



This story, like many others in *Australian 4WD Monthly* history, was ambitious from the start. Attempting to test, back to back, 14 sets of mud-terrain tyres was always going to be tough. My biggest source of apprehension was that the tyres wouldn't perform all that differently to one another. Hey, they've all got big, open, blocky treads, so how different could they be?

Well, let me put that misconception to bed right now. These tyres vary markedly in performance. Sure, some are similar, but overall there are massive differences.

Mud tyres used to be the domain of hardcore off-roaders, but now more and more four-wheel drivers are enjoying the qualities and sex appeal of these aggressive tyres. Put simply, muddies will take you further up that slippery track than any all-terrain tyre.

Of course, as with any tyre, there are trade-offs. Because there's less rubber in contact with the surface, your 4WD will generally take slightly longer to stop on bitumen when compared to an all-terrain or highway terrain tyre. Then again, in mud and gravel, expect your fourby to pull up slightly quicker.

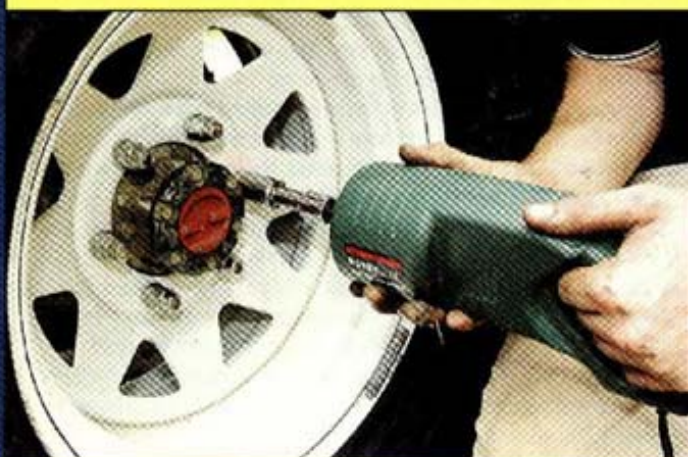
Tyre noise is something we attempted to test scientifically, but had difficulty in doing so. We hired a NATA-calibrated decibel meter, but found that the ambient noise in the test vehicle cancelled out the accuracy. Hey, when you're hurtling along a country road at 110 in a '91 HiLux, it's not exactly rattle-free. We tried measuring from different positions, but the sensitive instrument picked up every squeak, rattle and roar. So, in the end, it was up to me to give an objective marking for noise intrusion into the cabin during the test loop.

NIFTY SHIFTER

We're cynical buggers here at *Australian 4WD Monthly*, and when we get a new 12V product sent to us, we often joke about how soon it will be till it breaks in the bush. We're notoriously hard on equipment, and this tyre test was to be no different.

So when we were sent these electric rattle guns, we thought: How do we test 'em till they break? And then the tyre test arrived. There would be 21 different tyre changes. Multiply that by four tyres per car, and the HiLux six-stud pattern, not to mention the tyres being bolted on, and then off, and the rattle gun would be latching onto 1008 wheel nuts. It's even got a tiny red light that we thought would be useless. That was until the test ran into the night and we found the little light invaluable. After all, who can hold a torch and use a rattle gun at the same time?

And show me a light that can shine into that wheel nut area and without casting big shadows. Okay, so you can see I like the light... We experimented with connecting the rattle gun straight to the battery, and also through the cigarette-lighter attachment. As expected (given the more direct power source), the rattle gun had a little more grunt when attached directly to the battery. In fact, maximum grunt is 340Nm. Contact: Kangaroo Creek Imports on (02) 6643 0303 RRP \$89.



THE PERFECT TEST LOOP

Testing mud tyres in the driest continent on earth might sound a little funny, but hey, we do get mud in Oz, and when our four-wheel drivers find it, we love it! The High Country, Menai, Cruiser Park, Tassie – even WA has its fair share of Mundaring mud bogs. But testing these tyres only in mud would be doing them – and you – a disservice. Due to their aggressive tread and robust construction, muddies are increasingly used as multi-purpose tyres.

