTONE	55.50	88.10
7. KUMHO	54.75	87.00
8. CONTINENTAL	54.50	86.50
9. YOKOHAMA	48.00	76.20

An impressive result for Vredestein. Left: Bovingdon responds to the news that lunch has arrived



Six of the tyres tested impressed us, three fell some way short of what you should demand, but there was one clear winner. Golf GTI impressed us too...



RESULTS

1ST



GOODYEAR EAGLE F1 ASYMMETRIC

A decisive win for the new Goodyear, with more table-topping performances than any other tyre. Better still, those wins came in both the wet and the dry objective tests, and subjectively it was voted best tyre on the dry handling course. 'The steering feels clean, direct, positive,' said Bovington, 'and there's plenty of adjustability and agility.' He praised its wet handling abilities, too: 'Very neutral – not a single correction required'. On the road it was a little noisy but Barker said it had 'direct steering and a softly predictive feel'. And it comes in at a good price, too.

2ND VREDESTEIN ULTRAC SESSANTA

Surprised to see the Vredestein so high? We are, but there's no denying the small Dutch company has produced a fine tyre. The 'Giugiaro Design' Ultrac Sessanta was way ahead in the curved aquaplane test and the tester's favourite on the wet handling circuit: 'Strong turn-in and an ability to give more bite if you need it,' said Bov. It lacked bite in the dry but was the choice of both testers on the road, Barker praising its 'absorbent, quiet ride and smooth, nicely detailed steering.'

3RD CONTINENTAL CONTISPORT CONTACT 3

A string of consistently high results across almost all disciplines secured third for the Conti. Its measured performance in both the wet and the dry was very strong, showing what a well-balanced tyre it is, and it would have been right in amongst the top two had it been rated more highly by our testers. All the elements are there; it just lacks a little detail and driver appeal.

4TH BRIDGESTONE POTENZA RE050-A

Like the Conti, the Bridgestone was on the pace in both the wet and dry tests, notably getting within two per cent of the best tyre in both straight-line braking tests. Our testers preferred its feel in the dry, Bovington describing it as 'very predictable' on the dry handling track, where it set the third fastest time, but it was deemed a little loose, though still predictable, in the wet.

5TH MICHELIN PILOT SPORT PS2

Technically impressive, the Michelin gave a good account of itself across the spectrum of tests, bagging one top score for straight-line dry braking, ranking a close second on dry handling lap times and scoring highly in the rolling resistance test. Keen and adjustable on the dry track, it needed to be hustled for a good time in the wet. Overall, the Pilot Sport 2 is a tyre that seems more at home in the dry than the wet.

6TH PIRELLI PZERO NERO

Another consistent performer in the measured tests, the Pirelli was stronger in the wet than the dry, where it felt as though it had all the attributes necessary but just wouldn't deliver a good time. The reason seemed to be a lack of outright grip, reflected in the lowest lateral g score. Subjectively, we rated its steering feel and easy composure.

7TH KUMHO ECSTA STP KU31

A big drop from 6th to the 7th place Kumho and it's all down to feel. In the measured tests the Ecsta STP wasn't far off the pace but our testers didn't warm to it. In the wet it lacked steering feel; in the dry it felt a little twitchy in the fast turns. On the road, the ride was good though steering feel was still lacking.

8TH DUNLOP SPORT MAXX

The Sport Maxx was the best tyre in the straight-line aquaplane test and scored reasonably well on the dry circuit but its wet test results were patchy. At the limit, from behind the wheel, it felt poor, scoring low marks on track, yet on the road route it delivered good steering feel and progression.

9TH YOKOHAMA S.DRIVE

Lowest rolling resistance and a set of low to middling scores in the dry tests were the Yokohama's high spots. It came dead last in all the wet tests, generating so little grip that in the straight-line braking it took a massive 12.1m further than the best tyre...

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FINAL SCORES

1. GOODYEAR	96.4
2. VREDESTEIN	95.3
3. CONTINENTAL	93.5
4. BRIDGESTONE	92.7
5. MICHELIN	92.4
6. PIRELLI	92.0
7. KUMHO	88.7
8. DUNLOP	86.0
9. YOKOHAMA	82.0