

**J.D. Power Asia Pacific Reports:
With Winter Tires Being Driven on Non-Winter Roads More Than One-Half the Time, Tire
Performance for Use on Both Regular and Winter Roads Is Crucial**

[Michelin Ranks Highest in Customer Satisfaction with Winter Tires in Japan for a 10th Consecutive Year](#)

Tokyo: 31 May 2013 — While customer satisfaction with winter tires has decreased from 2012, the level of satisfaction with performance of winter tires on icy/snow-covered roads is higher than or equal to the level of satisfaction with performance on dry/wet roads, according to the J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2013 Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index StudySM released today.

The study, now in its 10th year, measures customer satisfaction with winter tires by examining six key factors (in order of importance): performance in icy conditions (25%); performance in snow-covered conditions (25%); durability/reliability (15%); ride/quietness on dry or wet roads (13%); appearance (12%); and handling/traction on dry or wet roads (10%). Overall satisfaction with winter tires averages 581 index points (on a 1,000-point scale) in 2013, down from 588 in 2012.

The study finds that, on average, winter tires are driven on regular (dry/wet) roads 66 percent of the time, and 38 percent in heavy snow fall areas.¹ Overall, customer satisfaction with the performance of winter tires on winter roads is higher than or nearly equal to satisfaction with performance on regular roads.

“The majority of winter tire use isn’t being done in extreme road conditions, so improving basic performance of winter tires on regular roads is a key to increasing customer satisfaction and differentiating manufacturers from their competitors in the winter tire market,” said Taku Kimoto, executive director of the automotive division at J.D. Power Asia Pacific, Tokyo.

The study also breaks down satisfaction with performance of winter tires based on the number of seasons used. The study finds that as customers perceive aging and deterioration of their winter tires over the number of seasons the tires are used, particularly when used on winter roads versus regular roads, the influence these conditions have on overall customer satisfaction increases. For example, while wet roads have a 14 percent influence on customer satisfaction during both the second and third seasons used, icy roads have a 24 percent influence the second season, and 28 percent influence on the third season.

The study also finds a high correlation between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Among customers who are less satisfied (index scores that are in the bottom 25%) with their winter tires, 38 percent indicate they would purchase the same brand for their replacement tires for next summer. The percentage rises to 68 percent among customers who are highly satisfied (index scores among the top 25%).

Furthermore, customers who purchased their winter tires from a tire shop or automobile dealership have a higher rate of purchase intent of the same brand from the same shop or dealer, which presents opportunities for these shops or dealers to retain their existing customers. In particular, customers who purchased from automotive dealers tend to purchase their tires based on dealer staff recommendations without first comparing them to other brands.

¹ Snow fall areas include Hokkaido, Aomori, Iwate, Akita, Yamagata, Niigata, Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui and Tottori.

“Customers rely on the information they get from their dealers, so from a tire manufacturer’s standpoint, developing relationships with dealerships to help promote their products represents a good opportunity to help develop loyal customers,” said Kimoto.

Among the 10 brands ranked in the study, Michelin ranks highest in overall customer satisfaction for a 10th consecutive year, with a score of 644 points. Michelin has continued to lead the industry since the study was launched in 2004. Michelin performs particularly well across all factors. Basic tire performance, such as handling/traction on dry/wet roads, continues to be an area of particular strength for Michelin, while the manufacturer posts higher scores in performance on snow-covered roads, compared with 2012.

The 2013 Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index Study is based on responses from 7,464 vehicle owners who purchased new winter tires for their personal passenger vehicle (including mini-cars) between May 2010 and February 2013 and who are still using these tires. The online survey was fielded in February 2013.

The Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index Study is one of 10 benchmark studies conducted by J.D. Power Asia Pacific in Japan. Other studies conducted by J.D. Power Asia Pacific include:

- The Japan Sales Satisfaction Index (SSI) Study, which measures satisfaction with the new-vehicle sales process
- The Japan Initial Quality Study (IQS), which measures problems experienced by new-vehicle owners during the first two to nine months of ownership
- The Japan Customer Service Index (CSI) Study, which measures overall customer satisfaction with service performed at automotive dealer facilities
- The Japan Automotive Performance, Execution and Layout (APEAL) Study, which measures what excites and delights owners about their new vehicle’s performance and design during the first two to nine months of ownership
- The Japan Original Equipment Tire Satisfaction Index Study, which measures customer satisfaction with original equipment tires equipped on new vehicles
- The Japan Navigation Systems Customer Satisfaction Index Study, which measures customer satisfaction with original equipment and aftermarket navigation systems
- The Japan Replacement Tire Satisfaction Study, which measures customer satisfaction with replacement tires (excluding winter tires).
- The Japan Light-Duty Truck Ownership Satisfaction Study, which measures customer satisfaction with light-duty truck manufacturers and their respective local authorized truck dealers
- The Japan Heavy-Duty Truck Ownership Satisfaction Study, which measures customer satisfaction with heavy-duty truck manufacturers and their respective local authorized truck dealers

