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THE QUAD
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**RUNNING
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ATV Magazine

6 BIG BORES HEAD TO HEAD

FIND THE TOP UTILITY 4x4
THAT'S BEST FOR YOU

2-UP LUXURY
GET COMFORTABLE
WITH POLARIS'
800 TOURING

**CABIN FEVER
BLUES?**
9 WAYS TO BEAT IT

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FIRST DRIVE
IN YAMAHA'S
RHINO 700

BRUTE
FORCE



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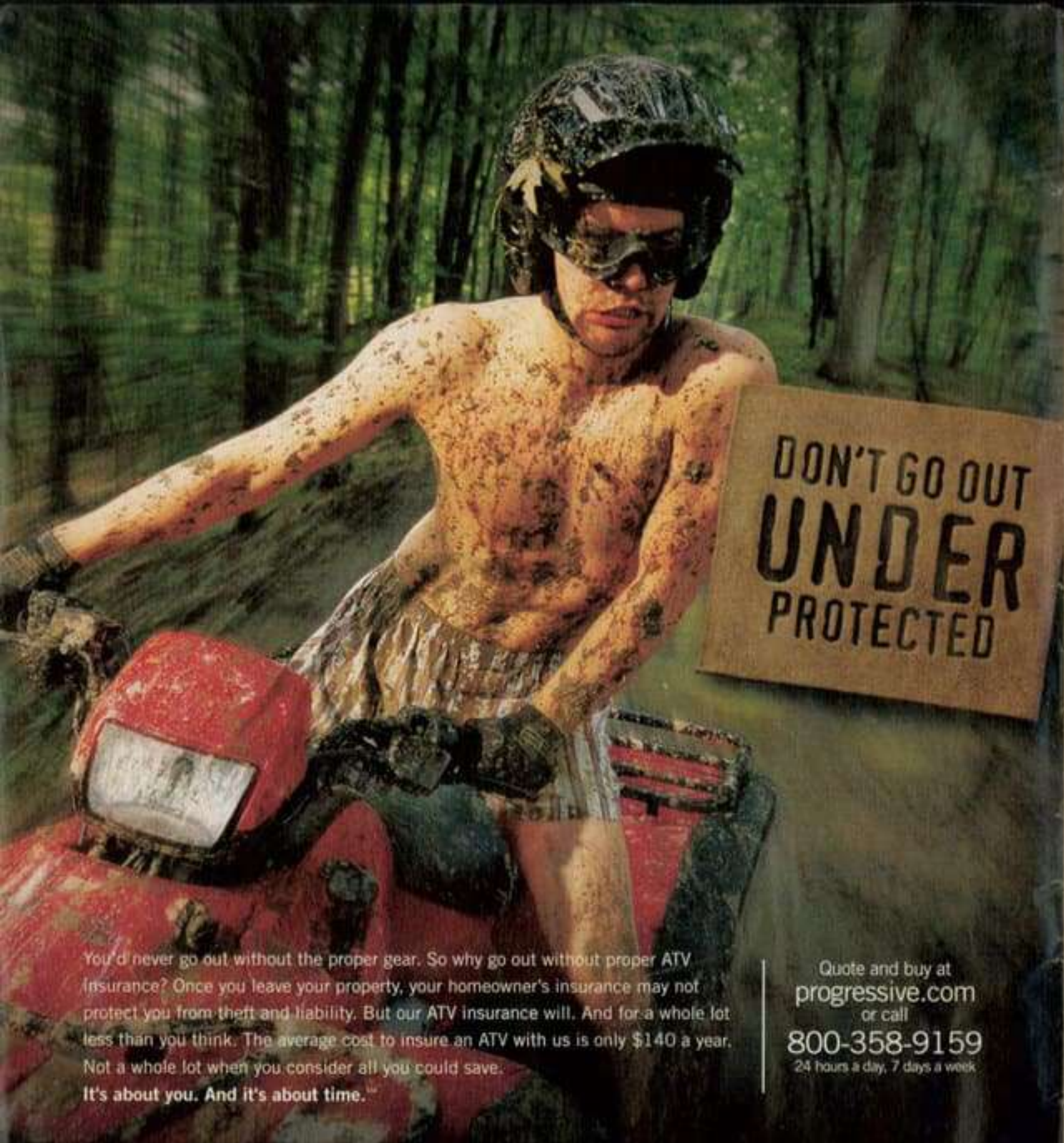
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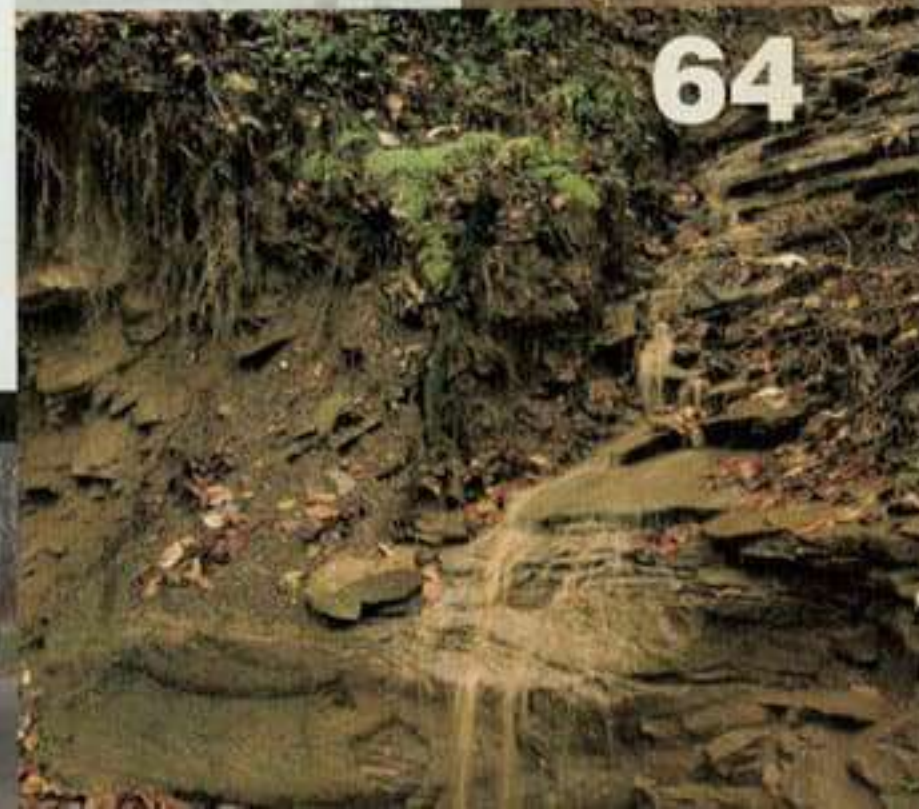
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CHECK IT OUT



FEATURED VIDEO:

ATV Magazine Managing Editor Chris Vignani takes viewers behind the scenes to the 2008 ATV Trials event, held at the Browning Fork segment of West Virginia's Hatfield-McCoy Trails System. Highlights include testing procedures, featured comparisons and sneak peeks of upcoming tests in future issues. Scroll to the week of November 20.

TRAIL GUIDE:

With 10,500 acres of riding, the Killpecker Sand Dunes in Wyoming are part of a dunes area that encompasses nearly 38,000 acres. The riding area is strictly enforced, as it's near a designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern, so stay within the legal areas to prevent further closings.

IMAGE GALLERY:

Let's see your skills. E-mail us your photo with your name. We'll post it. Send your photos to atvimages@ehlerpub.fishing.com.



THE ONLY WEEKLY ONLINE POWERSPORTS SHOW

Inside Powersports Host Denise DeBucher takes you to the top 10 dirt-riding spots across the country. With new shows weekly, Inside Powersports is your source for powersports news, Editor's insight columns, feature videos and nationwide ATV events.

