

Replacement Tires for the Rhoades Car

 <p>Low Rider diamond tread</p>	 <p>Low Rider knobby</p>	 <p>Low Rider slick</p>	 <p>Cheng Shin C241</p>
 <p>Primo V Monster</p>	 <p>Kenda Kontact</p>	 <p>Kenda K Rad</p>	 <p>Odyssey Path</p>
 <p>Primo Comet</p>	 <p>Tioga Comp Pool</p>	 <p>Avocet FasGrip</p>	 <p>Schwalbe Big Apple</p>

Chances are your Rhoades Car arrived fitted with Cheng Shin 20 x 2.125 diamond tread white walls.

20 x 2.125 Cheng Shin C-226-1



Personally, I like the whitewalls. They add a little a little flash to the bike that style forgot.

After much searching, I finally found – if not *the* tire – then one very similar to the factory installed Cheng Shin. The “Low Rider diamond tread” in the table above (top row, far left) is sold by Battle Axe Cycles in Palmdale, California. The Battle Axe web site doesn’t specify the brand, but the size is 20 x 2.125 and the tread looks the same to me. Battle Axe also sells a 20 x 2.125 knobby or “coffin tread” whitewall and a whitewall slick they call a “square edge” slick. Any bike shop that serves the Low Rider crowd will sell you tires like these. See, for example:

www.megalowrider.com

www.streetlowrider.com

www.skyehigh.com.

If you like the whitewall look, the Low Rider shops seem like the place the go. I included the Cheng Shin C-241 (top row, far right) because it’s the same width as the stock tire, it’s a whitewall, and you can pick them up on Amazon or from the mail order department at Niagara Cycle Works. Pyramid Pro also makes a generic diamond tread tire in the 20 x 2.125 size. If you’re a once-in-a-while rider, an economy tire will keep you rolling.

If you want to try a tire with a different tread or a higher inflation rating, you don’t have to be bound by the width of the factory-installed tire. This opens up your choices considerably. The inner width of the steel rims used by Rhoades Car is 28mm (1.10 inches). The *minimum* recommended tire width for a rim that size is 42mm. A tire marked with an inch-based width of 1.75 will usually be marked with a metric width of 47mm. Before you pull our your calculator, 1.75 *real* inches converts to 44.4 *real* millimetres (not 47mm). Tire sizing is an in-exact science.

I have not tried a 1.75" tire on my Rhoades Car, so I can't say for sure how one would work. Ashley Guy of Utah Trikes posted this note to the Rhoades Car Yahoo Group:

I put a set of 1.75" CST 40 psi tires on. They do fit, but seem a little narrow for the wheels. I wouldn't trust them for the weight of the RC. Maybe a single-seater RC. Better yet are the Schwalbe "Crazy Bobs". They are a 2.1" tire and hold a lot of weight. They have a thicker tread, but are still road friendly.

Inch based and metric tires sizes that will fit the Rhoades Car:

Some common inch-based tire sizes.	20 x 1.75
	20 x 1.85
	20 x 1.95
	20 x 2.00
	20 x 2.10
	20 x 2.125

Some common Metric tire sizes (expressed in millimetres). In this system, the width is given first.	47-406
	50-406
	54-406
	57-406

All the recumbent bike blogs I've read recommend using a wider tire on a bike like the Rhoades Car. On an upright bike, you can stand on your pedals when rolling over a nasty bump. That's not an option on a recumbent. The tires, the seat and your spine are the only suspension you've got. Wider tires offer greater comfort, and they are less prone to pinch flats.

Aren't skinny tires faster than wide tires? That depends. All else being equal, a 1.75" tire will be lighter than a 2.125" tire. A skinny tire cuts through the air better, but *wider tires roll more easily* at a given tire pressure than skinny tires do. There are two ways to reduce rolling resistance in a tire – make it wider, or inflate it to a higher pressure.

If you can't resist the lure of racing slicks or you just want to check out a high-end tire, two of the best are the Tioga "Comp Pool" and the Avocet "Fasgrip". *Recumbent Cyclist News* praised the Comp Pool for its low rolling resistance and for "fast, sticky, and stable handling." Although both the FasGrip and the Comp Pool are marked 1.75" the Avocet is slightly wider.

