

UK Tyre Specialist Welcomes Kumho's Eco-Friendly SUV



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Online tyres retailer Blackcircles.com has recently welcomed an announcement from tyre company Kumho about a radical innovation in the "green" cars field: an environmentally friendly sports utility vehicle.

As almost every manufacturer offers 4x4 options, Blackcircles.com has always offered a wide [range of 4x4 tyres](#), including Pirelli Scorpion, the Goodyear Wrangler and the [Michelin Diamaris](#). However, traditionally, 4x4s are considered to be damaging to the environment. Usually you will never hear the terms 'sports utility vehicle' and 'environmentally friendly' used to talk about the same car, but this vehicle developed by Kumho, which they have named 'Fortis', accomplishes this anomaly.

[Kumho Tires](#) are currently a huge tyre supplier, producing millions of tyres for SUVs, among other types, every year and exporting them worldwide. The company is based in South Korea, but has factories in China, Vietnam, and most recently in the United States.

Rob Dolton, the car designer behind the Fortis, is in fact the only qualified vehicle designer employed in the tyre industry, and he is based at Kumho's European Technical Centre in Birmingham. Dalton is using this car to demonstrate Kumho's new breed of 4x4 tyres, and to show what SUVs of the future could look like.

Fortis is a combination of the brute force of an SUV, and delicate aesthetics inspired by South Korean glass sculpture. It still has a lot modern features: the drivetrain consists of four separate 100hp chassis-mounted motors for each wheel. This allows off-road traction, ESP and hill descent with trouble-free transitions between four wheel drive and two wheel drive, front wheel drive and rear wheel drive.

However, the environmental features of the car are what make it exceptional. The bumpers, doors, front wings and rear hatch are made entirely out of recycled tyre material. The Fortis also boasts a regenerative

braking system and a lithium-ion battery pack that can be recharged at home or swapped with a spare for long drives. The coup de grace, of course, is the Fortis' tyres. When on the road, the tyre cavity is inflated, offering high levels of noise performance and comfort, and road-biased dynamic ability, as is usually expected of Kumho's 4x4 tyres. However, when the car goes off-road, the rubber areas of the tyre are contracted revealing tough metal biters in their tread that grip the terrain for outstanding traction and durability.

Mike Welch, MD of BlackCircles.com, said "The vehicle type and the terrain you drive on always dictate the [best kind of tyres](#) for you, tyres last longer if they are used for the purpose they were designed. So having tyres that can adapt to their environment is a great innovation! This is definitely a look into the future of tyre design."

While these tyres are not yet in production, [Kumho tyres](#) such as the Kumho 769 and Kumho Ecsta are currently available through BlackCircles.com with some fantastic savings.

Notes to Editors

1. Launched in 2001, Blackcircles.com is a nationwide tyre retailer that can offer customers an average of 40% savings on their normal purchase of tyres.
2. Managing Director Mike Welch left Kwik-Fit in 2001 to launch Blackcircles.com which now has more than 300,000 clients and sales of more than £10m.
3. Blackcircles.com also has trading sites in Europe including [Pneus En Ligne](#) in France, Mein Reifen in Germany, and [Autobanden Shop](#) in the Netherlands and these are said to contribute about 10% of overall sales.

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