REMEMBER TO CHECK OUT:

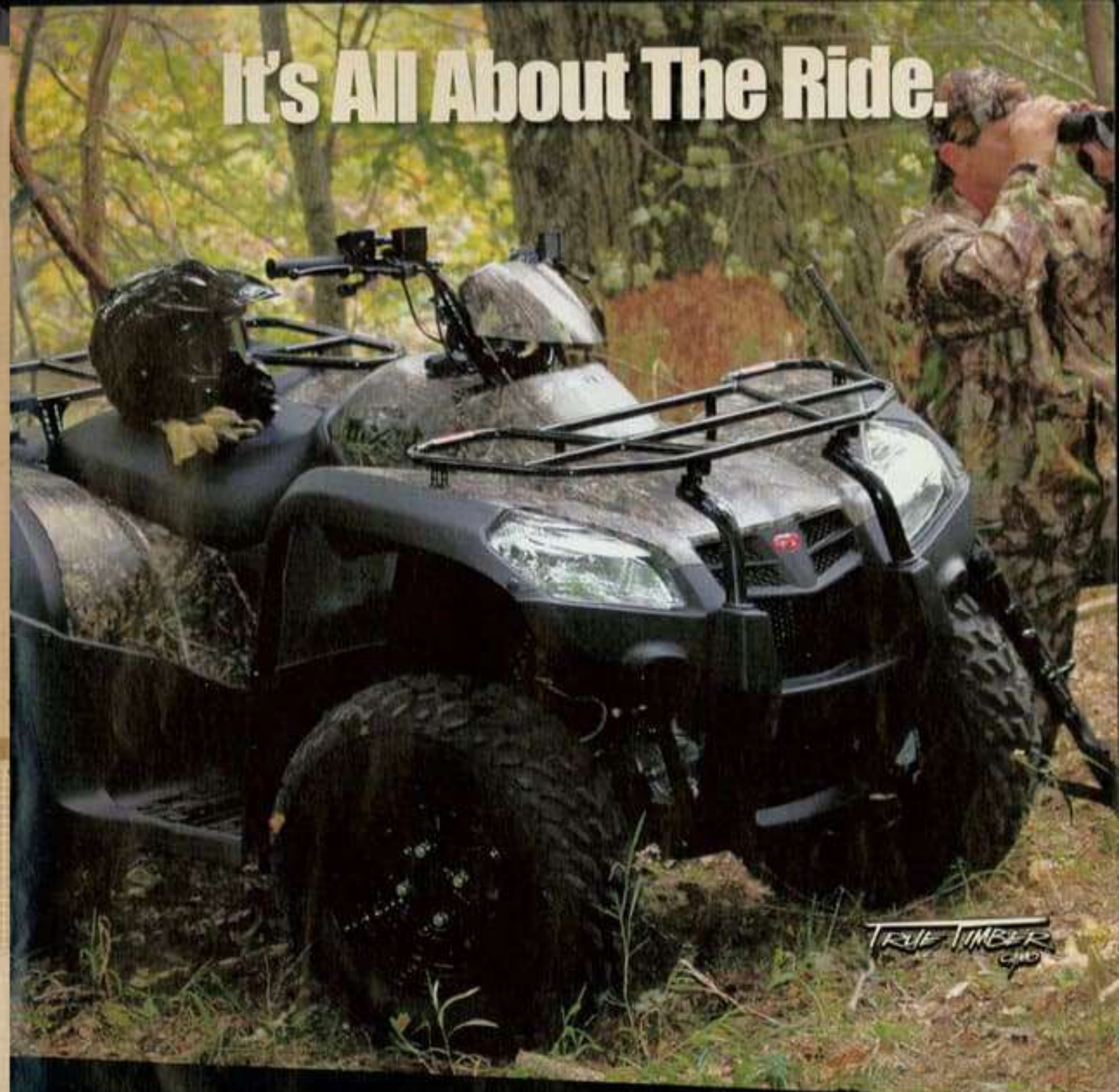
ATV MAGAZINE - OPEN FORUM

"Newbie" Dan from Colorado asks:

I'm new to ATVs and have a quick question — can anyone provide information and sources for plug-in engine block heaters for my Honda Rubicon? I have it set up for winter snowplow operations, but have to store my machine outside because there's no room in my overloaded garage. I have engine block heaters installed on all my other vehicles and they work great where I live in Colorado.

Post your thoughts on the Forum.

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© KYMCO USA 2008. KYMCO recommends that all ATV riders take a training course. For safety and training course information, see your dealer or call the SVIA at 1-800-852-5344. ATVs can be hazardous to operate. For your safety, always wear a helmet, eye protection and protective clothing. Never ride on public roads. Never carry passengers or engage in stunt riding. Be extra careful on difficult terrain. KYMCO ATVs with engines from 500cc to 700cc are recommended for use by riders 8 years and older, and always with adult supervision. KYMCO ATVs with engines greater than 700cc and up to 900cc are recommended for use by riders 12 years and older, and always with adult supervision. KYMCO ATVs with engines greater than 900cc are recommended only for use by riders 16 years and older.

the dirt

BY TIM ERICKSON...



Presenting More

Welcome to the new *ATV Magazine*. Before I scare you into thinking that we are turning your magazine into something that won't be welcome and familiar, let me assure you that the changes we're making to your magazine are the right ones.

Once you get past our cover and the familiar *ATV Magazine* logo there is little inside that remains the same in its design. This page is different and so are the rest of them inside this magazine. We've given our pages a makeover. ATV products change with time and evolve into something better. We've done the same with our magazine.

How is it better? In addition to the new pages, there are more of them. It's a bigger magazine. So many times we've heard readers tell us that we have great information, but not enough of it. We've added pages to give you more feature stories with our expert reporting that we hope you've come to trust.

We see an opportunity to deliver technical information that you aren't getting elsewhere. More than just expert evaluations from our diverse team of test drivers, we're going to use science to back up our claims.

At our recent *ATV Trials* event we recorded the performance of each machine with our radar gun and acceleration software. We brought with us a set of Intercomp scales, the exact type of equipment that NASCAR teams use when calibrating their Nextel Cup cars. You deserve the real weight of the machines we tested instead of the manufacturer's claimed figure. We also had an expert sound technician testing decibels. All the findings from the Big

Bore class of machines is in this issue, starting on p. 32.

Our technical information is going farther than our new model reporting. We've heard you tell us you want more how-to stories and expert advice on setups to make your machine better. It's here now, and we'll have a how-to story in every issue.

Our product tests will be more than just opinions. When it comes to performance products, we'll put company's speed and horsepower claims on trial with science instead of just opinions. It gives you the most objective, thorough test reporting possible.

Last Impressions is another new department for you to share your favorite ATV rides and stories. We hope you think of sending us photos of yourself and ride companions in strange situations — stuck in the muck, sharing great views with us and just having fun on your machine — but keep in mind that the only pictures we'll publish are those with riders wearing helmets.

We know that with these changes come something that we had to leave alone. What isn't changing is what you expect from us: the dirt. Our honest, expert machine evaluations are trusted more than what's in other magazines.

Thanks for reading. I hope you enjoy the hard work that goes into making *ATV Magazine* the best it can be for you, our readers. **ATV**

ATV Magazine

www.atvmagonline.com

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ATV MAILBOX, 8420 SYCAMORE LANE, SUITE 100, MAPLE GROVE, MN 55369 OR E-MAIL: ATVMAILBOX@EHLERTPUBLISHING.COM

ATV Snow Plowing

I just finished reading your article on moving snow (October 2007) and wanted to share some info with you. My neighbor and I are both retired but somewhat younger than others on our block. We have one thing in common: We both love to plow snow with our ATVs.

We plow our whole block and love doing it — although some of the seniors insist on giving us money for gas and upkeep for our machines.

I was concerned about our plows tearing out water shut-off caps and sewer caps, so I came up with an idea that has worked well for us. I removed the stock wear strip from the blade and replaced it with half-inch conveyor belt four inches wide and the length of the plow. Using the stock wear strip for a template, I drilled holes in the center of the four-inch belt. This allows for reversing it once it starts to wear down. This has worked extremely well and cleans the sidewalks and street as well as the wear strip did.

After cleaning the walks and pushing to the center of the street we begin working as a team and do what we like to call side-by-side plowing. My friend Ed will flip his blade left and I'll flip mine right. Trying to coordinate speed to start is a little tricky as Ed's ATV has an auto transmission and mine is push button. Once in sync, though, we can push a lot of snow with this method. Not bragging, but we have the cleanest street in town!

BILL DOMSON, ROCK SPRINGS, WYO.

