



COMUNICATO STAMPA

PIRELLI P ZERO: CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF THE FIRST ULTRA HIGH-PERFORMANCE TYRE IN HISTORY

The P Zero, which was born in 1985, made its debut on the Lancia Delta S4 Stradale – and has been a benchmark of innovation and technology ever since, thanks to its constant evolution

Milan, 21 January 2025 – The Pirelli P Zero, the ultimate sporting tyre, celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. Born from a single revolutionary idea, it is now the most renowned brand in the industry and the tyre of choice for prestige car manufacturers. Throughout its four generations, the Pirelli P Zero has become a market leader thanks to an unparalleled number of bespoke homologations for different automotive manufacturers, with more than 3,000 versions created to date. The list of cars these tyres have been attached to is extensive, including true icons of the motoring world such as the Ferrari F40, 512 Testarossa, and LaFerrari; Lamborghini Countach, Diablo, Murciélago, and Aventador; McLaren MP4-12C and P1; Pagani Zonda, Huayra, and Utopia; Aston Martin Vanquish, DB9, V12 Vantage; not to mention various versions of the Porsche 911, Cayenne, and Macan.

P Zero continues to set the standard for performance road tyres today, a fact often confirmed by comparison tests published by leading automotive titles. P Zero has also always been at the vanguard of Pirelli's innovations. In 2019, the P Zero first introduced the Elect package for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles, which went on to become an industry benchmark. In 2023, Pirelli launched the P Zero E, the first Ultra High-Performance (UHP) tyre with at least 55% bio-based or recycled materials, earning a coveted "triple A" rating on the European tyre label. In motorsport, where it originated, P Zero is synonymous with the pinnacle of performance: from Formula 1 to all sorts of other racing categories.

THE BIRTH OF THE P ZERO

The P Zero name first appeared in 1985, making its debut on the Lancia Delta S4 Stradale. This first road-going P Zero was an evolution of its predecessor, which was used on the legendary Lancia Delta S4 Group B rally car. The Lancia Delta S4 became legendary for its technological advancements and cutting-edge dynamics, with Pirelli being the natural choice to develop a tyre capable of delivering exceptional performance. This single request sparked a veritable revolution in the tyre industry, leading to the creation of the UHP (Ultra High-Performance) category. The name "P Zero" symbolised a new beginning for the Italian tyre firm, combining Pirelli's traditional "P" with the word "Zero."

That revolution occurred alongside transformative changes in the automotive world. In the 1980s, turbocharging and supercharging in sports cars led to unprecedented power outputs and new levels of performance. Without the electronic driving aids we take for granted today, the tyres played a crucial role in providing grip, stability, and safety.

At the time, Pirelli's flagship performance tyre was the P7: the very first low-profile tyre in history, launched in 1976. The knowledge gained from the P7 – on both roads and race tracks – combined with the vision of Pirelli's engineer Mario Mezzanotte, paved the way for the P Zero.



The concept was simple yet groundbreaking: to combine the three core attributes of racing tyres into a single tread pattern. The inner shoulder, with grooves like wet-weather tyres, ensured grip on wet roads. The outer shoulder, inspired by slick tyres, provided traction in dry conditions. The central part of the tread adopted some of the hallmarks of intermediate tyres, balancing the two extremes. This winning combination represented a significant innovation, surpassing the traditional boundaries of tyre design.

One motoring journalist famously summed up this innovation after driving a Delta S4 equipped with then-new P Zero tyres: "Let's hope the traffic police are aware of it," he joked. "We wouldn't want the smooth part to get mistaken for a worn tyre!"

Pirelli's motorsport expertise was instrumental in transferring this advanced technology to road tyres. One particularly remarkable incident showcased the road-going P Zero's wide-ranging capabilities. During the Sanremo Rally, Miki Biasion's Lancia Delta S4 used standard P Zero tyres (which were not yet on sale to the general public) on the road sections from stage to stage. They performed so well that he decided to keep them on the car for one very damp stage. He went on to win that stage, outperforming competitors on bespoke competition tyres.

PIRELLI'S PERFECT FIT STRATEGY

In addition to pioneering the UHP segment, P Zero marked the beginning of Pirelli's Perfect Fit strategy, which tailors tyres to the specific needs of premium and prestige car manufacturers. Today, the P Zero range includes various versions that are made to measure for different vehicles, uses, and seasons. P Zero equips everything from premium sedans to supercars and sporty SUVs, now taking in summer, winter, and all-season applications. After the pioneering tyre that was initially developed in small quantities for the Lancia Delta S4 Stradale, the first-generation P Zero was created for the Ferrari F40 in 1987.

In the coming months, Pirelli is set to unveil the eagerly-anticipated fifth evolution of the famous P Zero: the latest chapter in an ongoing story of technological innovation.

Pirelli Press Office
Tel. +39 02 6442 4270
pressoffice@pirelli.com – www.pirelli.com