So where do you test mud terrain tyres? It didn't take long for us to work out that one: Milbrodale, NSW, home of the Tuff Truck Challenge. Not only does it have that infamous mud bog, it also has a gravel-road race track and is on the doorstep of the twisty bitumen of the Putty Road.

The mud bog needed some modifying though, so we set Errol Smith to work on his dozer. He flattened the base so we could get through and manicured another mud bog in a depression right next to the original Tuff Truck one. The objective wasn't simply to get the vehicles bogged in the mud, it was to see how they clawed, steered and drove through the slush. It would be pretty much impossible to replicate the same mud bog time after time – so we didn't bother trying.

Having said that, we kept it consistent (except for a few wild photo opportunities of course). I hit the bog at 3500rpm in second gear low-range, with both front and rear diff locks engaged. This was fast enough to experience the self-cleaning abilities of the tread, but slow enough to maintain control and steering.

The gravel-road stretch was easy. Milbrodale is a famous round in the Off-Road Racing Championships, so we simply used part of the track to put the tyres through their paces. On the dirt, we tested cornering, braking and, importantly, lateral grip. And it was in this last section that the big differences between the tyres were discovered.

This leaves the on-road loop. Directly out the front of the Tuff Truck property is the Putty Road. It's a mixture of flat and potholed bitumen – just perfect. But head up the road about 7km and you'll find some of the craziest hairpins in Australia. Yet another great test for road-holding ability, tyre scrubbing and stopping.

The only major terrain we didn't test on was sand. There was no decent sand on which to test at Milbrodale, so we opted to give it a miss.

The vehicle we used to test the 31s was a turbo-diesel HiLux dual-cab – loaned to us by the generous Danny Mannix from Stockys Tyres. We chose it because it had twin ARB Air Lockers, meaning that power to the ground in the mud would be consistent. The 2in suspension lift would come in handy too, so the tyres could do their thing without clogging up the guards with mud. And being a dual-cab, we were concerned about having enough weight over the rear axle to make testing realistic, so we slung a heap of tyres in the back.



LONGEVITY

Let's get one thing straight: this isn't a test of longevity. And this test won't tell you whether you'll get a blowout after five yards of hitting the dirt. Nope, to do that test would be nigh on impossible, other than getting 14 identical vehicles and driving them across the Canning one after the other. But even that wouldn't work, because the track would change from car one to car 14.

My suggestion here is to look at the specifications and construction of the tyre (ie, sidewall plies) and have a crack at it yourself. Ask around at 4WD clubs and so on to see what works and what doesn't, and have a good look and feel of the tyre yourself.

But probably the best advice I can offer is to be aware of your tyre pressures and adjust them to suit the terrain. This will of course depend on how heavily you load your vehicle, and what sort of track you're travelling on. And in our experience, the manufacturers' stated tyre pressures are best suited to on-road, not off-road, conditions. Overinflation on sharp, rocky Flinders tracks or gibber-strewn backcountry is a recipe for a quick blowout. Experiment for yourself and see what works best for your rig.



YOKOHAMA GEOLANDER M/T

MANUFACTURER: Yokohama
TYRE: Geolander M/T
SIDEWALL PLIES: 2 polyester
TREAD PLIES: 2 polyester belts + 2 steel belts
WEIGHT: 20.5kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 11mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.31in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$265



COMMENT: The Yokie M/T is a ballsy-looking tyre to say the least — and it nailed maximum points in the sex-appeal section for this very reason. Its open lugs did the business in the mud too, but that open design leaves the tyre carcass vulnerable to rock strikes in the outback. They were pretty noisy too, but, unlike most mud tyres, would resist aquaplaning in the wet thanks to that big centre-tread void. The soft, kinda gummy tread grips the road well, which translated into good braking figures.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering



OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE



Score sheet (No. of tyres — 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

KUMHO M/T

MANUFACTURER: Kumho
TYRE: Road Venture M/T
SIDEWALL PLIES: 2 ply polyester
TREAD PLIES: 2 ply polyester + 2 ply steel
WEIGHT: 19.5kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 11mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.11in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$185



COMMENT: The Kumhos were most at home on the road and the dirt, where they made solid scores, displaying superb grip. But all the grip in the world couldn't make up for the fact that they were very noisy between 100 and 110km/h, and suffered from vibration at those speeds. Steering was also a little vague on the bitumen. Mud and rock performance was solid, and the price is pretty sharp too. Oh yeah, and they're snow-spike compatible, which will please the hell out of our three subscribers in Canada...

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering



OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE



Score sheet (No. of tyres — 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

SIMEX CENTIPEDE M/T

MANUFACTURER: Simex
TYRE: Centipede M/T
SIDEWALL PLIES: 2 ply polyester cord
TREAD PLIES: 2 ply polyester cord +
2 ply steel cord + 2 ply nylon
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 18kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 9mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.11in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$179

COMMENT: Despite having a six-ply tread, the Simex M/Ts still come in at a reasonable weight, tipping our scales at 18kg. But while having lots of rubber in the tread, they seem to lack some in the sidewall, with our measurement tallying just 9mm. Performance-wise, the M/Ts' scores were reasonably solid (especially in the mud), although they fell down a little in the vibration department at speeds of 110km/h. Cornering grip was a little absent on the bitumen too, as the vehicle tended to lurch into the corner and then grip at the last minute. But if it's a dedicated muddle you're after, the Simex is cheap and loves the mud.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering



OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE



Scoresheet (No. of tyres - 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

HANKOOK DYNAMIC M/T

MANUFACTURER: Hankook
TYRE: Dynamic M/T
SIDEWALL PLIES: 2 ply polyester cord
TREAD PLIES: 2 ply polyester cord + 2 ply steel cord
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 18.5kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 11mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.31in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$198

COMMENT: The Hankook Dynamic M/T was generally disappointing across the board. Its hard, blocky, old-school tread lacked the grip afforded by its competitors on bitumen and gravel. And at speeds of 100-110km/h, the tyres transferred some big vibrations into the HiLux cabin. Unfortunately, while pricing and mud performance are good, there are cheaper, better tyres out there. Oh yeah, they're snow-spike compatible too - giddyup.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering



OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE



Scoresheet (No. of tyres - 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

GOODYEAR MT/R

MANUFACTURER: Goodyear
TYRE: Wrangler MT/R
SIDEWALL PLIES: 3 ply polyester
TREAD PLIES: 3 ply polyester + 2 ply steel
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 21kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 11mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.31in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$230

COMMENT: Certainly one of the best tyres on-road, the MT/R marries an aggressive tread with smart bitumen performance. The sticky, soft silica compound displays superb braking and cornering characteristics on the blacktop. Around tight corners, the Goodyears don't squeal, they kind of roar – although generally road noise isn't an issue. And while the MT/Rs (standing for Maximum Traction Reinforced) landed at the sharp end of the field, they could have gone a touch better had it not been for average scores in the mud and dirt-road sections. That slightly less-open tread pattern seemed to clog up more readily in the mud than some other brands. But overall, the Goodyear is a fine all-rounder and would be a great choice for someone who wants a cool-looking, good-performing muddie that still has some manners on-road. Oh yeah, and I shouldn't forget to mention that the MT/R features a Durawall three-ply sidewall, which should make it more robust than most of the two-plys on long desert runs.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering

Tyre Squeal: 

Tyre Scrub: 

Vibration: 

Roadholding: 

Tramlining: 

Braking: 

Road Noise: 

OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Gravel Road Grip: 

