

Performance Talk

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Motorcycle Performance “Software”

When discussing Motorcycle Performance, you will rarely hear any mention of tires. You’ll hear plenty about cams, pistons, ignition systems, etc., all the “Hardware” of motorcycle performance, but the “Software” of motorcycle performance, the tires, is where the rubber meets the ground.

In the past, tires were made to last, they weren’t made for performance. Back in the day, Dunlop’s, and many other tires, were hard, and didn’t handle well in the corners. Nowadays, Dunlop is the “Touring” tire we use the most for our customers. Since 1984, Dunlop has been the sole supplier of original equipment tires for Harley-Davidson, and recently, the two companies partnered to create the Dunlop Harley Davidson Series. Last year, one of our Vendors convinced me that Metzler’s were truly the tire for my style of riding. My “style” is leaning into as many curvy roads as I can find, usually above the speed limit. He said that Metzler’s were “grippy”. He claimed they were better than the Avon’s I had been using. Since he was my “expert”, and it was time for new rubber, we ordered in the ME880 tires for my 87 FXR. Without getting deep & technical, these tires are designed to corner, even with a heavy load. Of course, I went right out and tested them, and loved them. The Metzler Company has been in the rubber biz since 1863. Back in 1937, they even set the high-speed world record for motorcycles. In 1978, they narrowed production to motorcycle tires exclusively, devoting all their expertise to improving the construction of the tire.

It is critical that you don’t skimp on your rubber. Your tires do have a limited life span. It isn’t just how many miles are on your tires, but the amount of time those tires have been on your bike. When it comes time to buying new rubber for your bike, count on your “expert” to provide you with the latest in rubber technology, for the type of riding you do.