We'd love to see a picture of your plow modification, Bill. It sounds like you take as much enjoyment out of pushing snow as we do. It might sound weird, but we actually look forward to a large snowfall so we can break out the ATV and plow equipment. Call it fun work. There's something empowering about clearing our driveway off 30 minutes faster than shoveling! — Editor.

Can-Am Trash Can

I purchased an Outlander so my wife, age 69, could ride at our riverside farm in Nebraska. After riding a few minutes, 30 or so, I felt heat under the seat exceeding my comfort zone. The engine was overheating. First trip, 205 miles to the repair shop. Diagnosis — a wire under the seat wore in half preventing the fan from operating and \$150 not covered under warranty.

Second ride — after my 74-year-old friend and I paused after a 45-minute ride — smoke, a pop and all the coolant drained on the ground. A tow back and another trip to the dealer (410 miles round trip) and another repair bill. The fan malfunctioned, unknown cause.

Trips three, four and five resulted in the same problem, overheating. Now the service manager tells me he found a leak in the water pump and is awaiting parts with estimated repairs of \$1,000. I wanted to trade the Outlander for a Polaris Ranger. I bought the Outlander for \$8,150. It's been in the shop five times and only has 530 miles on it and they offered me \$3,000 on a trade.

I went to McCook, Neb., and purchased a Polaris Ranger from a different shop. I currently own three Bombardiers (all for sale), a 1986 Kawasaki and a Polaris.

I agree with Gil Bafus (September 2006), the Outlander is a piece of junk. When my son took it elk hunting in Colorado, you guessed it, it was in the shop. If you think I'm alone with dissatisfaction with this trash can, log on to chat rooms for worse experiences than mine. Time to let Can-Am know its products are inferior.

RONALD HIATT, BERTHOUD, COLO.

Rincon Appeal?

One thing I've never understood, and I'm not bashing Honda, but I can't figure out what the Rincon's appeal is.

I can certainly see the benefits of the Rancher, Foreman and Rubicon. They all have their place in the ATV world and, in my opinion, perform extremely well in the conditions they are built to perform — often better than many of their competitors in that class.

But the Rincon baffles me. Where would the Rincon ever be considered an advantage over any other big bore ATV on the market? I'm not asking where it can perform as well as other big bores. I am trying to figure out where it excels past any other big bore ATV on the market. Almost every Rincon owner I meet has always said time and time again, "Sure wish I'd gotten a..."

The Rincon might have a decent reliability track record, but I never have understood what is so appealing about it. Is it just blind Honda loyalty that have people buying it?

Here's what I mean: You walk into a Yamaha dealer and look at a 2007 Grizzly 700 with power steering (Or Polaris Sportsman 800, or Suzuki King Quad 750). Then you go into a Honda dealership and look at the Honda Rincon. What would make you say, "Oh yeah, I really prefer this Rincon?"

KENT SIMS, HOUSTON, TEXAS

You might have answered your own question, Kent. Honda is known for having reliable machines. A day spent in the shop is a day without riding or working. In terms of the Rincon's big bore appeal and where it excels, we wish we could tell you how the Rincon fared with the other Big Bores in this issue, but Honda declined to participate in this year's ATV Trials Big-Bore Shootout saying, "we won't have product ready." We hope that means a new Rincon is on the horizon. — Ed. ATV



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POLARIS DEFENSE UNVEILS MILITARY RANGER

Polaris Industries unveiled its new military version Ranger utility vehicle to the U.S. Army at Fort Campbell, Ky.

The MVRS800 is the newest addition to the company's family of Ultra Light Tactical Vehicles produced for the military. It is powered by a 760cc, 40 hp Patriot engine that operates on JP8, the U.S. military's standard fuel. Polaris first introduced this breakthrough engine last year on the militarized MV800 ATV.

To withstand rugged terrain and the harsh environments the military expects these vehicles to perform in, the MVRS features a rugged, steel exoskeleton, high-capacity fuel tank, run flat tires and a completely sealed powertrain, which can ford up to 30 inches of water. For easy transport

of soldiers or gear, the vehicle also has a front storage rack, multiple D-rings, weapons storage and a rear bed with fold-down sides. The rear bed is adaptable to accessories such as litter racks and rear seating. Polaris also offers a gasoline-powered version of this vehicle called the MVRS700.

"Polaris continues to assess the needs of the Armed Forces to provide them with vehicles that offer capability that can meet a wide variety of needs," said Mark McCormick, managing director of Polaris Defense. "Basing the MVRS on the Ranger platform ensures a cost effective Ultra Light Tactical Vehicle



that can conquer the toughest military demands."

Polaris Defense has been providing a family of vehicles to the U.S. Armed Forces since 2001.

KUBOTA ANNOUNCES SPECIAL EDITION RTV900

In commemoration of its 35th anniversary, Kubota Tractor Corporation is offering a special edition model of its popular RTV900 utility vehicle. The RTV900 Special Edition is built from the Worksite Utility RTV model and sports silver paint. A longer list of standard features is also part of the package, goods usually offered only as optional equipment.

Kubota's RTV900 Special Edition comes standard with several factory-installed features like aluminum alloy wheels, plastic canopy top, speedometer, head rests and custom-designed Kubota 35th anniversary branding decals. It also features the industry's only factory spray-on bed liner that helps to dampen noise and protects the cargo bed from scratches, dents and corrosion.

"The RTV900 Special Edition grabs your attention with its brilliant metallic silver paint and diamond-cut alloy wheels, and offers tremendous value with its many standard features in one complete package price," said Dan Muramoto, product manager for Kubota. "This model is Kubota's way of celebrating our 35th year in America, and we are doing it in style."

As with the standard RTV900 series, the RTV900 Special Edition comes equipped with Kubota's variable hydro-transmission and a 3-cylinder, liquid-cooled 21.6 hp diesel engine that reaches a top speed of 25 mph. The RTV900 also includes 4-wheel, wet disc brakes, heavy-duty cargo bed with hydraulic lift and hydrostatic power steering.

The RTV900 Special Edition is a limited-production model that will be available in the U.S. at most Kubota dealers while supplies last.



FOSSILS DISCOVERED IN RIDING AREA

The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported the discovery of fossilized dinosaur tracks at a popular ATV riding area near the Coral Pink Sand Dunes State Park in southern Utah.

Discovered by hunters, the evidence shows that a sharp-toothed carnivorous dinosaur about the size of a small bird once roamed the area, leaving behind fossilized footprints. Signs of five other dinosaur species, including three-toed crocodiles and a 35-foot-long prosauropod were later found.

Recognizing the significance of the find, the Bureau of Land Management closed the football-field-sized area to ATVs to preserve the find. Officials plan to fence the site and add interpretive displays.

YAMAHA TEASES ITS TESSERACT

Tokyo's Motor Show is usually the place where the world's automakers unveil their wildest concepts. This year Yamaha fit right in with its Tesseract four-wheeled motorcycle-type concept. Sources indicate a hybrid V-twin/electric motor drivetrain and extreme performance.



ATVA ADDS DRAG RACING

The ATVA race series has welcomed drag racing into its competition lineup with the arrival of Wicked Motorsports Drag Racing Association (WMDRA) as the first ATVA-chartered drag racing promoter. WMDRA promotes both asphalt and dirt ATV drag racing events.

"With the sanctioning provided by AMA/ATVA, this growing sport will now have the opportunity to prove the professionalism the sport strives for," said Skip Conder, WMDRA's chief operating officer.

The WMDRA, under owner and president Roger Arreola, has made major strides this year. The WMDRA has held its annual Wicked Weekend events since 2005, attracting more than 100 entries from across the United States and Puerto Rico. The third Wicked Weekend took place in October at the US-19 Dragway in Albany, Ga. For 2008, WMDRA plans a full race schedule that will include both asphalt and dirt drag racing events from Michigan to Florida.

"ATV drag racing is a growing sport that is ready to move to a new level of professionalism and competition," said ATVA Director Doug Morris. "The WMDRA has proven its commitment to taking drag racing to that next level. We're happy to add this form of competition to the existing AMA/ATVA racing series and excited about the bright future for ATV drag racing."



RAINBOW STUDIOS UNLEASHES NEXT MX VS. ATV

Technology has brought some wild advancement in the ATV world, but video game know-how has progressed just as fast. Using the electronic horsepower of the Xbox 360 and Playstation 3, Rainbow Studios released its stunning MX vs. ATV Untamed just before the holidays.

