

PRODUCT CHECK

WHAT'S BLACK and round with knobs all over? Dirt bike tyres, right? Right. The thing is, though, not all dirt bike tyres are created equal, which might just be the law that Rick Atkinson, the driving force behind the new Australian brand of Motoz tyres, lives by.

For several years Rick has been burning the midnight-oil experimenting with three-dimensional computer design images of a varied range of off-road motorcycle tyres. Decades working in the tyre industry, along with a broad understanding of how dirt bike tyres need to perform thanks to his own dirt riding activities, gave Rick just the right background to design his own range of high-performance off-road tyres. Extensive contacts with tyre suppliers around the world allowed Rick to cement a relationship with a tyre manufacturer in Thailand that would offer its support in meeting the significant costs of producing numerous moulds and a selection of pre-production tyres that could be tested and developed right here in Australia.

"It took years and hundreds of test tyres before we could introduce a broad range of Motoz tyres and sizes that would slot right into dealerships across Australia," Rick explained when we recently hooked up with the Motoz crew to try their tyres during a trail ride with the team from Sunny Corner Trail Tours (see the story on page 28 of this issue).

It's been a long haul establishing Motoz from the ground up, but thanks to the company's substantial commitment and a dedicated bunch of enthusiastic staff, the brand now has steady supply and a constantly growing dealer base right around Australia – with Rick even keen to take the brand overseas to international markets.

Another individual feature of Motoz tyres is the tyre sizing compared to other brands. Sizes marked on Motoz sidewalls appear large, but this isn't the case. This is more to do with Motoz attaining road approval for the European market. Like everything in Europe, things are far different to the more commonly accepted American tyre sizes. So while a Motoz tyre marked 130/90x18 sounds large for some 450s, it's actually the right size.

HOME ON THE RANGE

Now, rather than delve deep into all the technical information that's available on the www.motoz.com.au web site (check it out), let's take a fast look at the Motoz tyre range, where the next thing you'll note is the wicked model names the Motoz crew have come up with!

Tractionator: Available in front and rear designs and described as a tough tyre designed for dry, hard-pack conditions where there could be plenty of rocks, off-cambers and ruts. Well suited to dual-sport and adventure riders that need good mileage as well as good puncture protection during long rides and weekends away.

Tractionator Enduro: Available in front and rear designs and aimed at use in varied conditions over a cross-section of terrain, that could include wet ground. Claimed to offer excellent rider feedback, good puncture protection and easy fitment. Aimed at trail riders and enduro racers alike.

Tracula: Available in front and rear designs and developed for grass-track and wet conditions to give bite when you need it most. Claimed to also excel in soft and loamy conditions where hard-pack is rare.

There's a new kid on the block in the tyre wars: Motoz. Australian inspired and designed, we hooked up with the Motoz team to get a taste of their new tyres.

Story: Phil Gielis
Photography: Clubby

>>> TYRE WARS >>>



GAINING THE EDGE

The first time you view a Motoz tyre you'll notice that the established tread pattern of square knobs placed evenly around the carcass doesn't apply to the Motoz range. As a general rule, the knobs on Motoz tyres have many more edges, points and corners incorporated into their design. Why? The Motoz design principle follows the line of thought that extra edges and more corners help to bite harder. It makes sense, when you think about it.

Further, the tapered sides on the centre knobs on Motoz tyres mean that even after the tyres start to wear, the knob's edges remain sharper, rather than rounding right off and losing their ability to bite and hook up. Add these specific knob designs and tread patterns to a careful selection of tyre profiles, wheel size fitments and carcass and bead construction techniques, and the Motoz range soon starts to stand out from the pack.

Tractionator X-Circuit: Available in front and rear sizes and designed to excel where tracks are made up of long straights and tight corners, such as short circuit lay-outs. Tread design allows plenty of side hook-up on tight flat corners and fast hard pack where line selection is critical and drive out of corners is essential.

