



METZELER M9RR

Spring and summer riding here in NZ demands a tyre which can cope with hot sticky tarseal... and wet tarseal. Metzeler's M9RR claims to do both.

Words & Photos: Ben Wilkins

When it comes to replacing a rider favourite, Metzeler had it's work cut out with the M7RR. The M7RR gained a reputation among sports riders as a tyre that'd happily go to the track, scythe through the Coro-Loop and still work ok in the wet. Track, road and commute – the holy trinity of the tyre world. Still, time marches on and no man, or tyre, can rest on their laurels. Enter the M9RR.

So when it came to replacing a rider favourite, Metzeler had its work cut out to better the M7RR. When a tyre has a load of fans, messing with it can often send them off to try something else. The plan? Grippier in the dry, grippier in the wet, and longer lasting. Seems easy enough. But it's not. Oh no.

SURELY IT'S JUST BLACK AND ROUND?

Those three things like to play the mutually exclusive game. Historically, if you make a tyre last longer then you'll lose grip at one end of the spectrum or another. Make it grippier and it won't last as long. Traditionally tyres have been made of carbon black, which is good for high mechanical grip in the dry. Somewhere in the 2000s silica compounds came along and gave improved chemical grip making them the choice for wet conditions. Silica was then mixed with carbon black to get the blend of performance a tyre engineer was after. Metzeler says that advances in silica compound chemistry now means it can offer tyres with good wet and dry performance and longevity, all from silica compounds. Seems like a win-win. ▶

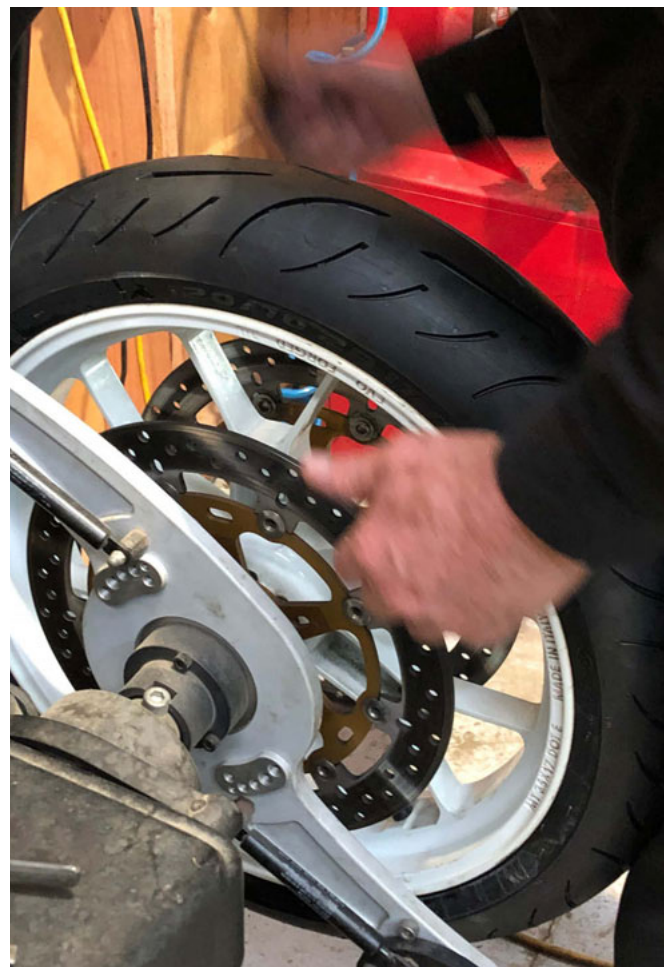


The basics according to Metzeler are:

- * 10% more mileage, wet grip and wet handling, with 20% faster track times and consistency compared to the M7RR.
- * Slick shoulders for confidence and grip at full lean.
- * Slick central contact patch pushes displaces standing water into the adjacent grooves
- * Cap and Base dual compound layout – with softer silica on the shoulders and harder silica in the centre area.
- * 100% silica compounds for quick warm up and wet grip, as well as optimised abrasion resistance for better mileage.

FITTING

I've been running Metzeler's M7RR tyres on my Aprilia Tuono and have been very happy with them, so when the M9RR was announced I was pretty curious to see how they'd stack up back-to-back, especially as the adverts showed a BMW S1000RR being used enthusiastically at ►





the Isle of Man. Now, that's nothing really out of the ordinary – sports tyres on a sports bike. The thing that piqued my curiosity was the setting – all the adverts showed the bike being ridden in the wet. Seemed just the ticket for NZ when you can't trust a weather forecast for more than an hour.

Fitting was easy as. They're not hugely stiff so were a breeze to go on with the machine. They aired up and popped straight onto the bead, and only needed 10g on the rear to balance, with no weights needed on the front at all.

INITIAL RIDING FEELS

My first couple of rides on the M9RRs were typical winter days – sunny but below 10°C – and it was a perfect chance to scrub them in. I have a 35km loop from the house that takes in highway, sweeping roads and some tight

twisties, perfect for getting to know a tyre's characteristics. One easy lap had the shiny mould release agent scrubbed off the surface and ready to go.

Maybe my outgoing M7RRs were a bit old (the date stamp put them at five years) but the M9s seem to soak up a bit more of the road 'noise'. Grip from cold is definitely better on the newer tyres, I can gas it up quite hard and there's no slip from the rear, where the M7 would slip a little from cold.

A ride out with the Italian Motorcycle Owners Club to Taupo at the end of June gave the opportunity to test them in the cold AND wet. With the Metzeler adverts firmly in mind I found I was leaning over further in the wet than I might have done otherwise – a case of sucking up the advertising? – and they really impressed me. Confident and grippy in ▶



definite sub par conditions.

More recently I've just come back from a Coromandel Loop – the weekend before this mag went online – in perfect conditions and they'll push to really high lean angles. Best for me though is the turn-in characteristics, they go from upright to full lean with no change in lean rate. It's a really neutral/linear feeling tyre, there's no having to yank the bike over to get it banked, and it doesn't drop in either.

So far I've done 1675km on them and I'm impressed with the grip in cold, wet and hot conditions. Longevity is looking good too – I can't see much difference between when they were new and now, take a look at the pics for yourself.

Once I've got some more kilometres racked up

I'll tell you how they're going. But for now, I'd say that these are a cracking set of tyres for sports-oriented riders in NZ conditions, and it looks like they're going to last a while too.



Model:	Metzeler M9RR
Sizes:	110/70ZR17, 120/70ZR17, 150/60ZR17, 160/60ZR17, 180/55ZR17, 180/60ZR17, 190/50ZR17, 190/55ZR17, 200/55ZR17