We heard good things in advance — side-by-side racing, more realistic gameplay, better graphics and an in-depth career mode.

"We have a whole bunch of new events, new

tournament stuff. It's just really, really big," said the game's lead technical designer Elliott Olson.

Olson said he and more than 60 others spent the last two years developing the game. He added that several of the designers ride or race in real life, and said that makes the game better, but adds challenges to the design process.

"We have 10 to 15 guys who actually ride or race something," Olson said. "Some guys race desert, some of us race tracks and we have one guy that's an ex-pro racer for [bikes]. It's important to us that when somebody plays this game, even if they've never driven or ridden ... that it feels right or it feels like how they expect it to be."

This time around, there are eight racing modes, new vehicles, 10 new tracks and a revamped version of its proprietary Rhythm Racing™ engine that controls vehicle handling and control. Also new is an X-Cross Tournament that brings together every racing series (Endurocross, Opencross, Supercross, Outdoor Nationals, Supercross, Freestyle, Waypoint and Minimoto) and turns them all into one gigantic off-road championship.

MX vs. ATV Untamed officially shipped Dec. 17. More information is available at www.rainbowstudios.com.



RALLY AROUND THE KING



Brand recognition can tip the scales between a successful product and one few consumers are familiar with. Such is the case with Suzuki's Eiger, a 400-class utility ATV that has won several comparison tests, but failed to gain the recognition Suzuki hoped for.

For 2008 Suzuki abandoned the Eiger name, which honors a jagged mountain

peak in the Swiss Alps, and replaced it with the successful and better-known King Quad moniker.

Glenn Hansen, communications manager for ASMC's motorcycle and ATV division, said the idea came from dealers who asked the company to update the Eiger's looks and give the welterweight utility a new name.

"They said don't do anything, except change the name and make it look better, and that's no joke," Hansen said. "The dealers said it looked old and nobody ever got the name Eiger. Change that and we'll keep selling them."

Aside from new styling and "signature King Quad

headlights", the company added a new T-shaped seat, a gate-type shift lever, more fuel capacity and new Maxxis tires.

The King Quad 400's chassis and engine are carryovers from the Eiger and it is still available with a five-speed semi-automatic transmission or a CVT, which Hansen said provides customers with more choice at a modest, \$150 price difference.



PIAA TO SPONSOR WORCS 8-HOUR ENDURANCE RACE

Powersports lighting and accessory supplier PIAA has teamed up with the World Off-Road Championship Racing Series to host WORCS' first ever PIAA 8-Hour UTV/ATV Endurance Race.

The event, held on January 12, 2008, at the Speedworld Raceway in Surprise, Ariz., featured racing in a variety of UTV and ATV classes.

PIAA was the presenting sponsor, providing financial support as well as offering a contingency program to encourage racers to use PIAA halogen and HID lighting products.

"PIAA is excited about helping this inaugural event be a success," Gordon Robertson said, PIAA's powersports business unit manager. "This is a great opportunity for us to show the ATV, UTV and powersports industry that PIAA lighting products are indeed the best in the world, proven everywhere from the Daytona 24 Hour sports car race to the World Rally circuit."

While there are a handful of ATV endurance races held in the U.S. (such as the 12 Hours of ATV America each fall), the PIAA 8-Hour is the first time an endurance race included the wildly popular UTV classes.

"UTV racers will have the opportunity to prove who is the fastest as well as the toughest," Robertson said.

"Everyone knows that WORCS races are the ultimate test of man and machine," said WORCS owner Sean Reddish. "Teaming up with the industry leader in performance lighting and putting on an UTV- and ATV-only 8-hour endurance race was a perfect fit."

It will be a standard endurance event with teams racing non-stop for eight hours around a 5-mile loop that starts on the Speedworld motocross circuit then heads out into the Arizona desert. There will be separate overall winners for both divisions, UTV and ATV.

For UTVs, racing classes include Unlimited, Modified, Stock, and Ironman/Woman; for ATVs, classes will be Pro A, B, and C; Women's Pro A and B; Veterans 30+; Masters 40+; and Ironman/Woman.

BAJA MOTORSPORTS RECALLS 16,000 ATVS

Due to a missing tire pressure gauge and flagpole mounting bracket, Phoenix-based Baja Motorsports has issued a recall of 16,000 youth ATVs.

The recalled youth ATVs include the Baja 90, Baja Wilderness 90 and Baja Wilderness 90u. The machines came in blue, green, red and camouflage and "Baja" is written on the side of each gas tank. They were sold through retail outlets, ATV dealerships and online from November 2004 through July 2007 for about \$1,000.

Owners should contact Baja by phone or at www.bajamotorsports.net to receive a free tire pressure gauge and flagpole bracket. Registered owners will be notified of the recall directly by mail.

No accidents or injuries have been reported.

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GNCC ADDS UTV RACING

Racer Productions, producers of the Can-Am Grand National Cross Country Series, made history when the first-ever GNCC UTV race hit the woods at the Klotz Ironman GNCC in Crawfordsville, Ind. The side-by-side machines raced on Saturday right after the ATV racing.

The machines raced on a course custom-built for the size and performance differences between a UTV and a traditional ATV. The GNCC track included a few tough sections to test the cross-country abilities of the UTVs.

A total of 29 competitors entered the UTV races, most in the Limited 700cc and 701cc+ classes. Jeff Russell took the overall, the only Modified 800cc competitor, with an elapsed time of 55:46. Rhino-riding Adam Carroll won the 700cc class in 12 laps, coming in at just over 58 minutes. Polaris rider Mike Hajec took the top



spot of the 701cc+ class in 13 laps and an elapsed time of 55:55.

The UTV race joined several other special events at the season-fine Klotz Ironman GNCC, highlighted by Bill Ballance's historic eighth consecutive series victory.

More information on the event is available at www.GNCCracing.com.



POLARIS ANNOUNCES NEW T.R.A.I.L.S GRANT RECIPIENTS

Polaris Industries announced the second year of recipients for its T.R.A.I.L.S. grants, which make funds available for not-for-profit national, state and local organizations in the U.S. working to ensure the future of ATV riding.

The grants ranged from \$5,000 to the maximum \$10,000 and will be applied toward trail developments, expansions, improvements and connections; youth safety courses; trail patrol; lobbying efforts to re-open state forests for off-road vehicle use; and support for the first sand park to open in the U.S. in 50 years.

"We continue to be thrilled by the interest and response in this program," said Mike Dougherty, general manager of the ATV division at Polaris. "Its ongoing success is far reaching and benefits riders at every level — be it locally, statewide or nationally. Polaris is proud to have a thriving program that gives back to our riding community because it's only together that we can ensure we'll have great places to ride for years to come."

In two years, the Polaris T.R.A.I.L.S. Grant Program dished out \$591,657 in funds to local, state and national ATV clubs.

MINNESOTA CONSIDERS TRAILS NEAR MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking public comment on its forest classification and motor vehicle route designation proposal for the Mississippi Headwaters State Forest in the northwest part of the state. Currently the plan recommends approximately 44.5 miles of new roads, trails and other routes on 11,500 acres of state forest lands.

Some route closures are possible, but added trails on both sides of the river are included in the DNR's vision for the area.

The plan will be open for public comment through mid-January. More information is available at www.dnr.state.mn.us.



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ATV

DO-IT-YOURSELF

IMPLEMENTS AND ATTACHMENTS TO PUT YOUR ATV TO WORK

BY TOM KAISER

PART 2

Aside from trail riding, it's amazing what you can do with an ATV. Using your hitch to haul and tow is great, but there's more work to be done than just pulling stuff around. With the right implements you can tame blizzards, move dirt, manage your property, maintain a food plot and tow stuff like a train.

Last year we brought you our first ATV DIY implements buyer's guide. While researching the market, we were pleasantly surprised to find so many diverse and innovative attachments — too many to cram into one issue. We figured we'd give it another shot.

Since we covered the basics last time around, this year's edition has more companies and the most unique products out there. Sure, every product and every company didn't make the cut, but this should be plenty to get you started and open your eyes to the wide world of ATV implements. Now, get riding and get to work!



HOME

Whether it's plowing, raking, mowing or landscaping, ATVs can be incredibly useful around the home. Save yourself some time, and turn those "chores" into your own personal recess. Note — here are several great ways to justify a new ATV purchase to your better half.

