

GEARLAB

Continental Motorcycle Tires



Continental Motorcycle Tires is on a roll. For 2017, the company based in Korbach, Germany, has rolled out four new Conti-brand tire models—the Tour, Legend, RoadAttack 3 and City, all engineered to fit specific ranges of motorcycles.

No doubt, the “lead” models for the U.S. market are the ContiTour, ContiLegend and ContiRoadAttack 3, which were developed for the long-distance riding that many American riders favor. The Tour and Legend specifically fit heavyweight touring and cruising models (e.g. Harley-Davidson and Indian), while the RoadAttack 3 is the next evolution of Continental’s sport-touring RoadAttack 2 EVO.

Continental revealed the new tires at a special presentation on the island of Mallorca, located off the coast of Spain in the Mediterranean Sea. A small fleet of bikes ranging from Harleys to European brands to various Japanese models, provided by Edelweiss Bike Travel, were equipped with the new Contis, and following a tech briefing we headed off through Mallorca’s tight, narrow streets and twisty mountain roads to experience the tires firsthand.

At first glance, the ContiTour and ContiLegend appear to be similar, the only difference being their sidewalls; the Legend wears whitewalls, the Tour comes in black. Both tires are intended to handle heavy loads, a must for touring, and, according to Continental, their multi-groove tread patterns allow for rapid water disbursement during wet-weather riding (although Mallorca’s brilliant sunshine kept us from testing it).

There are, however, slight differences between the Tour and Legend. Foremost, the Tour has a continuous center tread band that, without grooves, offers increased mileage and firm directional stability, especially when carrying extremely heavy loads. Both tires benefit from Continental’s special compound, which it calls MileagePlus technology, for extended wear and cornering grip, and they share similar profiles for responsive turn-in while cornering.

The ContiRoadAttack 3 is a zero-degree radial design that brings its own technology—EasyHandling in Continental’s lexicon—to the game. A single compound is used throughout to provide what Continental describes as “homogenous grip” at all lean angles. The corporate term for this is MultiGrip, and the goal is to offer seamless cornering feedback and feel to the rider from full lean to straight-up riding conditions. Continental touts the RoadAttack 3 as suitable for sport touring and everyday riding, so in addition to sportbikes our stable included standard models such as BMW’s R nineT and Yamaha’s sporty FZ-09.

When it was time to ride I jumped into the deep end, selecting a Harley Electra Glide shod with ContiTours. There was noticeable grip at the front tire, and after initial turn-in the big bike tracked well through corners, usually a sign that front and rear profiles are well

Top: ContiRoadAttack 3
Bottom: ContiTour

matched. Sadly, Mallorca doesn’t offer the wide-open spaces associated with America’s roadways, so I couldn’t experience high-speed feel. Considering Continental’s reputation for straight-line stability from previous tire models, though, I’d venture to say the ContiTour should be a suitable replacement tire when it’s time to re-shoe Ol’ Blue.

Next, I chose a Road King shod with ContiLegends. Turn-in for corners and smooth grip under braking told me the whitewall tire was well suited to the bagger. I managed to scrape the floorboards during full



We tested the new ContiLegend on a Road King.

lean in some of Mallorca's mountain hairpin turns, testimony to the tire's advertised grip.

The remainder of my day was spent on a BMW R nineT and Ducati Multistrada 1200, allowing the hooligan inside me to create a little mischief through the tight hairpin turns and switchbacks during our ride. The RoadAttack 3 felt forgiving enough; if I entered a turn a *little* too fast, following some initial trail braking on my part, the tires responded so I could hold my line with little fanfare. It's not the kind of riding I endorse all the time, but we were there to test the tires...right?

The new Contis come in sizes to fit most of today's popular bikes. Once they're mounted the only thing you have to bring to the party is the fun factor. Now let's roll!

—DAIN GINGERELLI

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iXS Shawn Leather Jacket

IF YOU'VE GOT A café racer, bobber or scrambler in the garage (heck, even if you don't), a quality vintage-styled leather jacket can feel like just the right thing to wear. As much as I like looking (and feeling) good while racin', bobbin' or scramblin', I'm not one to sacrifice quality construction and decent protection in the name of style. Thin, glove-soft leather might flatter my figure, but I'd rather not test it in a meet-the-pavement situation.

Fortunately, the Shawn jacket from iXS is constructed of thick, 1.4mm buffalo leather, which is just as abrasion-resistant as cowhide yet somehow feels more exotic. It's smooth and soft to the touch, but due to the thickness it proved to be a bit stiff until broken in. The leather has a distressed finish, and features off-white contrasting stripes, accents and zipper pulls, as well as a sewn-on patch on the right chest attesting to its "Vintage" nature.

