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Tourance Next Tires: A NEW Long Distance Tire Paradigm for Adventure Touring

by Paul H. Smith

My head is still reeling from a recent 12,000 mile road trip around the U.S. and Canada. In the planning stages, tire considerations were very much on my mind. I eventually decided to go with a dual-sport specific *road* tire, knowing that they could be aired down whenever off-road conditions warranted it. And man… what a PERFECT decision that turned out to be.

It just so happened that *Metzeler* wanted us to check out their new replacement for the *Tourance EXP*—the *Next*. And, thanks to Christopher Wall, a set arrived a few days before departure.

The *Tourance Next* is *Metzeler's* latest generation of enduro street tires, featuring new compounds, profiles, structure and tread pattern. There are several aspects unique to the new tire that makes it unusually relevant to adventure touring. The most noticeable of which is the tread pattern with its "differentiated groove layout" and shape. It's… well… kind of strange! The asymmetrical patterns of seemingly random squiggles are similar to those found on the latest crop of motorcycle tire designs—so radically removed from traditional tread patterns they could be alien in origin. And, so unusual that my first reaction was that I just might have made a big mistake. As a dual-sport and big enduro rider, I'm accustomed to seeing lots of tread and in very recognizable symmetrical patterns—this was a little out of my comfort zone.

However, after scrubbing them in, a shakedown ride proved my fears unfounded. Indeed, the *Next* tires enriched the on-pavement handling characteristics of the *R1200GSA*. Rider feedback was excellent. The tires rode quieter, and ate up irregularities, such as grooved concrete and tar snakes… basically rendering most of them unnoticeable.

At first glance, one might not think so, but they're also rain tires. Rain? On the trip, I had it in spades—and well over 3,000 miles of the wet stuff pelted from the sky at various times as I rode across North America. *Metzeler* claims that these tires perform excellent in rain, and that their design provides a "chemical grip with water evacuation" properties. I not only agree, but attest that they perform substantially better than any other tire I've *ever* used.

Most are calling the *Next* a 90/10 or 95/5 tire. Like many riders, I typically air down to around 25 psi when I'm off road for any length of time. This provides a much more sure-footed grip, especially when using road tires. They're nothing like a full knob, of course, but for getting around in the gravel or dirt, they do okay. And, in comparison to a regular set of *Tourances*, there were no perceivable differences.

How did they do on the long haul on my big, overloaded *GSA? Metzeler* states that the *Next* dual-compound rear tires are designed for extended wear. Being accustomed to swapping rubber around 4,000 to 6,000 miles, I thought, "Sure… maybe I'll get 8,000 miles out of them." Along the way, periodic inspections of the condition of the tires proved way beyond expectations. Even after 12,000 miles, both tires barely showed *any* wear. And, checking the forums, some riders are reporting as much as 22,000 miles on the rear alone. For an adventure touring tire, this is remarkable. Apparently *BMW* agrees, because the *Next* are now original equipment on the *R1200GS* water boxers rolling onto the showroom floors. Mileage is also improved.

PROS

- Extremely long wear
- Made specifically for heavily-laden adventure touring bikes
- Great handling

CONS

- Not suitable for off road
- Lower profile slightly decreases the *GS Adventure's* ground clearance

It's difficult to say by exactly what percentage, but I'd estimate an approximate gain of five MPG, on average (over regular dual-sport tires), throughout my trip.

Although no tire is a panacea for all riding styles and conditions, in the category of "Best Adventure Touring Tire," I'd hand it directly to the *Metzeler Tourance Next*, without a second thought. If you're planning to haul your big enduro across a country… any country where conditions won't exceed 90/10%, then you cannot go wrong with this tire. They're as close to "perfect" as any tire we've ever ridden on.

MSRP: $197.95–$276.95

Metzeler.com