

**The following is a compilation of emails received concerning replacement tires for the original Dunlop Fort 5:50 x 16 for the Sunbeam Talbots.**

**7 August 2012**

**Summary**

**Coker Tire, Tennessee**

Bias Ply:

Firestone 5.50 x 16 WW \$186.00



Excelsior 5.50 x 16 Black wall \$137.00



Radial:

Firestone Cavalino 185R16, \$281.00



Coker Classic 550R16 \$250.00



## Universal Tire, Hershey, PA ([www.universaltire.com](http://www.universaltire.com))

Radial:

Avon Turbosteel CR6D 165HR16 (550HR16) Blackwall \$300.00



They show a good selection of other 5.50 x 16 tires.

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From Pete Woodall

Coker Tyre have a 550x16R wide white radial tubed tyre. I have them on my Alpine and there is a significant improvement in ride quality and handling. Kinda heavy steering at slow speed but lightens up with speed. These tyres have an "old look" to their tread design but are not cheap at \$250 per plus a radial tube. Diamondback tire [www.diamondbacktire.com](http://www.diamondbacktire.com), also listed a metric equivalent tubeless tyre and will apply a whitewall of any width you want. Yes, you can use tubeless tyres on our rims. They were installed as standard on MK111's (see shop manual). There is an interesting article on their site debunking some of the myths about tubeless tyres on older rims. Apparently they have developed a process for applying a whitewall to any tyre. The process also eliminates any raised lettering on the wall of the tyre. Last I heard was that they were temporarily out of stock on the required tyres and at that time were a little cheaper than the Cokers. I know of one Sunbeamer with these installed and he's happy. My Saloon still has the original Dunlop Fort tyre on the spare and it measures 4.5 inches across the tread. I also have Firestones on my DHC and the other four wheels on the Saloon. They work as well as any crossply. As soon as the budget allows I'm going radial. Pete

Just talked to the people at Diamondback tire and they no longer have our size available. "maybe in a year". So at this time it would appear that Coker have the floor. Pete

From Pete Woodall

The Sunbeam wheels can be used with tubeless tyres. Check the shop manual which shows tubeless tyre repair process on Mk111 cars. However Coker Tire still make at least according to their on line catalogue a 550R16 whitewall radial with tube. Looks like a bias ply but is in fact a radial. I have them on my Alpine and they fit and work well. They are now listed at \$238+ tube.

From Pete Woodall

I've just checked out Coker tire website and they still list the 550x16R on page 14 of the radial tyre section. Hit search,550x16R.They are still listed at \$250 each plus tube. Spenny but sometimes

that's what it takes to get what you want. The taxi tyres, I fear, are a little bit too commercial for our needs plus they are blackwall. I feel the wide whitewall effect/look is worth the extra investment.

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From Derek Cook

I have written a couple of articles for Stardust on tyres available for our cars but everything is now out of date.

Over the years I have been fortunate (or not!) to have driven quite a selection of Alpines and 90s, as well as having owned three cars of my own. When I was STAR Membership Sec & first point of contact in the 1990's, members would phone me and ask me for an opinion on their car. Two things were very variable – the brakes and the handling. (I won't dwell on how poorly some ST's stop!) Some cars were just very tired, but I quickly came to the conclusion that the tyres could have a tremendous effect on how a car drove.

I came to several conclusions:

Unless you enjoy the four wheel drift effect (not good in modern traffic conditions!), steer clear of cross plies.

Many 16" radial tyres are made for commercial vehicles like vans and taxis – this means they designed to take much heavier loads, have heavier and thicker side walls which flex less and this has a detrimental effect on the handling and driveability of you Sunbeam, particularly with modern tyres.

To cut a long story short I would recommend 165HR16 Avon Turbosteels. They are not cheap but you will notice an improvement in the steering, handling and general driveability from walking pace up! They are also a tad narrower than 175x16 and should go in your spare wheel compartment. Look them up on the AC Ace site – the AC owners who have them are very positive about the tyre.

165HR16 (550HR16) Avon Turbosteel CR6D  
Type: RADIAL  
Overall Diameter: 679 mm - 26.73"  
Section Width: 165 mm – 6.5"  
Tread Width: 5.10"  
Max Speed: 130 mph  
Max Load: 560 kg – 1235 pounds (Load rating 88)  
Weight: 9 kg – 19.84 pounds

They are available in the US at [www.universaltire.com/165r16-550r16-avon-turbosteel-blackwall.html](http://www.universaltire.com/165r16-550r16-avon-turbosteel-blackwall.html). However, they are VERY expensive and it would be cheaper to have them shipped from the UK so try [www.vintagetyres.com/item/265/165hr16---550r16-avon-turbosteel-acr6d--car-tyre--road--radial--tl](http://www.vintagetyres.com/item/265/165hr16---550r16-avon-turbosteel-acr6d--car-tyre--road--radial--tl) or <http://www.longstonetyres.co.uk/page/165hr16--avon-turbosteel.html>

The cost will put some people off but what price safety, comfort and more fun behind the wheel?