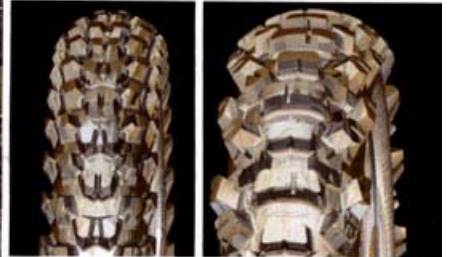
Motoz tyres are not cheap, but then, they're not the most expensive, either. They appear to offer good value for money, with rears ranging in price from \$110 to \$145 depending on the model and size selected, while fronts range from \$89 to \$115.

PUTTING THEM TO THE TEST

Of course, the true test of a tyre is how well it works, and how well it lasts, so with Motoz keen to have myself and **TRAIL ZONE** contributing



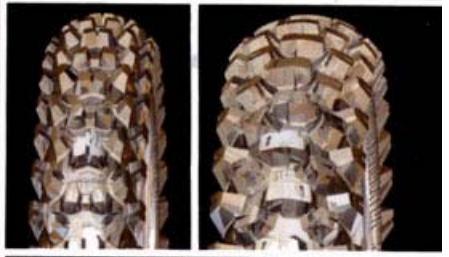
MOTOZ TRACTIONATOR



MOTOZ TRACTIONATOR ENDURO



MOTOZ TRACULA



MOTOZ TRACTIONATOR X-CIRCUIT



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MAIN: Muz McLerie manhandles his Safari-tanked KTM 450EXC through the Sunny Corner forests while giving Motoz's new tyres a solid work-out. 1. All hands on deck to fit the fresh new Motoz hoops. 2. Motoz guru Rick Atkinson gives Poppun the rundown on the new rubber. 3. Muz has to ask who needs tyre levers when Macca and Mick from Sunny Corner Tours are on-hand to do the tyre changes for you! 4. Rick and the Gun size up a set of Tractionators for the next test loop. 5. Poppun carves the single-track aboard a fresh set of Tractionator Enduro tyres. 6. Rick sure knows his stuff: a stack of research has gone into shaping Motoz's unique features.

Editor Muzza McLerie put their rubber to the test, we leapt at it.

First up we ran a set of Tractionator Enduro tyres on a KTM 450EXC test bike for the afore-mentioned Sunny Corner ride, then swapped them onto our Yamaha WR450F Project Bike for the Detour Pub With No Beer ride featured on page 40 of this issue. With the Sunny Corner loop being mostly dry, hard-packed ground with no moisture, the tyres were right at home in the conditions. There's no qualms about running them on hard ground, that's for sure. Plus they held their edge well after that first 120km or so of riding. Then on the Detour ride, the same went for the dry, rocky sections of trail, however on wet, greasy trails, we were quickly scrambling to let the tyre pressures down in pursuit of more grip. In the end we dropped to just nine psi at the rear to get traction on the greasiest hillclimbs, which would normally run the risk of puncture. But to give due credit to the tyres' strong sidewalls and

overall construction, we didn't cop a flat in two days of hard, fast riding.

Muz, meantime, ran a set of Tractionator tyres on his Safari-tanked KTM 450EXC at Sunny Corner, then grabbed another fresh set off Rick for his assault on the Condo 750 in western NSW two weeks later. Fitted with mousse tubes, the Tractionators came through with flying colours at Condo, where dry, hard-packed ground conditions dominated proceedings and the tyres barely lost their edge after more than 700km of racing. Rapt with the Tractionators' performance at Condo, you can guess what rubber Muz is aiming to run in the Australian Safari in WA later in the year!

For a start-up brand, Motoz has developed two tyres in the Tractionator and Tractionator Enduro that are well suited to dry, hard-pack ground and we all ride on plenty of that! When it finally rains and we get some soft, wet trails, we'll give a set of Motoz Traculas a try in a future issue.

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