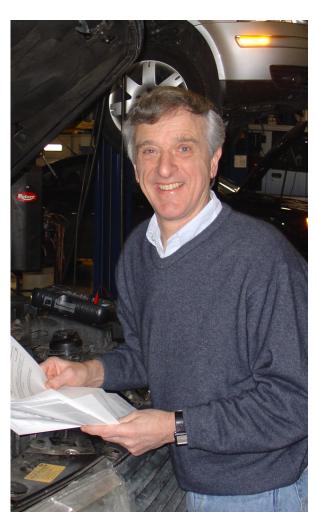


Get the information you need to choose the tire retailer that's right for you.

Tire Retailers The Pros & The Cons



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Brian England is the President of BA Auto Care, Inc. in Columbia, MD. He and his wife Jennifer founded the shop back in 1978.

Brian is a big believer in preventive maintenance, and the auto shop focuses on maximizing the life of their customers' cars by keeping them on the road with high quality repair and preventive maintenance service. BA Auto Care's outstanding customer service has resulted in them being recognized in Howard Magazine's Best of Howard County for over 25 years.

Brian writes a blog regularly and you can find him on Twitter @BrianECarAdvice









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INTRODUCTION

Shopping for tires seems like a very simple thing, but many times we see customers come in with poor quality auto tires or tires that are inappropriate for the type of car and use.

We'll be reviewing each type of tire retailer from the tire specialty chains to independent auto shops like BA Auto Care. Each retailer has its positives and negatives as well as a different type of approach to selling tires.

Some people are on a tight budget trying to minimize costs or they have an older vehicle and don't want to make a big investment. At the other end of the spectrum is the car enthusiast who is seeking perfection. Clearly, they will be looking for different things in a tire. The objective of this e-book is to highlight some of the key differentiations between each retailer. This will allow you to see the type of shop that offers the best fit for you.

Let's get started...





TIRE SPECIALTY CHAINS

This category includes stores like Goodyear Tires, Bridgestone Tire, Mr. Tire, Merchants Tire and Auto, National Tire and Battery and others. These tire outlets are often one of the first places people consider when they shop for tires because they specialize in tires -- it's right in the name.



Chances are, if you go to a tire shop, the service advisers and installers will be tire experts. They should be able to advise you on a tire that's right for your vehicle and driving habits. Additionally, they will likely have the proper equipment to ensure a quality tire installation.



Think about it. With all the different makes and models of cars out there, you would need a huge warehouse to stock the proper tire for every car. The biggest downside to places like this is that they may try to sell you the tires they already have. For example, you may see an advertisement for a great price on a specific tire. You arrive at the shop, and they don't have the advertised tire for your car in stock, so they try to sell/upsell you on something they do have in stock…even if it's not ideal for your vehicle and driving habits. It's a single transaction, and there isn't a huge incentive for the tire shop to ensure your repeat business.





FULL SERVICE GAS STATIONS

Gas stations tend to be the go-to places when people need an emergency repair that could require a replacement.



When you have a flat tire and your spare tire mileage has been maxed out, it's very tempting and sometimes necessary to get one tire repaired or replaced at the nearest gas station. They can be extremely convenient, fairly inexpensive, and "there when you need them".



Probably the biggest issue at a gas station will be tire availability. They may not have the proper tire for your car and can end up selling you something that's not right for you. Or, you can run into the problem of having a tire repaired that should actually be replaced. And lastly, there may not be a knowledgeable person on staff to assist you with selecting the right tire.





MASS MERCHANTS AND BIG BOX CHAINS

This category includes stores like Costco and BJ's. These big box discounters offer tires and a few other services.