Rocks: 

Mud: 

Sex Appeal: 

Scoresheet (No. of tyres – 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

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BFGOODRICH M/T

MANUFACTURER: BFGoodrich
TYRE: Mud Terrain
SIDEWALL PLYS: 3 ply polyester
TREAD PLYS: 3 ply polyester + 2 ply steel
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 20.5kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 9mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.70in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$265



COMMENT: If you'd have asked me at the start which tyre would win this test on points, I wouldn't have put money on the BFG. Hey, it's a great tyre, but that tread has been around for donkey's years, so surely it would have been outclassed by the newer designs? Not so.

The BFGoodrich Mud Terrain performed like the great all-rounder that it is. Dirt-road grip was nothing short of excellent, and given that Australia is the world's driest continent, the dirt is exactly where most of these tyres will spend most of their lives. The 9mm sidewall is a little disconcerting – we'd prefer to have seen it a little thicker for puncture and blowout resistance – but in our testing, that didn't come into play.

The soft, gummy tread gripped the road well – particularly in emergency stopping procedures. The deep outer lugs with the small ridges in between enhanced the tyre's self-cleaning ability in the sticky Milbrodale mud. And those mini-sidebiters looked the goods in the sex-appeal department too.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering

Tyre Squeal:

Tyre Scrub:

Vibration:

Roadholding:

Tramlining:

Braking:

Road Noise:

OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Gravel Road Grip:

Rocks:

Mud:

Sex Appeal:

Scoresheet (No. of tyres – 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)



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COOPER DISCOVERER STT

MANUFACTURER: Cooper
TYRE: Discoverer STT
SIDEWALL PLYS: 2 ply polyester
TREAD PLYS: 2 ply polyester + 2 ply steel
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 18.5kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 9mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.11in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$258

COMMENT: The Cooper Discoverer STT nailed this test, performing solidly on every surface. In fact, its worst score was in the sex-appeal section, where it still managed to score two points. Yep, the Cooper is an excellent all-rounder, with buckets of grip both on the dirt and on-road. Braking was exceptional, and handling surefooted, no matter what the road type. I found that it wasn't quite as polished as the BFG on the dirt, but it outscored the BFG in the on-road braking and vibration sections. The slightly more closed tread of the STT leaves less real estate available for punctures, so it would be ideally suited to outback touring. However, we'd still love to see a fatter, three-ply sidewall. Oh yeah – solid as a rock in the mud too.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering

Tyre Squeal:

Tyre Scrub:

Vibration:

Roadholding:

Tramlining:

Braking:

Road Noise:

OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Gravel Road Grip:

Rocks:

Mud:

Sex Appeal:

Scoresheet (No. of tyres – 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

MOTORWAY MONOFORM M/T

MANUFACTURER: Motorway
TYRE: Monoform M/T
SIDEWALL PLYS: Depends on donor tyre carcass
TREAD PLYS: Depends on donor tyre carcass
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 22kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 15mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.31in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$115

COMMENT: The budget bonanza of this test is Motorway's BFG look-alike – the Monoform. At 115 large, it's less than half the price of the leaders, but then, that's what you'd expect with a remanufactured tyre. It's not a pretty tyre (on the inside wall you can see the lettering of the previous carcass), but many off-roaders these days are using them as their 'weekend' set of rubber. Some nice A/Ts for weekdays, and some cheap ballsy rubber to trash on the weekend. Yet, given their meaty sidewalls, trashing the Monoforms might be harder than you think. With 15mm on the sidewall, the bead-to-bead construction ensures that they're pretty hard to puncture. However, that very sidewall width makes for a tyre that is as stiff as buggery, making it perform poorly on the rocks. And despite looking remarkably like the BFGs, that tread is actually 15 percent different, and it shows. Grip is far less impressive in the mud than the BFGoodrich. And on-road braking was less than impressive – largely due to the bulging 22kg weight of each tyre. General road-holding was solid though, and gravel-road grip was great. Longevity is another point that is always raised when it comes to remanufactured rubber. Of course, this test can't answer that question, suffice to say that, for quality reasons, Motorway rejects 90 percent of the tyre carcasses that come its way. And we reckon a bead-to-bead construction is much better than the old tread-only retread design.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering

Tyre Squeal:

Tyre Scrub:

Vibration:

Roadholding:

Tramlining:

Braking:

Road Noise:

OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Gravel Road Grip:

Rocks:

Mud:

Sex Appeal:

Scoresheet (No. of tyres – 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

DUNLOP GRANDTREK M/T

MANUFACTURER: Dunlop
TYRE: Grandtrek M/T
SIDEWALL PLIES: 2 ply polyester
TREAD PLIES: 2 ply polyester + 2 ply steel
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 18.5kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 11mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.31in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$270

COMMENT: All-round performance of the Dunlop Grandtrek was exceptionally good, particularly in the on-road and gravel-road departments. Grip was high in these sections (though slightly behind the Cooper, BFG and Goodyear), and braking performance exemplary. There was a little vibration at around 110km/h, but nothing to be concerned about. The Dunlop scored mid-field in the mud, but we particularly liked the small ripple beside the outer lugs to stop clogging. And that 11mm measured sidewall should be more resistant to blowouts than some of the more slender 9mm walls. Overall, the Dunlop is an excellent all-rounder – if a little overpriced.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering

Tyre Squeal:

Tyre Scrub:

Vibration:

Roadholding:

Tramlining:

Braking:

Road Noise:

OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Gravel Road Grip:

Rocks:

Mud:

Sex Appeal:

Scoresheet (No. of tyres – 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

PRO COMP M/T

MANUFACTURER: Pro Comp
TYRE: Mud Terrain
SIDEWALL PLIES: 2 ply polyester
TREAD PLIES: 2 ply polyester + 2 ply steel
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 19.5kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 9mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.19in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$260

COMMENT: On the blacktop, the Pro Comp Mud Terrain scored consistently well, with very little noise and good road-holding, although it wasn't quite as polished as the BFGoodrich on these surfaces. In the on-road braking test, the Pro Comp only managed to score mid-field too. The Pro Comp loved the gravel though, with excellent lateral grip, and under power, its deep tread blocks really bit the deck nicely. In the mud, the Pro Comp performed well, with its staggered outside lugs able to dig through the surface mud nicely finding the hard base underneath.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering

Tyre Squeal:

Tyre Scrub:

Vibration:

Roadholding:

Tramlining:

Braking:

Road Noise:

OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Gravel Road Grip:

Rocks:

Mud:

Sex Appeal:

Scoresheet (No. of tyres – 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

SILVERSTONE SQ773

MANUFACTURER: Silverstone
TYRE: SQ773
SIDEWALL PLIES: 2 ply polyester
TREAD PLIES: 2 ply polyester + 2 ply steel + 1 ply nylon
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 21kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 11mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.31in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$200



COMMENT: The Silverstone SQ773 is a vastly different looking hoop to the rest of the field, with its wide, jagged lateral lugs spanning the tyre. But in this case, different doesn't necessarily mean better, and on the road, this tyre is one of the noisiest of the pack. Yet, despite this noise, there was very little vibration to speak of.

Unfortunately, road holding on both the dirt and the road was poor – leaving me a little unimpressed after the test loop. And while they have good grip in a straight line in the mud, their steering ability was second-rate.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering



OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE



Scoresheet (No. of tyres – 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

SUMITOMO SERENGETI M/T

MANUFACTURER: Sumitomo
TYRE: Serengeti M/T
SIDEWALL PLIES: 2 ply polyester
TREAD PLIES: 2 ply polyester + 2 ply steel
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 19kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 9mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.51in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$169



COMMENT: Sumitomo is a tyre not all that familiar to most Aussies, but it's owned by GT Radial & Continental. In the mud, the Serengeti M/T was a real winner, scoring maximum points. We put this down to the second stage lug on each and every lug, making it harder for the mud to adhere. Gravel-road grip was great too, as was rock performance.