Best wishes,

Derek Cook

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From Martin Spurrell

I have just measured my naked rim as requested! MK3 rim laid flat on its inner edge on a flat sheet of ply, poke a tape measure through a wheel stud hole, measurement comes up 4" to the bottom of wheel stud chamfer.

Width flange to flange, I.D. 4 1/2" O.D. 5 1/2"

I have been running my Alpine for some years on the same set of Austone 175 r 16 c tubeless taxi tyres, they are rugged, give good grip, excellent value for money and hard wearing. I have done thousands of miles and i give it some stick. Only downside I can see is they don't fit easily in the spare compartment so i use a crossply for that, though I have never needed to use it. Secondly, they are not available in white wall, which is not so popular in the U.K. anyway. Hope this helps.

Martin Spurrell.

From Len Beatons

Tires I have just put the Dunlop Taxi 175R 16G on my Alpine the height is 27", width 6 ½ and they are great . One thing the spare will not go in well. The company is Wallas Wade Ph 214-688-0091 in Texas. Ask for Chris. Price was \$211 each US\$. Best of luck Len.

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From Dave Reina

Over the years I had bought 3 sets of Coker Classic Radials (185R16) with a wide but not super wide whitewall. However last year I had a blowout on a highway drive which I believe was caused by a tube valve stem failure. When I went to replace the tire they said they no longer carried the exact same one. It's too bad because the radial seems to do well on the highway and they were designed for tube use which I wanted for the 53 Sunbeams I was using them on.

However because you have a 55 you can install modern valve stems and use tubeless tires. I do know that the valve stem hole in our rims is larger than the current tube valve stems and if using a tube you must purchase and use a special rubber grommet in the hole before installing the tube. If you go tubeless there may be a different valve stem that should be installed in the larger hole. I would check and not assume the installer knows.

If you do use a tube try to buy a natural rubber rather than synthetic as they supposedly leak out slower and don't tear open in the same way as the synthetic rubber.

I was able to fit the tire in the spare well with the trick of keeping it in a large plastic garbage bag which helped it slide in and out. I do have a little scuffing against the steering box but only on full lock turn.

Below are some of my emails back and forth with Coker as well as a note at the beginning from I think Pete Woodall. I haven't looked in a while and they may have some new products. You can look at the 185's and check their widths. Some but not all are skinny enough for our cars

Dave

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**The following is a dialog of emails between David Reina and Coker Tire recently.**

From: "David Reina" <reinadesigns@aol.com>  
To: staowners@sunbeamtalbot.info  
Sent: Tuesday, July 26, 2011 7:33:42 AM  
Subject: [Sunbeam Talbot Email List] tires 55 Alpine

Hi All,

Here are some of my thoughts on tires and a warning about the tube valve stems. I have been meaning to post this warning for some time and with the recent talk about tires thought I'd throw it in now.

In the US and perhaps Europe, I believe the original tire supplied is a Dunlop Fort. (I have one perfect looking Dunlop Fort left as it was the original spare in my 55 Alpine and never used. It came with a whitewall.) I think this was a sort of performance tire of that era.

When I bought my first Alpine I spent a lot of time researching tires here in the US. At the time Coker had a 185 Coker Classic radial which was designed to take a tube and which was within an 1/8 inch of the diameter of the original tires. I used these tires on three Sunbeams to date and have been happy with their highway performance. My criteria was to have a modern tire which would be good for highway touring without the tracking issues of the old tire styles. The Coker tire seemed to fit the bill and had a decent size whitewall which I like. It also was designed to run with tubes, which I thought may be necessary as the rims on our cars were intended to be used with tubes.

However it seems that Coker has discontinued this tire. I learned this when I went replace a tire. Last year I had a bad blow out on the highway when doing 65 mph in the middle lane in traffic.

I don't think it was the tires fault but rather was caused by the tube valve stem chaffing where it went through the rim hole. The modern tubes have a smaller diameter valve stem then the 50's tubes and require a plastic grommet to be put into the rim hole first before putting in the tube. On this car we didn't install the grommets as they were unavailable when I had ordered the tires. I want to stress to everyone not to put the tube in without the grommet which takes up the slop between the valve stem and the hole in the rim.

I am pretty sure the valve stem was the cause of the loss of air and the blowout because after I got my spare installed I went to a garage to check the pressure and I then had a rear tire with a leak at the valve stem.

This brings me to something else which I think should be considered. Buy an extra tube or two and keep them in the boot. I discovered that day that you cannot buy the correct size tube (or tire) on the spot from a tire store. It generally will have to be special ordered.

The day I had my blowout I was in a spot. I had to be back to teach a class in the afternoon but I had used up my spare on the front and now had a leaking back tire that the tire shop could not locate a tube for even after calling around town. As a last desperate solution I had them take out the leaking tube and put in a modern tubeless tire valve stem assembly. This actually got me home OK.

