



Conclave 2025 | Branson MO

NEWSLETTER #11

ALL ABOUT TIRES

Nothing spoils a nice drive like a slow leak or worse yet, a blowout. Everyone uses their Healey differently, but it's unlikely that you will ever "wear out" a set of tires...." age out" is far more likely. So, let's take a few minutes to go over a few tire related items that might keep you from having a bad day on our Tour.

CHECKING YOUR TIRES MANUFACTURE DATE

The general rule of thumb is that tires should be replaced six years after manufacture. Besides wear from miles driven, tires also wear out due to oxidation, ozone embrittlement, sun damage, etc. Rubber just doesn't last forever, no matter how well maintained.

It's easy enough to check the manufacture date on your tires. All tires made since 2000 have a four-digit code that indicates the week and year of manufacture. Look for the sidewall marking that starts with the letters "DOT" and then check the four digits at the end of the string of numbers. In the picture below the code is 3507. The tire was made in the 35th week of 2007.



-Check all four road tires, even if you bought them all at the same time. One or more of the tires could have been sitting in someone's warehouse for many months before it was sold to you.

-Check the spare as well and take the opportunity to air it up.

-While the six-year rule might be a bit aggressive, certainly any tire ten or more years old should be considered for replacement.

OTHER THINGS TO CHECK

Besides *Age and Treadwear*, there are a few other conditions that might impact your replacement decision:

- Cracking or checking on the sidewall (an indication of rubber degradation)
- Road damage such as gouges, obvious bumps or swelling (a little ridge line where the belts overlap is normal, see photo below).
- Uneven tread wear (likely an alignment problem)
- Serious yellowing or powdery surface (an indication that the chemical used in the tire compound to resist the effects of ozone, known as 6PPD, is exhausted)
- Dented rims, and of course, loose or missing spokes (more later).



Normal belt overlap depression on a radial tire

IF YOU NEED TIRES

- A. The choices aren't what they used to be.
- B. The prices aren't what they used to be.
- C. The number of tire shops that have the equipment and knowledge to handle replacement on a wire wheel aren't what they used to be.
- D. The number of shops that have the correct adapters to properly balance wire wheels aren't what they used to be.
- E. The number of shops that can repair and true wire wheels is very limited and wait times may be long.

The moral of the story is a.) do your homework and b.) get started now as you may have to wait in line to get a new set of tires, properly balanced on trued up rims.

TO SPARE OR NOT TO SPARE (*that is the question*)

You may be surprised to learn that many vehicles on my Tours do not carry spare tires. I don't and never have. The reason is simple....the spare tire on my BJ8 takes up 2/3 of the boot space. And freeing up boot space means I can take more "stuff" (which generally translates into more of Cindi's stuff). Happy wife, happy life. (*More on packing and marital harmony in a later Newsletter*).

I run tubes in my tires, so I do bring a replacement tube, a can of inflator/sealer and a rechargeable air pump. Anything short of a catastrophic failure can likely be temporarily sealed and then fixed with a new tube at the next tire shop.

And besides, someone else will loan me their spare for a few hours.....

Even if you don't normally run tubes in your tires, having one on hand is cheap insurance in the event you get a puncture that can't be fixed with a patch or plug. They are getting hard to find. Try Amazon. Search based on your tire size. No name tubes are about \$10, but expect to pay more for a known brand like Michelin.

MOUNTING, BALANCING, AND WHEEL REPAIR AND ADJUSTMENT

As mentioned above, finding tire shops that have the proper equipment to balance wire wheels, let alone replace broken spokes and true the rims is problematic. I am listing the only ones I have used or are recommended below. If you know of others, please send me the information and I will share it out.

The full and correct process for mounting new tires on wire wheels is as follows:

- Dismount Tires with the proper adapters to avoid damage to the wheel.
- Replace any broken spokes
- True the wheels to perfectly round by adjusting the spokes to the correct tension.
- Mount the tires with the proper adapters to avoid damage to the wheel and tire. Use new tubes if appropriate and/or new rim bands.

-True the tire/wheel combination to perfectly round by shaving the tire.
(This actually increases the life of the tire.)

-High Speed Computer balance the tire/wheel off the car, again using the correct adapters.

-Install the Tires/Wheels on the car.

-Spin balance each tire/wheel on the car to correct any imbalance due to brake rotor/drum and hub variation. This is essential for a truly smooth ride and long life.

-Mark the tire and wheel interface and the wheel and hub interface so that if a wheel is removed, it can be reinstalled in the same orientation (otherwise kiss your investment goodbye).

-NEVER rotate your tires again or the entire balance will be upset. Trust me, you will get longer tire life without rotation if the above steps are followed.

-Consider a wheel alignment, suspension check and wheel bearing adjustment at the same time.

-And if you are really a fanatic (like me), get your driveshaft balanced as well.

-ENJOY your “smooth as glass” ride for years to come.

(Disclaimer: The author has a vested interest in the following recommendation. If you really want to go all out, consider the Fahrspass/Bilstein gas pressure tube shock kit for your Big Healey, Sprite or Jensen Healey.

www.fahrspassforhealey.com.



Wire Wheel Specialists recommended by Members:

**Hendrix Wire Wheel
1551-B W. Gate City Blvd.
Greensboro, NC 27403
336-852-8909**

(will do services on wheels shipped to them, but of course cannot balance on the car in that case)

**Nate Jones Tire
1896 Redondo Ave.
Signal Hill, CA 90755
562-597-3369**

(I have personally used them with great success. Figure about \$200 per wheel, not including the tires)

**Valley Wire Wheel
14731 Lull Street
Van Nuys, CA 91405
818-785-7237**

(recommended by AHASC member)

**Riteway Wire & Wheel
1119 Alpine Road
Walnut Creek, CA 94596
925-933-4046**

(recommended by GGAHC member)