The cuffs zip tightly closed to fit under gauntlet gloves, and they have extraneous snaps as well that I found to be more annoying than useful. I was thankful that the collar strap was hook-and-loop, with an outer metal snap button that is only for looks. The Shawn's sporty cut was flattering both on the bike and off, with hip adjuster straps (more snaps) that let me tailor the fit, and thoughtful bust darts for comfort. Slipping it on was like stepping into a saddle and tack shop; it seemed to exude more *parfum d'cuir* than any other jacket I've worn.

Removable CE Level 1 armor at the shoulders and elbows is included, but a back protector is optional; iXS' CE Level 2 Protect T (\$29) fits perfectly. Also included is a zip-in quilted vest liner for added warmth, and with its lack of vents, the Shawn is best for moderate to chilly temperatures. There are two big zippered hip pockets, one small pocket on the left chest that is mostly for looks, and two inner hook-and-loop pockets large enough to swallow a small paperback book. The quilted liner has its own pockets, for when you have it zipped in.

The close, sporty fit feels protective yet attractive, and is very comfortable at higher speeds with the wind-blocking characteristics of the thick leather. The Shawn's hip-length cut also provides great backside coverage, even when bent over on a café racer's low handlebars.

The iXS Shawn is available in women's sizes 8-16, in Purple-Ivory, Black-Ivory and Blue-Ivory, and in men's sizes 38-50, in Black-Ivory, Brown-Ivory and Blue-Ivory, for \$349. Remember, iXS is Euro-sized, so consider ordering a size larger than you normally might.

—JENNY SMITH

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BMW San Diego Jacket

ALL THAT'S OLD is new again! BMW is complementing its "Heritage" line of retro-cycles with this San Diego jacket, which looks to all the world like a classic 1960s-era waxed cotton garment, but actually boasts modern construction and armor underneath its fashionable skin. The undeniably handsome exterior shell is constructed of a wax-impregnated, 65-percent polyester/35-percent cotton textile material, and accented with 1-1.2mm thick abrasion resistant cowhide leather on the undersleeve and shoulder areas. Three zippered hand pockets and two breast pockets provide moderate storage, and a lapel collar with snap

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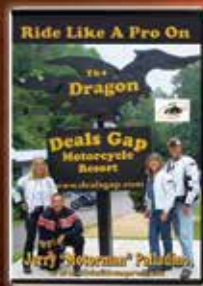
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closure completes the traditional look. All external zippers have leather pulls, so they're easy to use with gloves on. Stylish touches abound, from the subtly embossed BMW logo on the upper left sleeve to the delicately ribbed stitching on the shoulders.

The tasteful styling continues inside with a champagne-colored polyester main liner emblazoned with the compa-

ny's "Make Life A Ride" slogan, while the sleeves are lined in a darker gold-colored polyamide material. Two relatively large zippered inner pockets plus an additional cell phone pouch (with cord pass-through) provide more accommodation for sundries, while a 16-inch zipper at the base of the jacket allows interconnection with riding pants if desired.

Construction is solid and substan-

tial, as expected in this price class. BMW's CE-approved EN 1621-1:2012 certified NPL armor comes standard in the shoulders and elbows, while a matching 16-inch-high x 10.5-inch-wide NPL back pad is optional. In my experience, this armor is among the most comfortable in the industry, offering excellent flexibility in the cold and generously perforated for breathability in summer riding. The pads quickly conform to the body's shape, with minimal shifting once underway.

Out on the road, the San Diego impressed with its lightweight and reasonably good airflow. There is no thermal liner included and it's not waterproof, so it's best to think of this as a jacket primarily suited for moderately warm, sunny days—otherwise, you'd best pack the rain gear and some extra layers once things get brisk. Likewise, once the temperatures push much past 85 degrees, you'll be reaching for your freer-flowing summer mesh gear. That said, judging by the reaction of other riders, it's definitely one of the most aesthetically pleasing moto-garments on the market today. Both the leather and textile quickly developed a "distressed" look as the miles piled up, giving it the patina of a well-worn café racer's favorite duds, only further endearing it to those (like me) who love that old-school look. The San Diego gives such riders the best of both worlds, balancing a truly authentic appearance with the modern construction and armored protection one would expect from a jacket at this price point. MSRP for the Vietnamese-made BMW San Diego jacket is \$569, and the optional back pad (P/N 76-41-8-546-890) is \$29 additional.

—MOSHE K. LEVY 

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