One last thought on tubes is that they can be made of natural rubber or synthetic. According to folks who run tube tires in motorcycles, the natural rubber ones ( which cost a little more, naturally) tend to leak down slower then the synthetic ones which can open up in large rips when damaged.

I am including below some correspondence I had with Coker regarding what they have available.

Regards,  
Dave Reina

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From: David Reina [mailto:reinadesigns@aol.com]

Sent: Sunday, October 31, 2010 12:32 PM

To: support

Subject: Coker Tire: Contact email (store.cokertire.com)  
Name: David Reina  
E-mail: reinadesigns@aol.com

Comment: Dear Sirs,  
Over the past 9 years, I have bought 15 (three sets) of your Coker Classic 185R-16 tire with whitewall. I recently had a blowout on one of my cars and would like to buy a replacement tire, but am not finding it on your website. Would you please let me know if these tires are still available and if not could you possibly locate one which was not sold.

Thank you,  
David Reina

On Nov 1, 2010, at 11:29 AM, support wrote:

David,  
Unfortunately, these tires have been discontinued for some time and sold out. There are no unsold tires remaining in our inventory. Sorry we were not able to help with this request.

Web Sales Specialist  
1317 Chestnut Street  
Chattanooga, TN 37402  
Toll Free: 800-251-6336  
support@coker.com

-----Original Message-----

From: David Reina [mailto:reinadesigns@aol.com]  
Sent: Thursday, December 16, 2010 10:31 AM  
To: support  
Subject: Re: Coker Tire: Contact email (store.cokertire.com)

Dear Sirs,

I am sorry to hear that you no longer carry the Coker classic whitewall 185R-16 tire as I currently am using them on two of my cars and I do need a replacement for the one which I had blow out. What would you suggest from your current stock which would also be similar in look, be a radial tire with a whitewall and have a matching rolling radius to the discontinued tire?

Regards,  
David Reina

David,

Are you using these tires front and rear, or just front/just rear? We may be able to offer another radial white wall that has the approx. same height, and therefore rollout, but the actual sizing and appearance will be much different. Unfortunately, there is no other tire available that would closely resemble the 185R16.

Michael Howard  
Web Sales Specialist  
1317 Chestnut Street  
Chattanooga, TN 37402  
Toll Free: 800-251-6336  
support@coker.com

-----Original Message-----

From: David Reina [mailto:reinadesigns@aol.com]

Sent: Friday, December 17, 2010 12:14 PM

To: support

Subject: Re: Coker Tire: Contact email (store.cokertire.com)

Hi Mike,

Well I had been operating with a spare Coker classic radial, which is now on the car, so I suppose if I only want to have a new tire which is compatible for touring emergencies, than it can look different and also be a blackwall if this helps find a correct diameter tire. I remember doing a lot of research when I bought the first of three sets of those Coker Classics as they were within an 1/8" of the diameter of the old Dunlop Fort tires which had originally come with the cars. (Sunbeams from the early 50's.) In fact I remember being surprised at the time as most of the other companies 185's were of a smaller diameter. The other thing I liked about the tires were that they were designed for tube use, and the old rims were spec'ed for tube tires. What are the new radials you are recommending? No chance these tires will go back into production?

By the way, the reason I think I had the blowout at high speed is I think that we did not use the valve stem bushings. The old rims have a big hole and the new tubes use a small stem. At the time I ordered the tires you were out of the bushings and we thought it was OK to mount without them. I had to replace another tube as it was starting to leak from around the stem base which makes me guess that this is what happened to the blowout tire.

Another question I have is about your radial tire tubes. I ordered two recently to replace the one which blew out and to have a spare, and I notice there are two styles offered at two different price points. The salesman who helped me order sent me the lower priced tubes. What is the difference?

Regards,  
Dave Reina

David,

Ok, if you can use a black wall tire, that actually changes things a bit, maybe for the better, as we do have a 185R16 Firestone black wall in stock:

<http://store.cokertire.com/185r16-firestone-cavalino-tire.html>

Keep in mind that any tire can be used with a tube. A tube-type tire requires a tube, but a "tubeless" tire can be as well. The "tubeless" marking is not a prohibition, it simply means the tire does not require a tube itself. Of course a tube can be used in a "tubeless" tire, where required by the wheel. I personally run modern, tubeless radials on wire wheels with tubes on one of my own cars.

As far as the grommets placed around the valve stem, they are currently in stock, priced at \$ 0.80 each.

In the past, we did have standard radial, and high performance Michelin tubes available in many sizes, but at this time we carry one radial tube for this tire size, item #85640, priced at \$16.95 each.

Let me know if you have additional questions.

Michael Howard  
Web Sales Specialist  
1317 Chestnut Street  
Chattanooga, TN 37402  
Toll Free: 800-251-6336  
support@coker.com

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Staowners mailing list

Staowners@sunbeamtalbot.info

[http://sunbeamtalbot.info/mailman/listinfo/staowners\\_sunbeamtalbot.info](http://sunbeamtalbot.info/mailman/listinfo/staowners_sunbeamtalbot.info)