CYCLE COUNTRY 3-POINT REAR BLADE

Scrape away dirt, gravel or manure with Cycle Country's Rear Blade, part of the company's family of 3-Point Hitch implements. It can be scraped forward or pushed backwards, which makes it ideal for landscaping projects. A mounting kit (\$257) is required, along with the company's 3-Point System. **PRICE: \$156**

YORK MODERN TA2 LANDSCAPE RAKE

Coupled to ATVs or UTVs with a simple pin hitch or 1 7/8" hitch, York's TA2 rake is maneuvered easily through tough spots for agile grounds maintenance or landscaping. It can be set at an angle to discharge materials to the right or left, and also has lift adjustment control to modify the working depth and distribution of desired materials. Teeth are made of heat-treated alloy steel. **PRICE: \$1,175 TO \$1,293 (manual lift), \$1,925 TO \$2,043 (electric lift)**

KUNZ ENGINEERING ACREASE PRO60K FINISH CUT MOWER

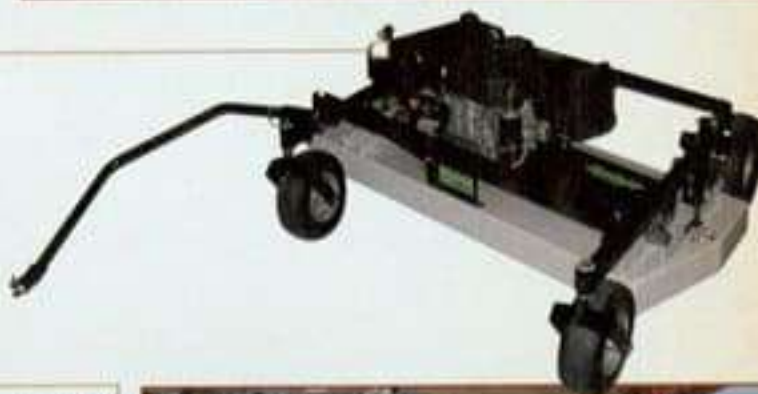
Turn your vehicle into a high-speed mower with Kunz's professional grade pull-behind Pro60K, the company's top-end finish cut mower. It mounts directly behind or offset fully to the side and is powered by an 18 hp Kohler Command engine with electric start and an electric clutch for blade engagement. The 60-inch deck is fully floating and equipped with a wide side discharge and deep deck design. The cutting height is adjustable with a two-point crank from 1.5 to 5 inches. **PRICE: \$3,495, plus \$85 for the ATV tongue**

AGRI-FAB MULTI-FIT ATV SNOW THROWER

For the times when a plow just doesn't cut it, Agri-Fab's new Multi-Fit ATV Snow Thrower has a large 50-inch clearing width and a 21-inch intake height to clear snow quickly and get it out of the way. The 11 hp Tecumseh Snow King engine is designed for reliable starts on cold days. The company says its serrated auger cuts through icy, hard packed snow, while the 12-inch impeller ensures high performance in deep snow. The clutch, chute and safety features are all operated from the ATV handlebars. Adjustable and replaceable skid shoes allow proper clearance, on any surface. **PRICE: \$3,000**

QUAD BOSS 44-INCH FINISH CUT MOWER

Outrun your neighbors with the Quad Boss 44" Finish Cut Mower. Available with Honda or Briggs & Stratton engines, the Quad Boss has an adjustable cutting height (1.5- to 4.5-inch) and the deck is made from tough 11-gauge steel. The blade brake disengages for easier starting. **PRICE: \$1,050 (Briggs & Stratton), \$1,530 (Honda)**



DR RAPID-FEED CHIPPER

New from DR, the Rapid-Feed Chipper has an exclusive loading system that enables users to drop most materials into the oversized hopper and walk away. It's designed to devour tree limbs and yard debris two to three times faster than any other home chippers, according to DR. Available in three sizes, ranging from 3.5-inch diameter capacity up to a 5.5-inch diameter capacity.

PRICE: \$1,140 AND UP

DR TOW-BEHIND FIELD AND BRUSH MOWER

DR's new tow-behind version of the Field and Brush Mower allows clearing overgrown property from the comfort of an ATV or tractor. It adjusts easily to provide quick attachment to towing vehicles without the use of tools and is available with two engines: a standard 13 HP unit, or a heavy-duty 17 HP OHV engine. Both come with a remote control to manage throttle, start and stop, and engagement of the mower blade from the vehicle. The mower height is adjustable from 5 to 7.5 inches and it cuts a wide 44-inch path.

PRICE: \$2,400 AND UP

MOOSE UTILITIES COUNTY PLOW

With a wing design and a 60-inch curved blade that drives snow up and away from the surface you're clearing, Moose's County Plow keeps snow from blowing into your face. The wing is 26 inches tall, and the plow tapers down to 16 inches at the end. Side shield sold separately.

PRICE: \$265

QUADIVATOR QUAD BLADE

Make nice with your neighbors and plow them all out with Quadivator's 50-inch Quad Blade. It's designed to fit all ATVs, installs quickly without any additional parts or kits and is made for heavy-duty operation. A simple pull of a strap adjusts the plowing angle and an extension kit is available to extend the blade to 60 inches.

PRICE: \$525

QUADIVATOR 62-INCH HYPER-CUT MOWER

Cut a wide 62-inch path with Quadivator's Hyper-Cut Mower. The "belly-mount" mower mounts below the ATV, between the front and rear wheels, and discharges out the rear. Features include five offset, heat-treated blades, multiple height adjustments and a powerful 18.5 HP Briggs & Stratton engine. To attach, back up over the mower deck, drop a pin in the hitch and lock it to your ATV.

PRICE: \$1,205

SWISHER SPIKE AERATOR

Available in 36-, 48- and 64-inch widths, Swisher's Spike Aerators penetrate the ground and loosen compacted soil to help oxygen and other nutrients reach the roots. An easy-fill fitting allows adding water for additional weight, with a plug for draining and storage. Heavy-duty steel wall construction and bearing blocks that can be greased promote long life.

PRICE: \$250 (36"), \$300 (48") AND \$350 (62")



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20x10x40	\$409.95	\$389.95	\$429.95
20x10x41	\$419.95	\$399.95	\$439.95
20x10x42	\$429.95	\$409.95	\$449.95
20x10x43	\$439.95	\$419.95	\$459.95
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20x10x98	\$989.95	\$969.95	\$1009.95
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KAWASAKI CARES: Warning: The TERYX™ ATV can be hazardous to operate. For your safety, always wear a helmet, eye protection and protective clothing. Never ride under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Never ride on public roads or pavement. Avoid excessive speeds and stunt driving. Be extra careful on difficult terrain. Protect the environment and obey all laws and regulations that control the use of this vehicle. ©2007 Kawasaki Motor Corp., U.S.A.



TARTER GATE ATV WIRE UNROLLER

Perhaps you live at the Ponderosa Ranch, and have a need to secure your borders. If so, Tarter Gate's powdercoated ATV Wire Unroller makes for fast, easy installation of fencing in tight places. It handles an entire roll of fencing wire and comes with a multi-receiver hitch for easy mounting.

PRICE: \$97

FARM

The core of the ATV market has always been utility. As gas prices increase the cost of operating heavy equipment, quads have become an even better choice for their speed, efficiency and the wide variety of available implements. Many agricultural accessories hook up with 3-point attachments. Several other companies sell 3-point hitches and implements, including Agri-Fab and Quadivator.

EARTHWAY M30 BROADCAST SPREADER

Powered by a 12-volt motor, Earth Way's M30 is a large-capacity broadcast spreader. The 3,350 cubic inch hopper is rust proof, the motor is enclosed in a thermo-plastic case for protection and it can be mounted to the ATV's front or rear cargo rack.

PRICE: \$400

KUNZ ENGINEERING TILL-EASE 2148 CULTIPACKER

Whether you're preparing a food plot or reseeding your lawn, the Till-Ease Cultipacker will provide the proper seed-to-soil contact for faster germination. The 48-inch wide Model 2148 is a flip-over design for easy transport and comes standard with 21 packer wheels. The bearings are greasable and the packer wheels are cast iron.