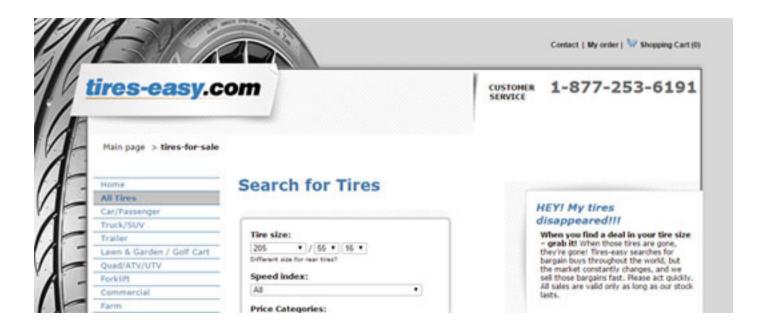


Your biggest advantage in places like this is price. Many have a fixed, small installation fee and offer a few brands of tires.



The cons are very similar to those of a tire specialty chain. The biggest disadvantage is selection. They basically sell you what they have in stock. Wait times can be long during peak hours, and the staff may not have a lot of expertise when it comes to recommending the best tire for your vehicle.





ONLINE TIRE RETAILERS

These days, online is where many searches begin, so it's not surprising that there are several online tire options.

THE PROS

The biggest advantage of online tire retailers is the fact that they can offer and source a very wide selection of tires. They don't have the overhead and storage costs associated with a traditional brick and mortar tire outlet, and hence, they should be able to offer some very aggressive prices. Plus for you price shoppers out there, shopping for tires online allows you to compare prices across retailers for very specific tire brands and model numbers. In fact, for some hard to find tires, we've even had to use online tire retailers.



he biggest disadvantage of online retailers is that you'll need to choose another shop to install your tires. This creates a warranty issue. In other words, should a failure occur, you'll need to determine whether it was a product failure or an installation failure. In fact, many auto repair shops won't warranty products that they don't source for exactly this reason.

Additionally, there is usually no one there to ensure you are purchasing the right tires for your vehicle. You're the expert.

But there's another issue also, and that's how the tires are shipped. Tires seem very resilient. After all they are made of rubber and are built to perform some fairly heavy duty service, but don't be misled by that. How tires are shipped is very important. When we have had to source hard to find tires online, we've been astonished at how they are shipped. Often the suppliers just tack on a label and ship it. Tires can arrive flattened or crushed. This can damage them or make them very difficult to inflate properly.





FULL SERVICE INDEPENDENT AUTO SHOPS

Here at BA Auto Care, we are an example of a full service auto repair shop.



The biggest advantage of full service auto repair shops like us is that we have a vested interest in ensuring that you receive the best tires for your vehicle and driving habits because we want to keep you as a customer. If you are a regular customer, we'll see when your tires are starting to show wear and can advise you on getting replacements before there is a problem. We start by asking how you like the ride of your current tires and whether there are any issues. The most important thing is your safety and comfort. We're not trying to upsell, and our service advisers and mechanics aren't incentivised based on how many tires they sell. The tires can be ordered from reputable, trusted suppliers whose shipping practices are well known. You can plan for your tire replacement in advance, and tires can be shipped in and ready for the installation. Additionally, we warranty the tires and the installation; we're there to look after your tires if there is an issue like puncture or tire wear. There's no question about responsibility like you might find with an online shop.



Like the other brick and mortar facilities, chances are we will have to order the proper tire for your car, so if you are looking for immediate turnaround, it will depend on the availability and delivery schedule of warehouse we order from. Additionally, we most likely won't be as inexpensive as the online retailers or mass merchants.



IN CONCLUSION...

Clearly, there is a lot to consider when you're thinking about purchasing automobile tires. Many years ago, we didn't sell tires because we thought we couldn't beat the mass merchandisers on price, but we stepped in and started selling tires because we wanted to offer our customers a better way to shop for tires – a way that could ensure them a higher quality experience. We hope these tips help you to get the best tires for your vehicle.

If you would like to consult with us on tires, give us a call at 410-381-2700 or schedule an appointment online by clicking the make an appointment link below.





BA Auto Care

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