

Tyre tests 215/60 R17

# Rubber and Stone

*Tyres for an SUV involve some pretty special challenges. Eleven manufacturers are put through their paces with an Opel Mokka.*

**T**yres don't have an easy life of it. The black rubber circles are squashed, scraped, worn, kneaded – and rarely looked after. They're sometimes freezing, and sometimes sizzling at surface temperatures of 60°. They're driven through water, crashed into kerbs, and have to cope with enormous mechanical stresses.

But when a tyre is fitted to an SUV, it has the hardest job of all. SUVs are heavy, and tyres need a high load index to cope. The Opel Mokka's LI was 96, equivalent to a wheel load of 710 kg. Tyres below this benchmark are not permitted.

**These vehicles** have a high centre of gravity, and tyres with a broad cross-section that gives them

the familiar brawny appearance. However, these tyres deform considerably when cornering.

To find out which tyres are best for normal road conditions in summer, ACE LENKRAD joined forces with technical inspection organisation (GTÜ) and its Austrian partner association ARBÖ to test eleven tyres that are

do less damage; however, it is still advisable to avoid driving over nails, screws and roadside kerbs.

The use of these strengthening measures has negative consequences; the weight of our tested tyres ranges from 9.1 for the Conti lightweight to 12.2 for the Michelin Latitude Tour.



Like any vehicle, SUVs rely on good tyres. The choice is wide, but in summer conditions the best models are summer tyres similar to car tyres.

approved for vehicles like the Opel Mokka.

**According** to the manufacturers, all tyres are intended for summer use. AT (All Terrain) tyres were not included in the test; the drive-by noise and wet grip performance of these chunky models make them considerably less road-friendly.

And yet many SUV drivers firmly expect their tyres to cope with any terrain from dirt tracks to grass. Tyre manufacturers do take rough road conditions into consideration; SUV-labelled tyres are generally more rugged than their often visually identical car counterparts. Extra layers or the use of tougher materials for the casing increases puncture resistance, so that sharp stones

That's a whole 12 kilos more on the vehicle, which have to be powered, accelerated and braked time after time. In conjunction with rolling resistance, this may end up considerably boosting fuel consumption.

**However, braking** distance itself is largely determined by other factors, particularly on wet roads. Here, the much-quoted rubber compound and optimized tread design are what make the difference.

Continental has focused on shortening braking distances for many years, and this dedication also shows in the SUV category, with the Premium Contact 5 putting up a great performance. Even on wet roads, our Conti-fitted Opel Mokka came to a



Even if summer roads take a showering, most of the tyres we tested delivered effective grip. But drivers shouldn't expect all-terrain performance; driving characteristics on asphalt would suffer immediately.

standstill after only 26 metres. Apart from the size and load index, the tyre is identical to the car version. Broad circumferential grooves which are virtually smooth at the sidewalls serve to deflect water, while relatively compact outer shoulders bump up the amount of rubber on the road and add stability in braking and cornering.

**Yet this is the reason** why many SUV drivers are disappointed when they're stuck to the spot on wet grass despite all-wheel drive. In this case, only a deeply profiled tread would help, tearing out the grass in clumps instead of sliding over the top. The tread would need lots of transverse edges or free-standing blocks – but the tyre would then be unsuitable for

driving on summer roads.

Michelin's heavyweight model is a step in that direction; according to the Michelin website, the summer tyre – which is designed for SUVs under normal road conditions – has also been approved for the Audi Q5, VW Tiguan and Touareg, Volvo XC60 XC60 and Range Rover in the corresponding sizes.

But the M+S label is normally reserved for winter tyres. Unfortunately, many manufacturers have the bad habit of fitting SUVs with M+S-labelled tyres in the factory. Provided those tyres are genuine all-year models and were expressly ordered, there's little objection.