PRICE: \$845

AGRI-FAB 25-GALLON TOW SPRAYER

Attaching separately to your ATV or UTV, Agri-Fab's 25-Gallon Tow Sprayer is designed for large-scale jobs. The company says its SHURflo pump delivers reliable operation at 1.8 gallons per minute. There's a large screw cap for easy mixing of chemicals, 7-foot spray coverage with booms extended and it connects easily to the vehicle's electric source.

PRICE: \$350

CYCLE COUNTRY 3-POINT HITCH

Cycle Country has a wide lineup of tillage equipment, and it all starts with the 3-Point Hitch. Designed for larger 4WD ATVs, the 3-Point Hitch can be attached or removed in minutes and hooks up with the company's plow, disc harrow, furrower, cultivator, rake and rear blade. It locks out the rear suspension of the ATV for better precision and control than lighter pull-behind implements, according to Cycle Country.

PRICE: \$648, plus frame mount kit (\$130) and toolbar (\$169) for most implements



CYCLE COUNTRY DISC HARROW

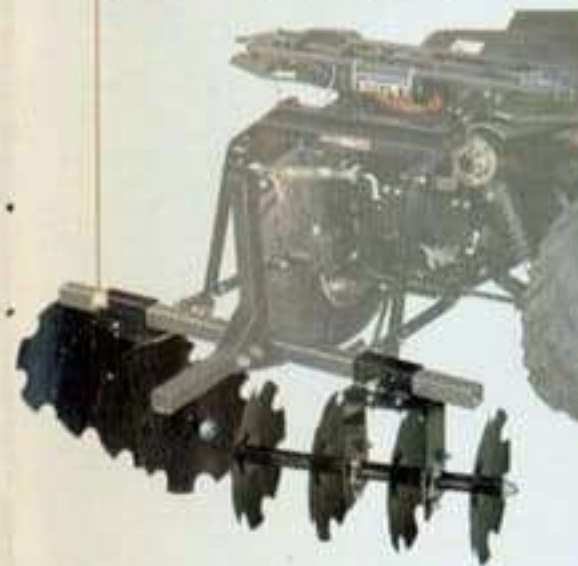
A key implement for the company's 3-Point Hitch, Cycle Country's Disc Harrow has eight disc blades and five adjustable angle positions for customized operation that make it good for smoothing out ground, breaking up dirt and preparing seedbeds for planting. Requires 3-Point Hitch and Universal Toolbar.

PRICE: \$409

KOLPIN DIRTWORKS 3-POINT HITCH SYSTEM

The lighter version of its UTV 3-Point System, Kolpin's 3-Point ATV setup is designed for fast and easy installation and adjustments without tools. It also includes a heavy-duty 12-volt electric actuator that takes care of the heavy lifting and provides down force for the toughest jobs. Altogether it weighs 42 pounds, and attaches to any 2-inch automotive-style receiver hitch.

PRICE: \$630, plus accessory tool bar (\$127)



KOLPIN DIRTWORKS DISC PLOW

With easy attachment to the DirtWorks 3-Point System (with the tool bar), Kolpin's Disc Plow churns up a 54-inch-wide path with eight 14-inch notched disc blades. Other features include a live axle, sealed ball bearing design and adjustable cutting angle.

PRICE: \$345, plus accessory tool bar (\$127)



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KOLPIN DIRTWORKS SEEDER/CULTIPACTOR

Just like the Disc Plow, Kolpin's Seeder/Cultipactor is part of the company's 3-Point system of implements. The spring-loaded soil compactor improves germination, while the dial adjustment allows for different seed types. The driver can access the seed flow gate, and the 48-inch width is adjustable.

PRICE: \$345, plus accessory tool bar (\$127)

FIMCO INDUSTRIES LG-3025 SPRAYER

Spray mosquitoes, ditches, fencerows, crops, yards, parks or sporting fields with Fimco's boomless sprayer. Its design allows access to hard to reach areas where boomed sprayers can't go. Nozzles can be turned on or off individually. With them all on, it can cover a 30-foot swath in one pass. The 25-gallon tank is corrosion resistant and includes mounting brackets to fit most ATV cargo racks.

PRICE: \$389

FIMCO INDUSTRIES DTH-42 DETHATCHER

Gently bring thatch and clippings to the surface for a cleaner, healthier lawn. Use in spring, mid-summer or fall for proper lawn maintenance. Fimco's Dethatcher assembles in 10 minutes or less and covers a 42-inch-wide swath with its 22 coiled tines. The tray has a 150-pound capacity for added downforce and is made of 14-gauge steel.

PRICE: \$99

QUADBOSS 15-GALLON SPOT SPRAYER

Tackle smaller spraying jobs efficiently with the QuadBoss spot sprayer. The SHURflo pump kicks out one gallon per minute and has a built-in on/off switch for control. The 10-foot hose includes an adjustable tip wand and a drain.

PRICE: \$150

TARTER GATE 125-POUND REAR-MOUNT SPREADER

This rear-mounted broadcast spreader is designed for fewer passes to fully cover your lawn, food plot or garden. The wide, 12-foot distribution pattern reduces over- or under-fertilizing and the hopper is injection-molded polyethylene to prevent rusting. Powered by a 12-volt sealed motor.

PRICE: \$364

LOYAL COMPACT MANURE SPREADER

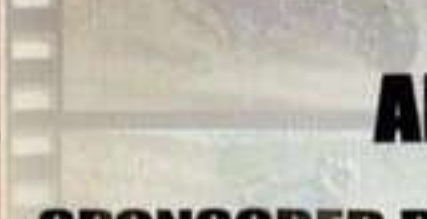
The company says its Compact Manure Spreader works just like bigger and more expensive spreaders, but only weighs 385 pounds. The full load spreads in about a minute and its 46.5-inch width means you can pull right into a stall to load up. The frame is reinforced and it works with most ATVs.

PRICE: \$1,725



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LOYAL MULTI-USE HARROW

Renovate foot plots, landscape your lawn, smooth out paths and level seed beds with Loyal's Multi-Use Harrow. Its width adjusts from 4 to 14 inches and it works in three different ways — pull forward for deep penetration, use in reverse for lighter work and turn over to use as a drag.

PRICE: \$250

LOYAL ATV DISC HARROW

The company claims its ATV Disc Harrow is the easiest to use and strongest harrow on the market. At 430 pounds, it's no lightweight. Disc blades are 16 inches in diameter and the disc gangs are adjustable and able to be offset, front or rear.

PRICE: \$995

DR ROTO-HOG POWER TILLER

While it looks like it could repave a highway, DR's Roto-Hog Power Tiller is meant to take the pain out of planting bed maintenance by loosening hard packed soil. Its power is transferred to 24 steel tines that spin at over 230 rpm and break soil into a soft mix that's ideal for planting. Cuts a 3-foot wide swath, all while you ride in comfort, and is powered by an OHV engine.

PRICE: \$2,199

SWISHER ACREAGE RAKE AND DETHATCHER

This two-in-one tool rakes and dethatches big yards quickly for greener grass and a healthier lawn by suffocating thatch. It rakes a 60-inch-wide path with six rake reels that are reversible for dethatching. Removable reel arms come off for easy storage, and each can be lifted separately for windrowing. Attaches to an ATV or lawn tractor.

PRICE: \$370

HAULING

Towing and hauling are both natural ATV duties. Purposefully designed trailers, power loaders and dump buckets are the best way to add cargo capacity and powerful capability. There are endless choices for rack add-ons, bolt-on cargo boxes, and power loaders. Swisher and Agri-Fab also sell ATV carts.

