

<http://www.lerepairedesmotards.com/essais/pneus/pneus-mitas-sportforce-plus.php>

## **Mitas SportForce + Tyre Test**

3,500 kilometres of testing on the road, in a road rally and at the Nürburgring!

Efficiency and longevity: probably the best kept secret of motorcycle tires for less than €200 per set!

For all riders who have powerful machines, who know how to make use of them, and who require a minimum service life, the question of tyres is thorny because they know they can't simply have their cake and eat it too. They can only hope that the lady who baked it likes mean machines.

### **Petty crooks on vacation**

Stef is one of those riders looking for the best compromise. He likes sports motorcycles (he owns a Kawasaki 650 Versys for everyday use, for the March Moto Madness and sometimes for road rallies, as well as an Aprilia Tuono V4 for showing off) and he rides. A lot. Everywhere. Vacations, road trips with his friends (who are all just as excited as he is), road rallies for enlightened and demanding amateurs, and power laps on one of the three most dangerous racing tracks in the world, the famous North Loop at the Nürburgring (sharing the podium with the Isle of Man TT and Macau Grand Prix). Not a bad vision of the motorcycle, right?

Last year, Stef and his merry gang of friends went on a road trip. The programme included the Alps and 8 hours of motorcycling a day in order to cross as many passes as possible – riding, to borrow their words, like “morons”. We are far from supporting this kind of antisocial practice, but as professional journalists, we have to collect information as it is.

In short, aboard their war machines (two Tuonos, one KTM 1290 SuperDuke, one MT-09 and one Ducati Monster 821), Stef and his friends let off steam. Braking late, putting their feet on the accelerator at an angle, coming out of a bend drifting, they polished the asphalt and took very little time to admire the scenery. The Alps are overrated anyway.

And the inevitable did indeed happen: our lovely gang found itself without rear tyres, wearing them out after only 2,000 kilometres out of a planned total of 3,500 kilometres. Our friends thus had to buy tyres in Switzerland. They discovered that local prices are double the French prices and that the availability of tyres is quite uncertain in midsummer. The rest of the journey cost them an arm and a leg (not to mention a few Swiss radar traps they fell into on the way) and since experience is the best teacher, Stef decided to do a little research to avoid suffering the same misfortune on the 2016 Road Trip.

### **Mitas, not an obvious choice...**

When riding a sports motorcycle or radical roadster, no one wants to compromise safety. And this is where the premium brands advance the killer argument worthy of their price: their reputation!

Stef agrees: “Before participating in the March Moto Madness (he is the guy jumping on a Versys with the top case and side panniers), I would not have imagined that the Czech brand Mitas could make good tyres. But there were many guys on the R 1200 GS who had them and were satisfied.”

Like a true geek, Stef checked out the forums, mostly foreign ones, since the brand recognition is still poor or non-existent in France. He realised that certain communities found these Mitas tyres quite good. Reassured by the diversity of testimonies and their consistently positive tone, Stef went for it and fitted a set of SportForce+ tyres on his Tuono V4. It was a clever deal: a complete set with a

190mm rear tyre cost him less than €200, compared to the more than €250 he had to pay for a premium brand or almost €300 for the Metzeler M7RR. And a bit of research can often reveal special €150 deals on a set of 190mm tyres. Financially, it is unbeatable.

Other participants in the 2016 Road Trip made a similar but less “economical” choice, fitting road tyres on their sports roadsters. Before leaving on a big trip in the South of France, JC, the king of wheeling when coming out of a bend, put the Pirelli Angel GT tyres on his KTM 1290 SuperDuke, while Max put the Bridgestone S21 tyres on his Tuono V4.

### **Almost the best qualities**

Stef has a long history of fitting different types of tyres on his motorcycle. He thus has good experience and excellent feedback on Dunlop SportSmart (“the front tyre gives a special feeling and is very sensitive to pressure), Michelin Pilot Power 3 (“awful performance after mid-life”), Bridgestone S20 (“a very good grip, but ridiculous service life”) and Metzeler (“very good, nothing left to be said”).

As we can see, opinions are well defined. The folks at Mitas will surely blush with pride as Stef compares his Mitas with Metzeler! “I mainly broke them in on drying asphalt and there is nothing to say in relation to other tyres, I didn’t notice any unusual reactions. And, as a bonus, it is very easy to fit them,” said Stef, whose consumption of tyres made him buy a fitting machine. The Mitas tyres have no paraffin coat and are therefore easy to break in.

“The confidence was built immediately and I noticed no unnecessary reactions at an angle or sudden losses of grip.” During the road trip, the Mitas Sport Force+ tyres were fully satisfactory: “I rode dynamically, with lots of big boosts at an angle, right in the torque. The grip was there, the balance was good and the motorcycle remained strong.”

The best moment? “In the Var, I was able to follow JC and Angel GT in the heavy rain, although the Mitas tyres seem to lack some feedback on these conditions.”

### **Excellent on the road, slightly less in extreme use (still 8min 28s at the Nürburgring!)**

Stef’s advantage is that when he is testing he is really testing! The Tuono V4 + Mitas SportForce+ pair thus participated in the Dourdou Rally. “I had a very good feeling, even when I did some things that weren’t very neat, like put the motorcycle in first gear while fully hitting the brakes and riding at an angle. Then, the Mitas tyres let out a little squeal, but regained their grip immediately.”

On Road Rallies, you do not really use the maximum angle, but you do make major boosts, while the slips are late and thoughtful. “Especially in the case of bumps, I cut off the Tuono’s traction control. I was even able to try out some heavy late braking with warm tyres. Well, I did it once and ended up in a ditch, but that was entirely my fault, I was simply too fast.”

The level of requirements was raised. Stef decided to confront the infamous North Loop of Nürburgring in Germany, the renowned Nordschleife with its 21km track, 180 bends, 300m of elevation change... There, the Mitas tyres proved less magnificent... But this should be put into perspective: Stef completed a lap in 8 minutes 28 seconds in traffic, which is not bad at all!

“I rode my motorcycle at the Nürburgring with the M7RR and Pirelli SuperCorsa and the Mitas tyres are not at the same level. They are far behind Pirelli and slightly behind Metzeler. There were no problems with the front tyre, which heated up quickly, but the rear tyre didn’t really appreciate my 167 hp when I stepped on the gas and quickly pulled into an angle. With the SuperCorsa tyres, I put the APRC on the third of the eight levels and they practically never caught fire, but the Mitas tyres often caused me ignition problems. So I lowered the level of traction control and the motorcycle

started to slip gradually when coming out of a bend. It was still safe, but the riding power was not good. It's a big handicap!"

Let's not forget that the Mitas SportForce+ tyres are not specifically made for the racing tracks.

And the last quality? "Just like M7RR, the Mitas tyres are awesome even at the end of their service life."

The price remains the main advantage of Mitas SportForce+, especially for consumers who often replace their tyres. Those who mostly ride on dry roads will be trouble-free with the tyre, though it shows its limits on the racing track especially.

### Strengths

- Grip and feeling when used on the road
  - Very decent service life
  - In the rain: good grip
- Unbeatable price in this category

### Weaknesses

- Average feeling in the rain
- Limited grip on the racing track, especially when speeding up

Test conditions

Itinerary: 3,500km on a road trip, a road rally and 12 laps at the Nürburgring