TYRE MOST LIKELY

At a recent AOMC restoration seminar one of the speakers was a Tyre Wallah giving his thoughts on tyre life. I have heard some tyre people suggest a shelf life (before use) of 5 years under ideal storage conditions, others simply suggest 10 years total life from date of manufacture and so with other factors no one really knows the use by date. Obviously if you see cracks in the sidewalls or between the tread and sidewall the tyre has had it's day.

Our beloved Michelin X tyres were widely used by amateur racers in the 50s and 60s (before dedicated racing tyres became available) because they were the **TYRE MOST LIKELY** to grip a dry track due to their stiff tread soft sidewall design.

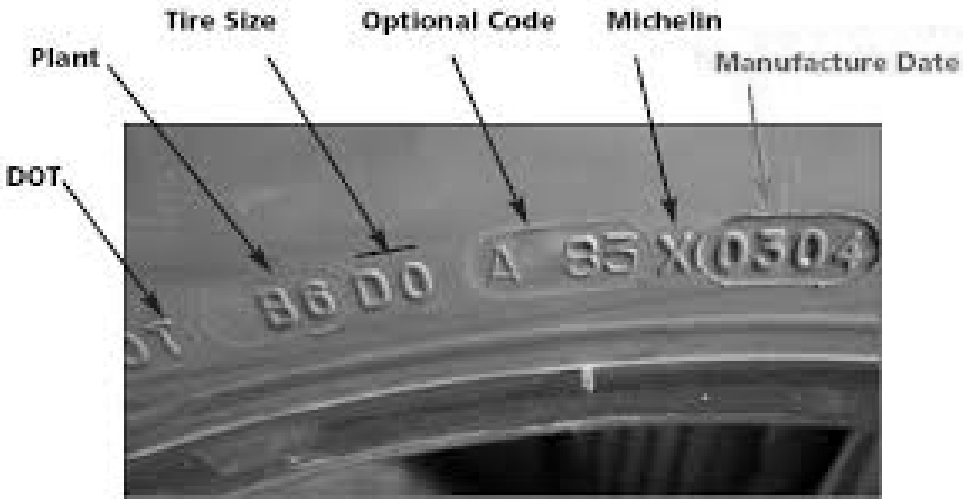
As we move through the 21st century can you guess the **TYRE MOST LIKELY**? Yes it's the Michelin X and it's steel belted compatriots. You must get down and dirty and with a good light and examine in the tread grooves for cracks because in the past when drivers felt wobble/ vibration the thought often was "damm, I have lost a balance weight" and so drive a little faster ie drive through the wobble. This was often successful but if you are using "mature" Michelin X tyres and a sudden vibration starts **STOP IMMEDIATLY**, if you try to drive through the vibration you will **SOON STOP**, upside down, in a ditch or worse.

So instead of the **TYRE MOST LIKELY** to grip, the mature Michelin X is also the **TYRE MOST LIKELY** to fly to bits, ie lose it's tread where water has penetrated cracks in the tread, then rust on the steel bracing causes the tread to lose it's bond, textile radials and old crossplies are almost immune from this tread separation problem.

The other issue is tubeless tyres on an older car , tubeless tyres should only be fitted on wheels with safety rims, this problem arises when wheels are mixed and matched from different era's.

Having had a Michelin X lose it's tread and lived to tell the tale the amount of damage to the car caused by the flailing tread was incredible, without even running off the road.

Finally how to read your tyres! Tyres are manufactured with a Tyre Identification Number (TIN) marking moulded on the sidewall that shows the week and year the tyre was made.



For post 2000 made tyres the last four digits of the TIN indicate production date, eg: 1204 indicates a tyre made on the 12 week of 2004.

For tyres made pre 2000 the last three digits of the TIN indicate production date, eg: 375 indicates a tyre made in the 37 week of 1995.

Tyres made in the 1990s have a triangular indentation after the last number, eg: 10th week of 1994 would have the code 104Δ. No symbols, head for the tyre shop.

Thanks to the Vintage Motor Club of NSW via the AOMC for the tyre marking info.

Russell.