POLAR TRAILER HD 1500TA

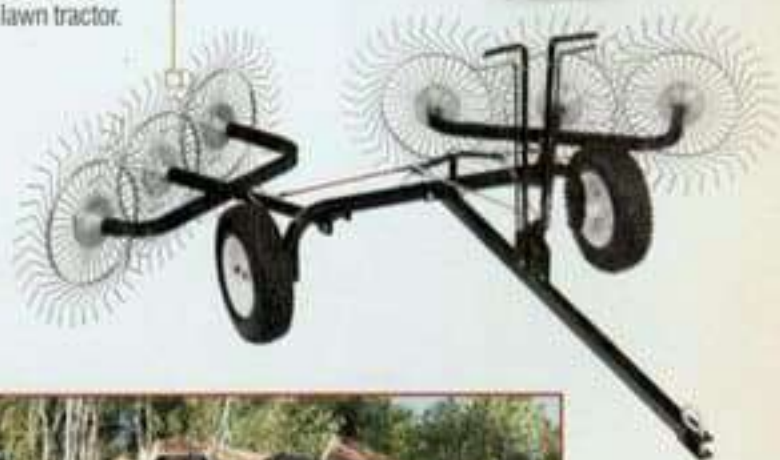
One of several ATV trailer options, Polar's heavier-duty tandem trailer has a listed load capacity of 1,500 pounds and can haul 22 cubic feet of cargo. The company's Tandem Walking Arm™ provides exceptional towing stability to haul any payload over tough terrain. The body is made of high impact polyethylene, the steel frame is powdercoated and the off-road bearings include grease fittings for long-term durability.

PRICE: \$699

BOSSKI 800 AL ATV WAGON

Made of aluminum, Bosski's 800 AL trailer has independent suspension with a torsion bar axle, 25-inch tires and tail and brake lights for extra safety. Additional features include a front-mounted gas can holder and a lid with tie down anchors to load gear on top, for even more storage.

PRICE: \$1,199



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GREAT DAY POWERLOADER

As the company says it, Great Day's PowerLoader can turn your ATV or UTV into a "juiced muscle machine" capable of loading and hauling enormous objects. At the push of a button, the PowerLoader's telescopic arms move as much as 250 pounds from the ground to your machine, ready for transport. Constructed of aircraft-grade aluminum, it adds a scant 29 pounds to the vehicle. Powered by a regular winch and adaptable to any regular ATV, golf cart or side-by-side.

PRICE: \$299

QUADIVATOR UNIVERSAL DUMP BUCKET

Turn your ATV into a front-end loader with Quadivator's Universal Dump Bucket. At 44 inches wide, it's designed for digging and moving modest weights of material. Includes rugged scoring teeth for soil penetration and an 18-inch lift height that allows dumping of loads. Attaches and detaches easily without tools to the company's Universal Mounting Kit (\$249). A winch or manual lift is required.

PRICE: \$486

MONTANA JACK'S GAS-N-TOOL PACK

Turn your ATV racks into a roving tool bench to carry items such as axes, mauls, sledgehammers or short-handle shovels and up to two fuel containers (included) to keep power tools and your machine gassed up. The two cargo decks are made of tough steel plates, are 8 inches deep and adjustable individually from 10 to 12 inches in width. Requires the company's model-specific Accessory Receiver System.

Price: \$479

MOOSE UTILITIES VERTICAL TOOL HOLDER

Sometimes you just need old-fashioned tools. For just such an occasion, Moose Utilities has its Vertical Tool holder that allows horizontal or vertical tool toting. It's designed to carry all types of fiberglass long handled tools, including shovels, rakes and hoes on the back of your ATV without taking up precious rack space.

PRICE: \$21

CONTACT INFORMATION

AGRI-FAB, (217) 728-8388; www.agri-fab.com

BOSSKI, (208) 455-8433; www.atvwagon.com

CYCLE COUNTRY, (800) 841-2222; www.cyclecountry.com

DR POWER EQUIPMENT, (800) 687-6575;

www.drpower.com

EARTHWAY PRODUCTS, (800) 294-0671; www.earthway.com

FIMCO INDUSTRIES, (800) 831-0027; www.fimcoindustries.com

GREAT DAY INC., (866) 649-1918; www.greatdayinc.com

KOLPIN OUTDOORS, (877) 956-5746; www.kolpin.com

KUNZ ENGINEERING, (815) 539-6954; www.kunzeng.com

LOYAL, (800) 472-2341; www.loyal-roth.com

MONTANA JACK'S, (877) 463-2344; www.montanajacks.com

MOOSE UTILITIES, (608) 758-1111; www.mooseutilities.com

POLAR TRAILER, www.polartrailer.com

SWISHER MOWER & MACHINE CO., (800) 222-8183; www.swisherinc.com

TARTER GATE, (800) 733-4283; www.tartergate.com

QUAD BOSS, www.quadboss.com

QUADIVATOR, (866) 770-2169; www.quadivator.com

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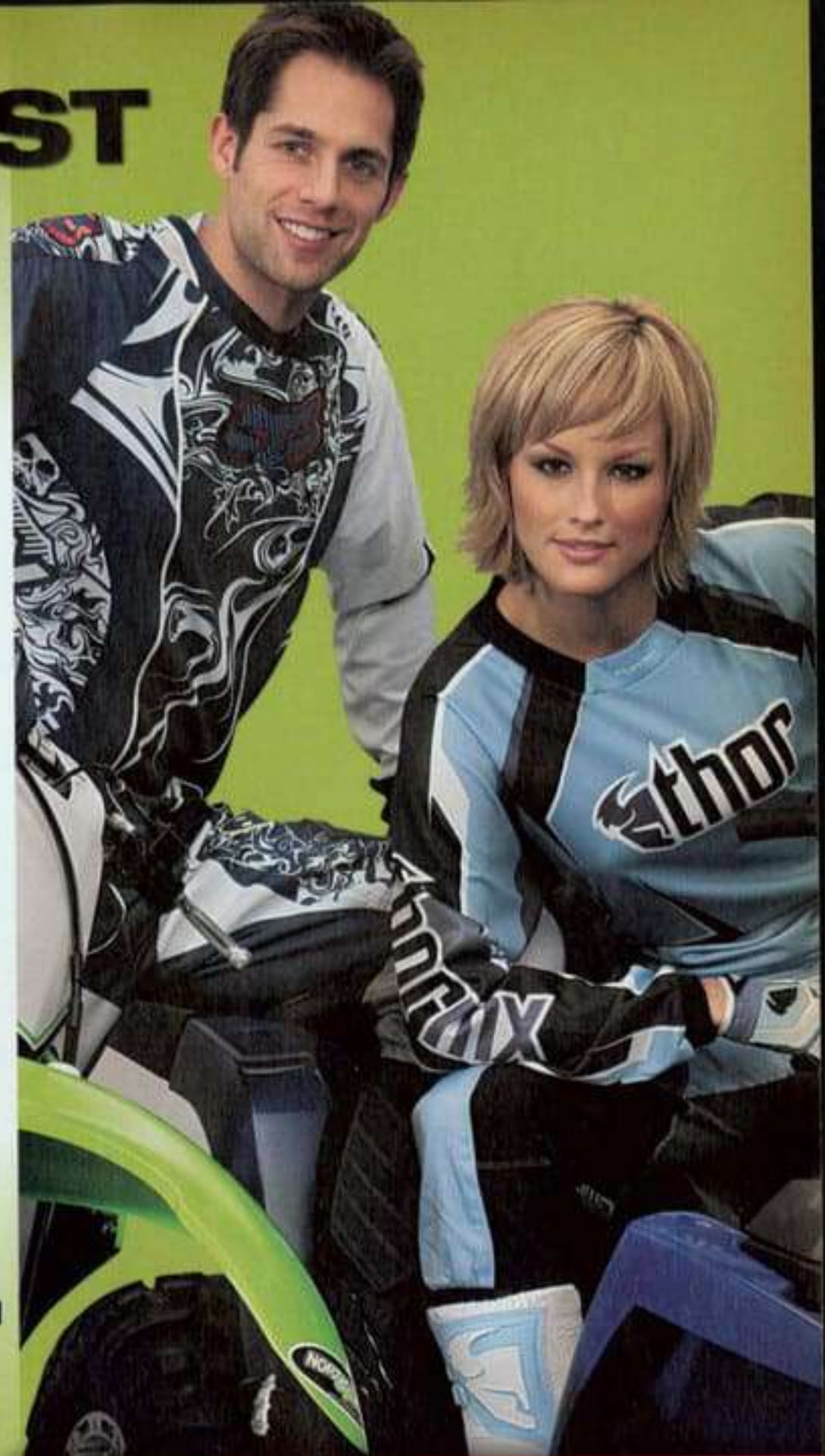
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POWER

6 BIG BORE



HUNGRY

4x4s, HEAD TO HEAD

By Tim Erickson



WHILE THE TOP-DISPLACEMENT CATEGORY OF UTILITY ATVS ISN'T FOR EVERYONE, BIG BORE ATVS GET THE MOST ATTENTION FROM RIDERS. IT'S THE CLASS OF ATV WITH THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY, THE BEST BELLS AND WHISTLES AND, OF COURSE, THE MOST POWER.