About J.D. Power Asia Pacific

J.D. Power Asia Pacific has offices in Tokyo, Singapore, Beijing, Shanghai and Bangkok that conduct customer satisfaction research and provide consulting services in the automotive, information technology and finance industries. Together, the five offices bring the language of customer satisfaction to consumers and businesses in China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand. Information regarding J.D. Power Asia Pacific and its products can be accessed through the Internet at japan.jdpower.com. Media e-mail contact: cc-group@jdpower.co.jp

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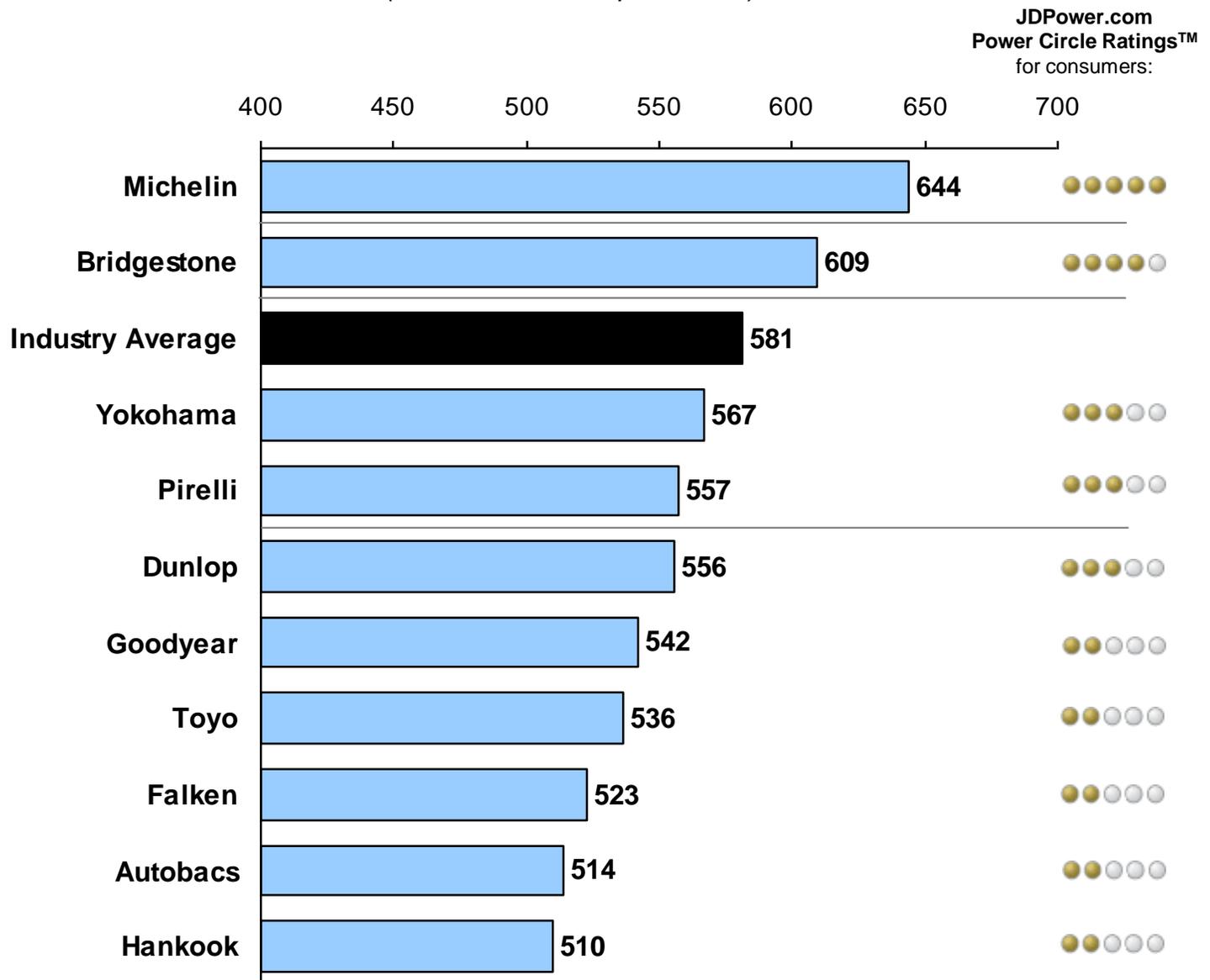
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NOTE: Two charts follow.

