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FIRESTONE DESTINATION M/T TIRES MAKE THE GRADE ON ROVER ACCESSORIES' PROJECT VEHICLES

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (July 30, 2003) – When Rover Accessories, the premier California-based supplier of aftermarket products for the Land Rover family of SUVs, went looking for tires to outfit its fleet of project vehicles for the automotive show and off-road circuits, it looked to the Firestone brand's newest entry to the off-road market, the Destination™ M/T. The Firestone Destination M/T, introduced to the marketplace last fall by Bridgestone/Firestone North American Tire, LLC (BFNT), is a full traction-depth tire featuring UNI-T® technology for excellent wet and mud handling. The tire features a square footprint and heavy-duty construction to protect it in the most extreme terrains, and has a high void to help clear debris from the tread.

Aside from marketing aftermarket products for Land Rovers, Rover Accessories builds specialty Rovers for individual buyers, and also is deeply involved in off-road racing and outdoors events in the western United States.

According to Charles D'Andrade, a founder and president of Rover Accessories, the company built three project vehicles which all ride on Firestone Destination M/T tires. The vehicles have garnered plenty of attention since their debut at last year's SEMA Show. They include: the **FlyFisher 110**, a Land Rover "Defender" model, designed as the ultimate luxury fly fishing purpose-built vehicle for getting off the beaten track in luxury with all the comforts available; the **Hannibal 80**, an everyday driver with a rooftop tent, which also can easily handle a trip out into the desert or to the mountains for isolated camping; and the **Discovery Destination**, designed for the urban weekend warrior to use for any number of adrenalin sports, including snowboarding, kayaking, surfing, mountain biking or rock climbing.

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“The first major excursion where we used the Firestone Destination M/T tire was an overland trip for *4WD & Sport Utility Magazine*, which included 10 very unique vehicles. The ride covered a varied terrain from very hot desert conditions to heavy snow in the Sierra Mountains,” D’Andrade explained. “We ran the Firestone Destination M/T on our FlyFisher 110 and Hannibal SUVs, and of all the vehicles participating, the Destination tires performed perfectly – they were one of the very few tire brands that gave us no trouble whatsoever.”

He added that in the mountains, the Firestone Destination M/Ts easily overcame more than a foot of snow, ice and slush, and came to be dubbed “The Black Snow Tire,” because even in the deepest snow, the Destination M/Ts completely dispersed the snow, hence making the treads appear black.

Since that event, D’Andrade said he has subjected the tires to extensive road driving around Los Angeles, and has been impressed with their smooth, quiet highway ride.

“In fact, even in heavy rains, we had a hard time inducing any kind of skid with our FlyFisher 110, which doesn’t have ABS braking systems. I was most impressed that the Destination M/Ts can hold the road in even the most slippery rain conditions.”

D’Andrade also added that Rover Accessories built a Destination Discovery for an East Coast client, who runs a hotel in Washington, D.C. “This past winter, when the worst snowstorm to hit the capital in 20 years dumped 2 ½ feet of snow and effectively paralyzed the city, this person was able to act as a taxi to bring staff members into work, and also to ferry hotel guests around town, because the tires could get through almost anything,” he said. “His hotel was completely booked, and his was the only vehicle on the roads besides the snow plows. He said the tires drove unbelievably well. We’re sold on the Firestone Destination M/Ts.”

Phil Pacsi, executive director, North American Consumer Tire Brand Marketing for Bridgestone/Firestone North American Tire, LLC, said he wasn’t surprised to hear these stories about the Firestone Destination M/Ts’ performance.

“These tires were purpose-built to perform in these extreme conditions,” Pacsi said. “With the Firestone Destination M/T, we’ve been able to combine the most rugged off-road characteristics with a smooth, quiet highway ride, to give consumers a superior all-around, off-road tire.”

Pacsi added that to date, the Destination M/T has been selling well above the company’s initial expectations.

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Rover Accessories, based in Torrance, Calif., was developed from the love of the outdoors and overland travel. The company provides accessories for Land Rovers including Range Rover, Discovery and Defenders. With trained factory technicians and state-of-the-art facilities, Rover Accessories can modify your Land Rover to your specific needs. The company manufactures its own line of accessories and performance products and is exclusive to some of the most unique 4x4 equipment available in the USA. For more information, call 800-ROVER-55, or visit www.roveraccessories.com.

Nashville-based Bridgestone/Firestone North American Tire, LLC is a subsidiary of Bridgestone Americas Holding, Inc., whose parent company, Bridgestone Corporation, is the world's largest tire and rubber company. BFNT develops, manufactures and markets Bridgestone, Firestone, Dayton and associate and private brand tires. The company is focused on wholesale and original equipment markets, supplying passenger, light truck, commercial vehicle, off-road, agricultural and other tires to its customers in North America.

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