

THE BRIDGESTONE UK NEWSLETTER FOR FIRST STOP DEALERS

Bridgestone's global success is mirrored in UK

Despite challenging market conditions, 2004 has been another successful year for Bridgestone as the company has recorded excellent sales throughout the world.

And according to Andy Lane, marketing manager at Bridgestone UK, this global success has been mirrored in the UK, setting the tone for an even more successful 2005.

"The excellent results achieved by Bridgestone worldwide are very encouraging, and we are extremely proud to have contributed to those results," he said.



ANDY LANE

"It gives our workforce confidence and a sense of pride to work for a company that has capital to invest and is able to deliver sales and profit in the current challenging environment."

Investment

Bridgestone has invested significantly in Europe in the past 12 months, and these are already having an impact in the UK.

Production facilities in Poland, Spain, and France have been expanded, a new technical centre and proving ground has opened in Italy, and Bridgestone now has a share in Scandinavian tyre manufacturer Nokian Tyres. All these investments are already benefiting Bridgestone UK.

"The key performance targets we achieved in 2004 include increasing the turnover of both the Bridgestone and Firestone brands, improving delivery reliability thanks to investment in a new fleet of vehicles, and reducing our customer invoice queries, and this is something we will be striving to improve further in 2005.

"We began to simplify our product line-up in passenger car tyres which will deliver increased productivity and make our range more consumer-friendly," said Andy.

"Both Bridgestone Corporation and Bridgestone UK have had a tremendously successful year in 2004. We are already looking forward to next year where we will continue to strive to secure the long-term demand for our products, as well as seeking improvements in our service levels to make Bridgestone UK the number one tyre company to work with," he added.

Ferrari F430 is latest supercar to fit Bridgestone Potenza

The Ferrari F430, which goes on sale in early 2005, will be the latest supercar to fit Bridgestone Potenza tyres as original equipment.

The stunning car, which will replace the highly-regarded Ferrari 360 Modena, fits Potenza RE050A tyres, which are derived from Formula One technology.



THE STUNNING NEW FERRARI F430

Like its Potenza tyres, the new F430 has been developed utilising motor sport expertise. A steering-wheel-mounted switch, called Manettino, which allows drivers to change the set-up of their car to suit driving conditions, and an optional paddle-shift gearbox are just two examples of how Ferrari has transferred its motor racing knowledge from the track to the road. And with a 0-60mph time of less than four seconds and a top speed of more than 196 miles-per-hour the Ferrari has turned to Bridgestone to provide tyres to support such impressive performance.

Andy Lane, consumer marketing manager at Bridgestone UK, said: "With the extreme power generated by the F430 it was essential Ferrari provided drivers with suitable levels of control – and with its optimum handling and responsiveness the RE050A is the perfect tyre to compliment the car's stunning capabilities."

"Ferrari's choice of Bridgestone Potenza RE050A tyres for the new F430 is another example of the special relationship the two companies share," said Andy Lane. "It is very encouraging to see the partnership that works so well on the Formula One race track so successfully extended to the road."



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NEWS

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Star turns First Stop stars shine even brighter in 2004



STAR PERFORMERS CELEBRATE THEIR AWARDS. TOP ROW (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): PAN AUTOS, STEVE ANDREWS TYRES, AND TW TYRES. BOTTOM ROW (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): KETTERING MOTORIST CENTRE, WILSONS TYRES, AND FLINTSTONE TYRE SERVICES

The number of First Stop dealerships reaching the network's highest customer service standard has doubled in the past 12 months, with six outlets now achieving the acclaimed five star status.

The results of the annual First Stop Stars programme also show that the whole network is making exceptional headway, with a 25 per cent increase in those reaching the three star standard and a huge 75 per cent increase in dealerships attaining the four star rating.

"This is a remarkable increase in the performance levels of First Stop dealerships and demonstrates the high-quality service that the network is offering," said Andy Dingley, senior marketing analyst at Bridgestone UK, "and it's encouraging to see so many

dealerships committed to continually improving the service they offer to customers."

A total of 42 dealerships were awarded the four star award.

The six dealerships achieving the prestigious five star rating are: Pan Autos in Harpenden; Flintstone Tyre Services near Fareham, Southampton; Steve Andrews Tyres in St Austell; Kettering Motorist Centre; TW Tyres in Rugby; and Wilsons Tyres in Eaton Socon in Cambridgeshire. They receive a £3,500 investment and a luxury weekend for two at the European Grand Prix in 2005. Dealerships awarded with four stars receive £2,500 worth of Bridgestone investment in their business.

Eden Tyre Sales joins 'booming' network

Eden Tyre Sales is the latest high-calibre tyre dealership to join the First Stop network.

The company has a series of outlets across the East Midlands and has recently signed-up three of them to the First Stop network including a new state-of-the-art depot in Derby.



JAMES (LEFT) AND MATTHEW EDEN OUTSIDE THE STATE-OF-THE-ART DEALERSHIP

"We decided to sign-up our outlets to the First Stop scheme for a number of reasons," said Matthew Eden, director of Eden Tyre Sales. "The Bridgestone brand is very recognisable and synonymous with high-quality tyres. We are also seeing an increasing number of cars being fitted with Bridgestone tyres as original equipment, demonstrating the growing coverage of the tyre brand in the UK.