J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2013 Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index (W-TSI) StudySM

Customer Satisfaction Index Ranking (Based on a 1,000-point scale)



Power Circle Ratings Legend

- Among the best
- Better than most
- About average
- The rest

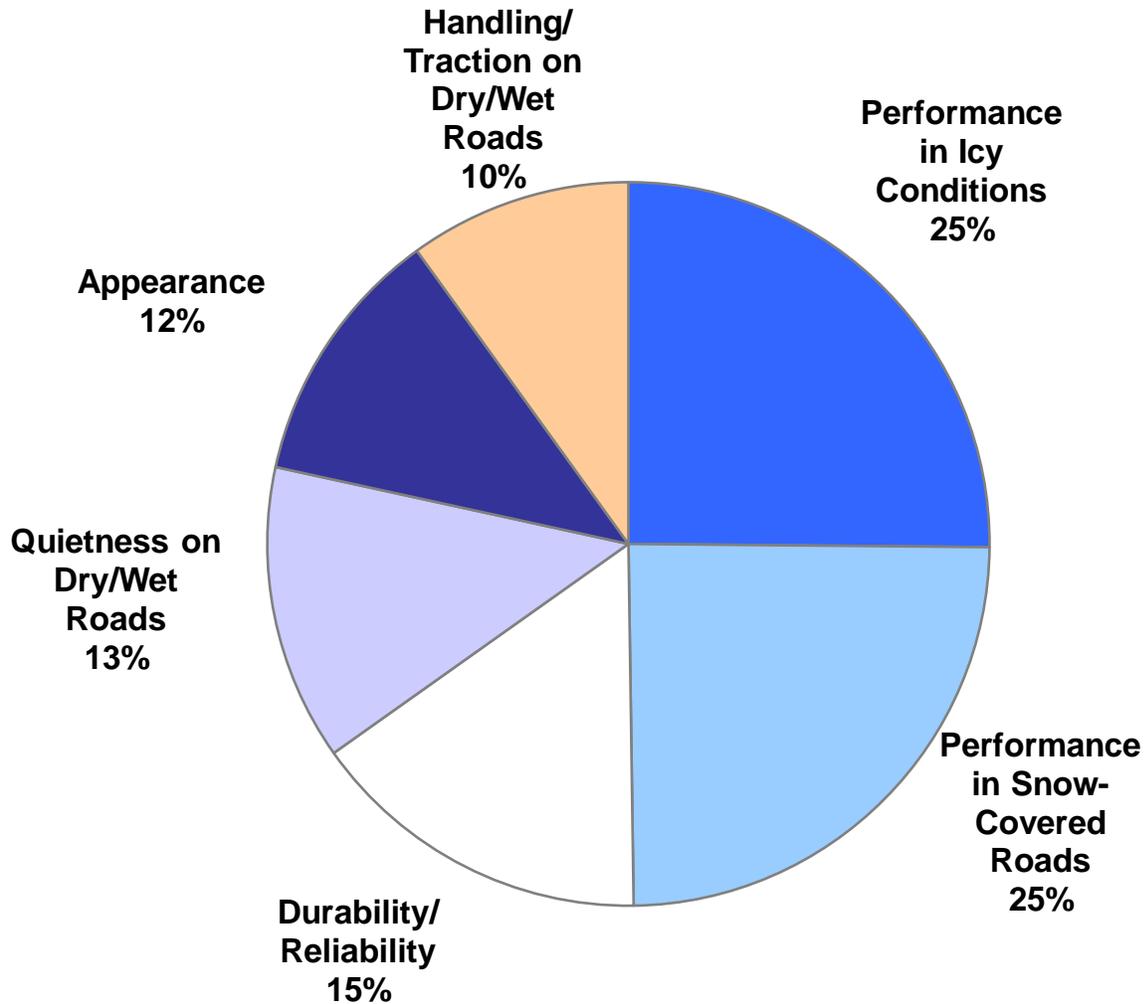
NOTE: Included in the study, but not ranked due to small sample size, is Kumho.

Source: J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2013 Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index (W-TSI) StudySM

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Factors Contributing to Overall Satisfaction



Source: J.D. Power Asia Pacific 2013 Japan Winter Tire Customer Satisfaction Index (W-TSI) StudySM

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