One rider wrote that he gained two miles per hour in speed when he switched to Primo Comet slicks. With 1.95" and 2.1" widths available, the Comet is wider than the

FasGrip and the Comp Pool. Most comments about the Primo Comet are favorable, however one writer noted that the Comet seemed especially vulnerable to puncture flats.

The other high-end tire on my list is the Schwalbe “Big Apple”. The Big Apple is designed to blend maximum comfort with *minimum* rolling resistance. It has Kevlar flat protection built in, and reflective stripes on the sidewalls. At \$35.00 per tire, the Big Apple better be good! Lightfoot Cycles checked out the Big Apple and wrote, “the... supple side walls do indeed provide a smooth ride”. You can read more of their comments here: <http://www.lightfootcycles.com/customoptions.htm>

Utah Trikes also tested the Big Apple. Their review is here:

<http://www.utahtrikes.com/ARTICLE-32.html>

The 20" Big Apple is available in 2.0 and 2.35 widths.

Art.No.	Size	ETRTO	PSI	Weight	Price
11117838	20 x 2.00	50-406	30-70	530 g	34.95
11118438	20 x 2.35	60-406	20-55	650 g	34.95

Tire manufacturers build whatever sells, and what sells these days (especially in the 20" size) are BMX tires. BMX tires (also “Freestyle” “Flatland” and “Vert” tires) are built for stunts, jumps and hard landings. To hold up under that sort of abuse, some BMX tires are made with very stiff cases and sidewalls.

Because the front tires on my RC wear so quickly, I bought a pair of Duro “Fantasy” tires with, “durable side walls and stiff characteristics.” Avoid any tire described as “hardwearing” or “rigid”. The Fantasies may be durable but they’re also as hard as hockey pucks! They jar and bang over every imperfection in the road and the ride quality is terrible! Ironically, I can’t wait for them to wear out so I can replace them with tires that don’t go “thud.” The worst of the “iron side” tires is the Maxxis “Hookworm”. The Maxxis “Miracle” is also pretty stiff. The point is, “feel before you buy.” If the tire feels like it could roll without air in the tube, you probably won’t like the ride.

If you’re not into whitewalls or slicks and just want a quality general purpose tire, the Primo “V Monster”, the Kenda “Kontakt” and “K Rad” and the Odyssey “Path” seem like good choices. With its wrap-around tread the Primo “V Monster” may look like a BMX tire, but it’s supple, not stiff. Chris Wacker sent this post to the Rhoades Car Yahoo Group:

I replaced all 4 of my original [Cheng Shin] tires with the Primo V's this weekend. WOW what a difference. Wish I had done it much earlier. I aired them up to 60 lbs. and it is much easier to keep at speed than it was before.

I had a chance to handle an Odyssey “Path” and while it’s stiffer than the “V Monster” its nowhere near as stiff as the Duro “Fantasy” or the Maxxis “Miracle”. It’s been a while since I handled a Kenda “K Rad”, but I don’t remember it being an inflexible tire. I’ve been to three bike shops and none of them had a Kenda “Kontakt” in stock. At least one web site (Danscomp) highlights the Kontakt’s “soft rubber compound,” so it should work well on the Rhoades Car.

Here’s a quick reference table

Manufacturer	Model / Name	Size	Max PSI
unknown	Low Rider diamond tread	20 x 2.125	35
unknown	Low Rider knobby	20 x 2.125	35
unknown	Low Rider slick	20 x 2.125	35
Cheng Shin	C241	20 x 2.125	35
Primo	V Monster	20 x 2.10	65
Kenda	Kontakt	20 x 1.95	65
Kenda	K-Rad	20 x 2.125	65
Odyssey	Path	20 x 2.10	90
Primo	Comet	20 x 2.10	110
Tioga	Comp Pool	20 x 1.75	65
Avocet	FasGrip	20 x 1.75	80
Schwalbe	Big Apple	20 x 2.00	70

If you have experience with any of these tires, or if you have a favourite tire you’d like to recommend please share your knowledge.

May you wear out your tires with safe and happy miles in 2008.