"We pride ourselves on having a good reputation in the local community for high-quality service, and the business support and training we receive from being part of the First Stop network will further improve the service levels we offer our customers," he added.

Network 'booming'

Eden Tyre Sales is one of a number of dealerships that has joined the First Stop network in 2004, helping to increase its size to a record 160 outlets.

"In the past 12 months a total of 17 new outlets across the country have become members of First Stop," said Andy Dingley, senior marketing analyst at Bridgestone UK. "This represents excellent growth as we work towards increasing both the size and quality of the network."

New BDM for Scotland

Bridgestone has appointed Billy McDowall as business development manager and area sales manager for Scotland.



BILLY MCDOWALL

Billy has more than 17 years' experience in the tyre industry having previously worked at National Tyres in a variety of roles including technical trainer for apprentice tyre technicians and as a senior manager of retail outlets across West Scotland. He takes over from Phil Livingston who is now operating in the new position of car dealer executive for the north of the UK.

"I'm looking forward to working with and getting to know all our First Stop partners in Scotland," said Billy.

Andy Dingley, senior marketing analyst at Bridgestone UK, said: "Billy's knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm will be of great benefit to both Bridgestone and members of First Stop."

WIN a dream day out

Your chance to be a motor-racing star for the day

Bridgestone is launching a new incentive scheme exclusively for members of First Stop. The scheme, which runs from December 2004 to May 2005, gives dealers the opportunity to become motor-racing stars for the day at the superb Bedford Autodrome.

Bedford Autodrome is a state-of-the-art facility, designed by former Formula One driver Jonathan Palmer to provide the most magnificent driving experience in the UK. Dealers who reach their targets will get the chance to drive some of the



THE VAUXHALL VX220 - JUST ONE OF THE INCREDIBLE CARS YOU CAN DRIVE AT THE BEDFORD AUTODROME

world's top sports cars such as the Vauxhall VX220 Turbo and the Mitsubishi Evo.

Dealers who would like more information on how to win this fantastic prize should ask their BDM for details.

Bridgestone reports excellent third quarter financial results

Bridgestone has announced an operating income of \$983 million on sales of \$12.6 billion in its tyre segment for the first three-quarters of the present financial year.

The excellent results have been achieved through a variety of measures, including the introduction of new products and more

aggressive manufacturing and marketing activity. In addition, to meet demand, Bridgestone has produced larger and more high-performance specifications of passenger car tyres and increased productivity in generally favourable worldwide business conditions.

Bridgestone sponsors MPH '04

Bridgestone tyres have a strong association with high-performance cars - both on the track and on the road. And now the tyre manufacturer has strengthened it with by sponsoring the precision driving display at the MPH '04 car show.

The exclusive motor show, which took place at London's Earls Court in November, showcased a selection of supercars including the Aston Martin DB9, the Ferrari Enzo, and the Noble M12 GTO - all of which fit Bridgestone Potenza tyres as original equipment.

"Some of the world's most powerful cars were on display at MPH '04," said Andy Dingley, senior marketing analyst at Bridgestone UK. "And it was fitting that Bridgestone, as a manufacturer of some of the world's most technologically advanced tyres, should be there too."



TWO OF THE STUNNING SUPERCARS ON SHOW AT MPH '04

Stunning new FST tyres - only for First Stop outlets

Throughout 2004 First Stop outlets around the country have been receiving deliveries of two brand new tyres manufactured exclusively for members of the network.

The new tyres are First Stop Tour and First Stop Speed.

Andy Lane, marketing manager at Bridgestone UK, said: "First Stop Tour and First Stop Speed are ideal for First Stop outlets to stock as they're unique to the network and cater for the two main categories of the passenger car market. And what makes these tyres even better is that they utilise the same high-quality technology that is contained in all Bridgestone tyres, while offering excellent all-round performance and value for money."

First Stop Tour

First Stop Tour is a T speed-rated tyre designed for standard compacts, mid-sized cars and family saloons in the general use segment. It provides good, well-balanced, all-round performance with a modern, attractive pattern, and is aimed at value-minded motorists who require a high-quality, comfortable ride.

Wet performance is improved from its predecessor, the FST 2000, especially when the tyre wears. The tread pattern features distinctive shaped grooves to evacuate water away from the centre contact area, with deep sipes to reduce the risk of aquaplaning.

First Stop Speed

The second new tyre in the range is the FST Speed, an exciting new high-performance tyre with an attractive tread pattern and striking sidewall, designed particularly with wet handling in mind.

As the tyre is designed for higher horsepower engines, it appeals to drivers who own standard and higher performance cars. Also, the uni-directional tread pattern is firmly focused on wet performance, incorporating circumferential grooves to maximise water clearance from the contact patch and a silica compound for added safety.

What's more, extensive tests have shown that, compared to a leading competitor's tyre, First Stop Speed significantly reduces the risk of aquaplaning both on the straight and on cornering.

FIRST STOP SPEED (TOP) AND FIRST STOP TOUR (BOTTOM)



First Stop Tour is available in sizes from 135/80 R13 to 195/65 R15, and First Stop Speed is available in sizes ranging from 185/70 R14 to 235/45 R17.