**However,** to some extent these OE tyres are only designed to underline the rough, rugged character of a SUV. Sobering realization comes with the first snowfall at the very latest. Summer driving characteristics are deliberately impaired to promise minor improvements in traction on slippery ground. As the Michelin Latitude Tour is just such a case, it performed correspondingly poorly in our tests

carried out on the Goodyear test track in Mireval, South of France, under summer conditions. Braking distance in the wet was around 31 metres from 80 km/h, a good vehicle length longer than the Conti. Drivers seeking more rugged profiles may go for the Michelin Latitude Cross, but the car tyre Primacy 3 could very well prove to be a more useful choice.

**The Cooper 4XS Sport,** Nankang Green Sport Eco2+ and Sunny SH 220 likewise took over 30 metres to come to a standstill. More surprisingly, so did the Vredestein Sportrac 5 and Toyo Proxes CF 2 SUV. The tread designs of the latter two show no confirmation of any status as all-terrain tyres.

**Braking distances** of less than 30 metres in the wet were achieved by the tyres we tested from Falken, Hankook, Goodyear and Nokian – the latter two actually bearing the designation "SUV". The test results do not bear out any general rules along the lines of "SUV-specific tyres have limited all-terrain suitability but poorer braking in the wet". However, it is probably true to say that the "premium" tyres from Conti, Goodyear, Hankook and even Nokian are a better choice than the cheaper budget brands. Yet even here, exceptions may prove the rule.

*Gunnar Beer*



## SUMMER TYRE TEST 2017 - Size 215/60 R 17

Brand Tyre type	Max. points	Continental PremiumContact 5	Goodyear EfficientGrip SUV	Falken ZieX ZE914	Hankook VentusPrime <sup>3</sup>	Nokian Line SUV	Vredestein Sportrac 5	Nankang GreenSportEco-2+	Cooper Zeon 4XS Sport	Sunny SH 220	Toyo Proxes CF2 SUV	Michelin Latitude Tour HP
<b>SAFETY, WET</b>												
Braking, wet	30	28	26	23	21	21	18	18	16	12	10	18
Handling, wet (measured)	5	4	3	3	3	5	4	3	4	3	3	4
Handling, wet (subjective)	10	9	8	8	8	9	8	7	7	8	7	7
Circuit, wet	5	5	4	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	2	2
Aquaplaning, longitudinal	20	14	13	13	13	13	13	13	11	13	12	13
Aquaplaning, lateral	10	8	8	9	9	9	8	9	6	8	8	9
<b>Category total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>68</b>	62	<b>59</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>SAFETY, DRY</b>												
Braking, dry	30	27	26	25	25	22	24	22	24	19	22	17
Handling, dry (measured)	15	12	13	11	11	12	12	10	13	10	11	10
Handling, dry (subjective)	15	11	11	11	11	10	11	10	11	9	11	10
<b>Category total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>50</b>	50	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL/ECONOMY</b>												
Drive-by noise	10	6	7	9	9	7	6	8	8	9	9	8
Rolling resistance	20	16	16	14	16	14	16	14	14	15	17	15
<b>Category total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>22</b>	23	<b>23</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>TOTAL TECH. CHARACTERISTICS</b>												
<b>Category total</b>	<b>170</b>	140	135	129	129	126	123	116	117	109	112	113
Approx. price for 4 tyres (EUR)		570.00	558.00	466.00	470.00	458.00	522.00	342.00	444.00	196.00	458.00	628.00
<b>Rating, price</b>	<b>20</b>	13	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>												
<b>Category total</b>	<b>190</b>	153	148	144	144	141	137	133	132	129	127	124
<b>RANKING</b>												
<b>Category total</b>		1	2	3	3	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<b>RATING</b>												
		Highly Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended	Recommended w. reservations	Recommended w. reservations	Recommended w. reservations



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## HOW THE TESTS WORK

SUV tyres undergo the same test programme as conventional car tyres. All measurements were conducted at the Goodyear test track at Mireval (France) at summer conditions. Exception: rolling resistance, measured on a stationary test bench. For more details, visit [www.ace.de/ratgeber/produkttests](http://www.ace.de/ratgeber/produkttests).