



POWERPROOF AND WETPROOF

Nokian is aiming at summer tyre segment

Nokian Tyres is above all well known for its winter tyres. Now the tyre manufacturer would like to expand the summer tyre business and has launched two new summer tyres in Portimao/Portugal.

The tyre manufacturer offers the Nokian Wetproof as a summer tyre for passenger cars, which is to stand out because of its extraordinary wet braking capacities and its aquaplaning protection. Nokian is aiming at the UHP segment with the Powerproof. “We want to increase our brand awareness in those regions, where winter tyres play a less important role. Mika Häkkinen will support us to build up the brand”, illustrates Antti-Jussi Tähtinen, Vice President Marketing and Communication, during the product launch. First of all, the product names Powerproof and Wetproof demonstrate that the tyres stand for a completely new tyre generation. “Compared with former products, many aspects changed with regard to the new Nokian tyres”, explains Petri Niemi, Head of Product and Price Management.

Nokian Tyres tested the new products all over Europe before introducing them into the market. The tyres were driven for tests among others in Germany, France, Spain, and Portugal. Mika Häkkinen added his expertise to the testing procedure of the Powerproof. “The steering reactions of the new Nokian Powerproof are really fantastic. Those are exactly the features, all the quality tyres should have. If the tyre creates confidence when driving, then it will also provide safety”, says Mika Häkkinen, two-time formula 1 world champion. Moreover, the TÜV SÜD test mark is meant to confirm the performance of the tyre. “We have not received any OE releases for the new tyres so far, but we are working on it”, adds Petri Niemi.

Broad range of sizes

The Nokian Powerproof will be available in 51 sizes from 17 to 20 inches in speed categories W and Y. The Nokian Wetproof will be introduced into the market in 46 sizes from 14 to 20 inches, and with speed indexes T, H, V, and W. As of spring 2019, the tyres are to be on sale.

The development of new summer tyres takes about four years. “When developing



Mika Häkkinen was involved in the development of the Powerproof.

the Powerproof tyres, our first focus was on grip on wet roads. Moreover, we placed the spotlight on stability, grip on dry roads, safety in extreme situations, a good wear resistance, and low fuel consumption”, explains Hannu Liitsola, Managing Director at Nokian Tyres Europe. “Safety has always been at the centre of the philosophy of our product development. The Nokian Powerproof disposes of a unique concept of double safety zones, which guarantee a balan-

ced road contact. The driver feels the grip of the tyre, how it adapts to the coarseness of the surface, and how it immediately reacts to steering commands, especially on wet and dry roads – an absolute must for safety, e.g. in case of sudden evasive manoeuvres”, says Jarno Røytiö, Development Manager at Nokian Tyres.

Precise handling

The so-called Powerzone at the external

shoulder of the tyre is responsible for precise handling. The wet safety zone at the interior of the tyre side is to increase safety on wet roads due to improved grip.

The trapezoidal flow grooves divide the centre rib and the rib closest to the inner shoulder. According to the manufacturer, the winding design of the groove bottom provides aquaplaning protection by storing water and accelerating the removal of water from the area between the tyre and the road surface. The cooperation of the tread blocks of the inner shoulder and grooves also supports aquaplaning protection. The groove ends in the tread blocks are spread out and their sides have horn-like indentations. These water-storing grooves are to further facilitate the removal of water.

Moreover, the tyre tread developed for higher speeds consists of several different rubber compounds. The dynamic grip rubber compound produced by Nokian Tyres consists of functional molecule chains and polymers, which form a dense, flexible mesh-like structure. Thus, better grip and durability are provided than in the previous generation.

Wet specialist

The Wetproof is to convince above all on wet roads. Furthermore, it is meant to offer high safety on dry roads too. The secret behind the fine-tuned balance of wet and dry properties is the new dual zone safety concept: The tread area of the tyre is subdivided into two functional zones. Thanks to this technology, the tyre is supposed to offer safety and lower rolling resistance at

the same time. The so-called stability zone is at the outside of the tyre and is meant to provide easy and reliable steering behaviour because of its excellent stability and handling features. The wet safety zone at the inside of the tyre, however, is said to improve wet grip and aquaplaning protection. Additionally, the tyre has the TÜV SÜD test mark too.

Moreover, the Nokian Wetproof is to have reinforced wet and handling properties due to a responsive lock concept, which supports the longitudinal ribs. As a consequence, it allows the water to flow away from the tyre more easily. In addition to this, the silent sidewall technology on the wing area of the tyre helps to filter vibration and reduces the noise level within and at the outside of the vehicle.

As the name Wetproof already indicates, the tyre is characterized by its wet properties. A special technology is used among other things. When you move water and it gets in contact with a curved surface, it will try to follow that surface. A phenomenon also known as the Coanda effect means that water can be directed to follow the curve of the surface rather than flowing a straight line. When a tyre gets in contact with more water than it can drain, aquaplaning occurs. "The Nokian Tyres Coanda Technology accelerates the removal of water by guiding the water flow away from the tyre. Thus, it helps preventing aquaplaning", says Petri Niemi. Furthermore, the Aqua Hybrid rubber compound also offers additional safety in rainy weather. Polished main grooves take care that the water easily drains. **(akl)**



Antti-Jussi Tähtinen, Vice President Marketing and Communication, presented the new tyres.



The Powerzone of the Nokian Powerproof.



The Nokian Powerproof was designed for the market in Central Europe.