The Serengeti was less at home on the road, especially in the road-holding department; however, aside from a general hum at 110km/h, noise wasn't a problem. Bang for your buck, the Serengeti is a hard tyre to go past, especially if you like to get down and dirty. A little more rubber in those sidewalls and we'd be even happier.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering



OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE



Scoresheet (No. of tyres – 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

MICKEY THOMSON BAJA CLAW

MANUFACTURER: Mickey Thompson
TYRE: Baja Claw
SIDEWALL PLYS: 2 ply polyester
TREAD PLYS: 2 ply polyester + 2 ply steel
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 19.5kg
ACTUAL SIDEWALL WIDTH: 9mm
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.11in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$258



COMMENT: The Claw in a mud-terrain comparison? Are we kidding? Nope, not at all. At \$258, and with a radial construction (unlike its bias-ply big brother), the Mickey Thompson Claw is one of the coolest-looking tyres in this test. And on the road, the Claw was not as noisy as that aggressive tread would suggest. Traction in a straight line is fantastic – this baby digs! – but the arrow-shaped tread of the Claw falls down while cornering in gravel and mud. Put simply, there's not a lot of resistance when the lugs are pushing hard through a corner. So I wouldn't suggest these tyres for outback touring. They're directional too, so if you want to have them pointing in the right direction all the time, you'll need to carry two spares – one for each side of your truck.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering

Tyre Squeal:

Tyre Scrub:

Vibration:

Roadholding:

Tramlining:

Braking:

Road Noise:

OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Gravel Road Grip:

Rocks:

Mud:

Sex Appeal:

Score sheet (No. of tyres – 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

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PRO COMP X-TERRAIN

MANUFACTURER: Pro Comp
TYRE: X-Terrain
SIDEWALL PLIES: 2 ply polyester
TREAD PLIES: 2 ply polyester + 2 ply steel
ACTUAL WEIGHT: 18.6kg
ACTUAL ROLLING DIAMETER: 30.11in
LOAD RANGE: C
PRICE: \$285



COMMENT: If good-lookin' rubber is your thing, you've come to the right place. The X-Terrain has that 'I've got big goolies' look, from its raised shoulder lugs with the 'X' imprint, to the arrow-shaped tread – which is why it scored maximum points in the sex-appeal department. On the road, the X-Terrain is a solid performer, with minimal road noise, great braking and solid road-holding characteristics.

But that's about where the good times end for the X-Terrain. Lateral stability is awful on the gravel, and I had the tail kicking out like nobody's business on the test loop. This tyre would love the B&S circuit, 'cause its donut prowess is unbeatable. And that arrow-shaped tread would be downright scary on slippery side-slopes, with little to stop the tyre from moving sideways. In the mud, straight-line performance was great but again, lateral grip was poor.

ON-ROAD PERFORMANCE

Noise / Vibration / Harshness / Cornering



OFF-ROAD PERFORMANCE



Scoresheet (No. of tyres – 5 good, 1 bad, flat tyre awful)

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CONCLUSION

Adding up the scores will give you the overall winner of this test – and congratulations to BFGoodrich. I've gotta say that given how long this tyre has been around, I'm surprised to see it still outperforming the competition, but I guess this is one case where nothing beats the original. Having said that, the BFG is not the cheapest tyre here. But to say one tyre fits every use and every budget would be wrong. Sure, the BFGoodrich and Cooper really nail things in the premium market, but what if you've got mud aspirations on a beer budget?

Pound for pound, the Sumitomo Serengeti is a great all-rounder. And with maximum points in the mud, it displayed some serious traction. Plus, as the cheapest of the bunch – it'll win a lot of hearts.

But like all product comparisons, it's horses for courses. For example, if your next mud tyre is to be used for outback touring, take a good look at its gravel-road grip and sidewall construction. That information should see you choose a tyre that's right for you. But if all you ever drive in is mud, of course your buying parameters will be much different. Check out the scores and see what comes up trumps for your rig. *4WD*

BIG THANKS

Tests like this don't just happen, and there are plenty of people besides us *4WD Monthly* nutbags who worked hard to bring you this test.

The Bulga Rural Bushfire Brigade worked around the clock to keep our boghole topped with water and our test vehicles and wheels clean after each test run. Mick and Nathan Bendall were the main offenders, but their family and friends helped by not complaining that we'd kept their men working hard into the night. So thanks to all.

Thanks also to Errol Smith and family for the use and preparation of their property for our test, and to Colin Smith for showing us a few gnarly tracks and sharing his invaluable local knowledge.

When we had fourby troubles, we headed to Singleton's own 4WD racing guru, Graham Baxter, who sorted us out quick smart. Graham runs Singleton 4WD, and can be contacted on (02) 6572 1913.

Thanks to Danny Mannix from Stockys Tyres in St Marys for the use of the HiLux, and to the boys at Stockys for seating our rubber to the rims, balancing every tyre, and popping off the tyres after we'd finished testing. Thanks also to Sam Keck of Overkill Engineering for the air jack (how good are these things?), and to Lachlan Sidey from Offroad Industries for the hydraulic jack.

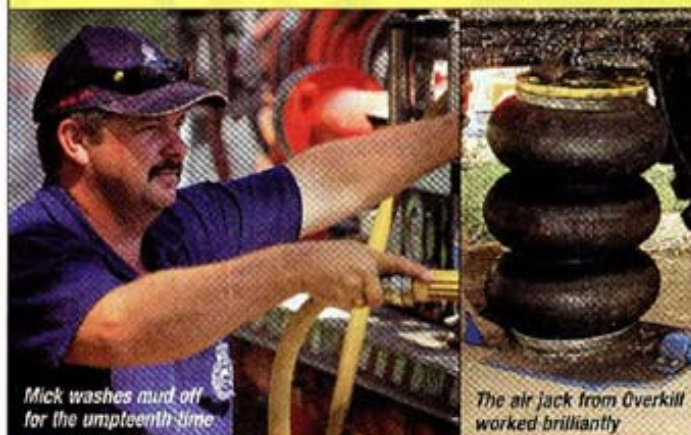
Finally, thanks to Evan Spence, who, when we could stop him rolling his own tobacco and talking about his orange Zook, occasionally changed a few tyres; to Mark Allen, aka Mr Swagman, who, when we could get him to stop talking about his latest swag design, actually jacked up a few cars; and to Rhys, who, in between organising the latest mods for his 40 Series, managed to sort of organise a tyre comparison.