The Powerzone of the Nokian Powerproof.



DRIVER

Test winner in DISQ service study “Tyre Dealer 2018“

The Driver Reifen und KFZ-Technik GmbH is the test winner (test rating “excellent”) of the current service study “Tyre Dealer 2018“, which was carried out by Deutsches Institut für Service-Qualität (DISQ - German Institute for Service Quality) on behalf of the news channel n-tv.

I am extremely proud of my employees, who live our service concept, put it into practice on a daily basis, and take care that our customers only leave our branches in a highly satisfied way“, says Thorsten Schäfer, Managing Director at Driver Reifen und KFZ-Technik GmbH. DISQ tested a total of 14 chains of tyre dealers with a minimum of 30 nationwide locations. According to DISQ, the whole tyre dealer industry offers good service and achieves overall good or excellent results in nearly all the tested areas. Two companies are able to get the test rating “excellent”, ten have “good” as total result and only two tyre dealers are not better than “satisfactory”.

As illustrated by DISQ in the study, mostly the employees score high concerning friendliness, helpfulness, and have a high level of consulting expertise. According to the study, there is also some criticism, as rather seldom a broad range of tyres, wheels and rims is on offer in the sales areas of the branches. Moreover, price labelling and relevant product information are not always available. Nonetheless, the service offer is able to convince: Apart from standards like storing tyres and disposal of old tyres, many branches offer extra services like cleaning wheel hubs or repairing tyres.

Service-oriented and individual

The service experts at DISQ sum up in their final conclusion: “The company Driver turns out to be the test winner of this study with the test rating “excellent”. The extremely friendly and helpful employees are able to consult in a competent way and offer tailor-made solutions to meet the customer’s needs. They decide in favour of service orientation when dealing with complaints. Moreover, the range of products convinces with a huge variety of tyres and rims”. PneuHage follows in the second position and has as well the test rating “excellent”. DISQ stresses in its final results the fol-

The Driver branch in Bonn.



lowing: “Confident employees show the best consulting expertise in this test and give explanations, which are easy to understand. They clearly focus on the benefit of the recommended product and pay attention to alternatives in a comprehensive way too. Furthermore, customers only have to wait for the consultation a short time”. Reifen Helm finds itself in the third position with a “good” total result. Highly motivated employees invest much time in consultations, ask detailed questions about customer needs, and show a lot of expertise. Additionally, the company offers extra services like cleaning wheel hubs, cleaning complete tyres or repairing tyres in all the branches.

The companies Quick Reifendiscount, Reifen.com, A.T.U., Premio, Vergölst, Reiff Reifen, Euromaster, First Stop, and Point S as well achieve a “good” test result. Pit Stop and RTC, the two companies with a “satisfactory” test rating, follow behind them. Apart from the total result, DISQ also had a closer look at the sub-categories “consulting expertise” and “quality of communication”. Concerning “consulting expertise”, PneuHage is ahead of DRIVER and Reifen Helm, followed by Reifen.com, Premio and A.T.U. PneuHage is as well better than DRIVER, followed by Premio, Reiff Reifen and First Stop in the sub-category “quality of communication”.

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Double top rating for Dunlop Winter Sport 5

In the framework of the Winter Tyre Test 2018, the editors of AutoBild stress again the importance of seasonal products. The medium chooses as proof the probably most explicit winter discipline: A car equipped with the test winner Dunlop Winter Sport 5 takes only 28 metres to stop from a speed of 50 km/h on snow. A passenger car with a comparable summer tyre takes 43 metres to stop.

Normally, the best braking tyres can be found in the test final of AutoBild – this year there are 20 treads. The Dunlop Winter Sport 5 is „the winter tyre with the best level of performance in all weather conditions“. At the same time, the **Dunlop Winter Sport 5** is considered to be the rubber with the best price-performance ratio – and thus gets the additional title “Eco-Meister 2018“. Although it is not one of the most reasonable models with a price of 290 euros per set of tyres, but it is supposed to achieve a mileage of about 51,000 kilometres. According to AutoBild, other tyres already will have to be exchanged after reaching 30,000 or even less kilometres.

The **Continental WinterContact TS 860** (320 euros/set) and the Kleber Krisalp HP 3 (240 euros/set) share the second position. AutoBild gives the rating “excellent” as well to a fourth candidate, the **Fulda Kristall Control HP 2** (255 euros/set).

The medium of the Springer Group tested treads of the size 195/65 R15 on wet, snowy and dry roads. The people being responsible talk about “dramatic results”: When braking on wet roads, 21 of the about 50 candidates failed “with a crash” – they were immediately disqualified. When coming to a full stop from 80 km/h, the worst candidate took 49.8 metres. The best candidates only took 35 metres. Further 10 tyres were disqualified

after the braking test on snow. According to AutoBild, low-price or no-name manufacturers produced all the disqualified tyre candidates. All in all: Whoever is stingy concerning winter tyres, may pay for it with his or her life in the worst case.

The testers are of the opinion that among others the **Firestone Winterhawk 3** turns out to be a negative surprise in the group of the final candidates. It is “only recommendable with restrictions”, as it shows weaknesses when handling on wet roads. Moreover, the **Gislaved Euro Frost 6** fights with problems like aquaplaning and reduced lateral guidance on wet roads.

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According to AutoBild, the Dunlop Winter Sport 5 is “the winter tyre with the best level of performance in all weather conditions”.