The winning tyre on points



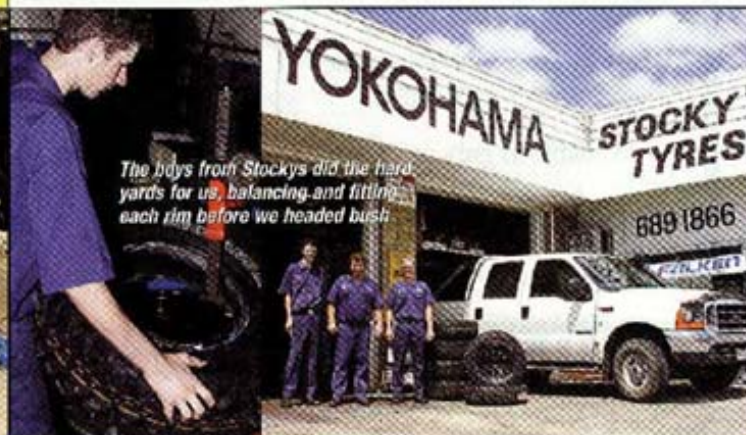
TOTAL SCORES

BFGoodrich Mud Terrain	45
Cooper Radial STT	43
Goodyear MT/R	40
Dunlop Grandtrek M/T	39
Pro Comp M/T	39
Sumitomo Serengeti	37
Pro Comp X-Terrain	37
Mickey Thompson Rad Claw	36
Yokohama Geolander M/T	33
Kumho M/T	32
Simex Centipede M/T	28
Silverstone SQ 773	27
Motorway Monoform	25
Hankook Dynamic M/T	22



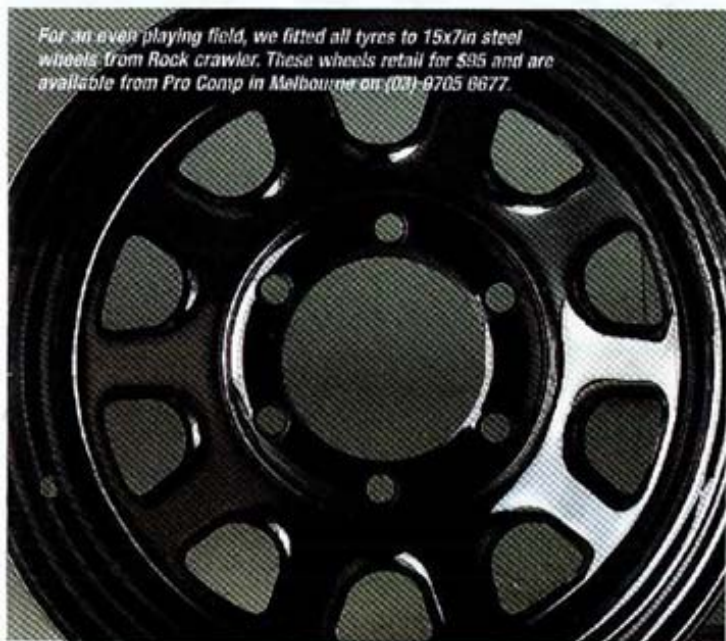
Mick washes mud off for the umpteenth time

The air jack from Overkill worked brilliantly



The boys from Stockys did the hard yards for us, balancing and fitting each rim before we headed bush

For an even playing field, we fitted all tyres to 15x7in steel wheels from Rock crawler. These wheels retail for \$95 and are available from Pro Comp in Melbourne on (03) 9705 6677.



CONTACTS

TYRE MANUFACTURER	PHONE	WEB
Mickey Thompson	1800 681 298	www.coopertires.com.au
BFGoodrich	1300 306 757	www.bfgoodrichtires.com.au
Goodyear	13 23 43	www.goodyear.com.au
Pro Comp	(03) 9705 6677	www.procomp.com.au
Cooper	1800 681 298	www.coopertires.com.au
Hankook		www.hankooktyre.com.au
Kumho	1300 651 413	www.kumho.com.au
Dunlop	1800 888 973	www.dunloptyres.com.au
Simex	(07) 3268 4150	www.simextyres.com
Yokohama	13 15 09	www.yokohama.com.au
Silverstone	1800 803 532	
Motorway	1800 036 061	www.motorway-tyres.com.au
Sumitomo	1300 660 233	

NEXT MONTH

MEAN MOTHER RUBBER

If heavy-duty off-road rubber is on your shopping list, then next month is a must-read edition of *Australian 4WD Monthly*. The big guns go head-to-head over a gruelling test course to find out which is king of the jungle. The contenders: Simex Centipede, Super Swamper Bogger, Goodyear MT/R, Super Swamper TSL, Mickey Thompson Claw. They're all between 36in and 37in in diameter, and all will be tested on *4WD Monthly's* own Project Otis. We can't wait!



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