As displacements have surged upward, factories have put increased emphasis on performance and handling with big bore utility machines. While all of them still come with racks and hitches, the reality is that the majority of these machines spend as much or more time playing than working. Tow implements for a few hours of chores during the week and unhitch a great time enjoying trails all weekend long.

Go-anywhere capability, better response at higher speeds and performance-tuned suspension are all focal points of modern ATV design. There is a premium on rider comfort, which means people spend more time than ever on their ATVs.

Such was the premise of our recent ATV Trials at the Hatfield-McCoy trails near Logan, West Virginia. All these machines are capable workers. But the ATVs that are best for the weekend getaway is where the true interest lies.

For ATV Trials we invited every manufacturer to bring its top-displacement 2008 utility 4x4 to pit them head-to-head. It was quite an assortment. Every factory but Honda accepted the invitation (the company stated product availability problems with its Rincon).

We had the spankin' new monster Arctic Cat Thundercat. The Outlander 800 was unloaded from Can-Am's factory trailer and the Yamaha Grizzly 700 was queued up. The Polaris Sportsman 800 EFI represented, and the Kawasaki Brute Force 750 EFI made the trek, too. Suzuki was unable to have a 2008 King Quad 750 for us in time for the test, but saw to it we had a 2007 King Quad 700 instead. For that reason, the King Quad is unranked in this shootout.

Topped off with fuel, test riders on board—it was time to see what the biggest ATVs could do. Read carefully for your priorities. Though we name a winner and rank and file the rest, there isn't a bad machine in the bunch.

FIFTH PLACE ARCTIC CAT THUNDERCAT

HITS

- ✓ With power like this, who needs Viagra?
- ✓ Rider comfort calibrated as well as a NASA flight computer
- ✓ Fancy wheels and its silver, painted finish have plenty of wow

MISSES

- ✗ Cheap feel to the gated shifter that needs more positive detents
- ✗ Too much handlebar feedback and the steering is heavy
- ✗ Throttle management is great, the throttle lever isn't

OUR TAKE

The monster machine of choice for the power-hungry off-roader.



It'd be too easy to simply crown the Thundercat "Most Powerful" and walk away from the rest of our responsibilities. There are a number of things about this machine worth discussing that are more than just how much power gets to the ground (and holy of holiest is there a lot of it!).

The Thundercat has the most power, the quickest acceleration and the most top end. The deep, growling big bore has an abundance of power through its entire range that urges drivers to use more and more of it. It's a smooth delivery, too, thanks to a 90-degree V-twin that does a beautiful job concealing engine vibration.

Not all of our test drivers were able to ride the Thundercat prior to our ATV Trials. Arctic Cat PR frontman Kale Wainer reminded us, as he did at our first

With this much motor, there's a case for crowning the Thundercat the king of the big bore class. With all things considered, though, that wasn't the case.

ride event late last summer, to be careful while getting to know the big kitty because "the power sneaks up on you."

Wainer's right. The engine power is so broad and so easy to manage (and the chassis capable to handle it) that it welcomes drivers to use lots of lever without feeling they're pushing it. Throttle control is easier to manage than the instant-hit feeling of the Outlander. It's an engineering feat to have this much power on tap yet have it so refined for the user.

To accommodate the power, Arctic Cat lengthened the chassis wheelbase 2.5 inches after trying several iterations. The company's designers said it was the best combina-



(above) An extended wheelbase, among other chassis tweaks, results in a dramatically improved ride compared with previous Arctic Cat utilities.

(right) While the shifting mechanism is easy to use, its sloppy engagement was a frequent hassle.



We're still waiting for the upgrade to a dual A-arm suspension setup in the front, but the Sportsman makes due with what it's got. All testers praised its comfortable and predictable ride.

tion of stability and handling. During hard acceleration, the chassis offers plenty of positive feedback. Frankly, there were members of our test crew who thought driving a 1000-class machine on trails would be too much. After a few pulls, those most nervous were using the full thumb when the trails allowed for it.

Using the thumb control would be better, however, with a better throttle lever. It's nitpicky, but the throttle paddle is smallish and at such an angle that it only allows for a single thumb position. It gets fatiguing even though the lever pull is light. Though the rider comfort is very well dialed in (to the potential of the chassis, we feel) the handlebars didn't agree with all the test drivers. One of our shorter riders said the handlebars turned up too much and put his wrists at an awkward angle.

The seat, however, was fantastic and we applaud the designers who insisted the rider height got dropped lower into the chassis. In addition to sitting more into the machine, as opposed to on top of it, the Thundercat's seat has both comfort and good support.

Keeping the rider connected to the terrain is a dual A-arm front suspension and independent rear. The rear suspension is unique to the Thundercat from the other Cat chassis. The rear shocks are mounted in a more vertical orientation. It allows a nice, progressive valve stack with a linear rate that is plush and comfortable. Overall ride height compared to most other Arctic Cat utility models is lower by one inch with these changes, which lowers the center of gravity to improve handling.

The Thundercat is the most comfortable Arctic Cat chassis to date. Between the lower rider and lower ride height, the Thundercat reassures drivers who want to drive wicked fast. Managing Editor Chris Vogtman noted,

"Arctic Cat crafted an ATV with enhanced ergos and a front end that complies with higher speed riding."

While the ride control and predictability is much improved from the other utility machines from Arctic Cat, there is room for improvement to refine the ride and match performance of others in this class. Namely, the front end does little to isolate handlebar feedback. The suspension is plush but the bars twist with the slightest sidewall pressure to a front tire from bumps or ruts. It causes the bars to move in the driver's hands, which robs confidence. There is heavy steering effort with the Thundercat, too, especially in downhill situations when the front end is loaded. It gets worse in four-wheel drive, and worse again with the lever-actuated front diff lock engaged.

Like other Arctic Cat utility machines, the ground clearance and ample suspension travel make the Thundercat one of the best machines here for extreme off-road terrain. The downside is that the long wheelbase compromises the turning radius, but the Cat still moves through woods and over obstacles easily.

Did we mention this thing is fast?

FOURTH PLACE POLARIS SPORTSMAN 800 TWIN EFI

HITS

- ✓ Gorgeous automotive paint disguises a dated chassis better than an Armani suit on Uncle Jesse
- ✓ Enough storage to pack the contents of a 4-shelf garage cabinet
- ✓ Still the ride comfort king after all these years

MISSES

- ✗ MacPherson struts feel tired up front; we've been waiting for the next-gen Sportsman, and feel like we've waited long enough
- ✗ Uninspiring power for an 800
- ✗ Too much chassis clatter in the moving parts

OUR TAKE

The Polaris Sportsman is an old friend.



(above) They may not be the flashiest gauges of the test, Can-Am handily wins that one, but all pertinent data is present.

(left) Don't discount the utility of the Polaris front rack storage box. We filled it with pens, notebooks, extra gloves and water bottles every time we hit the trails.



Despite the power increase it got for 2008, the Polaris Sportsman 800, compared to the others in this test, is a bit of an underachiever in terms of power output and thrill. The engine pulls fine and has ample torque (9 percent more peak horsepower, 11 percent more peak torque for 2008), but there isn't a powerful or fast-revving hit that puts power to the ground as quickly as any of the V-twins. It lacks cool exhaust notes, too.

In the radar test, it only beat the Yamaha Grizzly to any measure of performance with its displacement advantage. That advantage disappears with the weight of the Sportsman, which on our scales had a running weight of 788 pounds compared to the Grizzly's 628 pounds.

The biggest Sportsman has some engine vibration just up the RPM ladder from idle that makes the chassis rattle and resonate a bit, but once underway in the power range that creates forward motion it disappears. The clutching feels just right for a shared work/play machine in high range with plenty of mid-range scoot to get from corner to corner.

When testing the machines in the low transmission range, the Sportsman has the shortest gearing. Though we didn't prove it with our radar gun, the Polaris felt the most speed limited in its low range as well. But that low-range grunt also contributed to the feel that had we stumbled upon a stuck coal truck during a trail ride, the Sportsman would give it a tug back into service. The

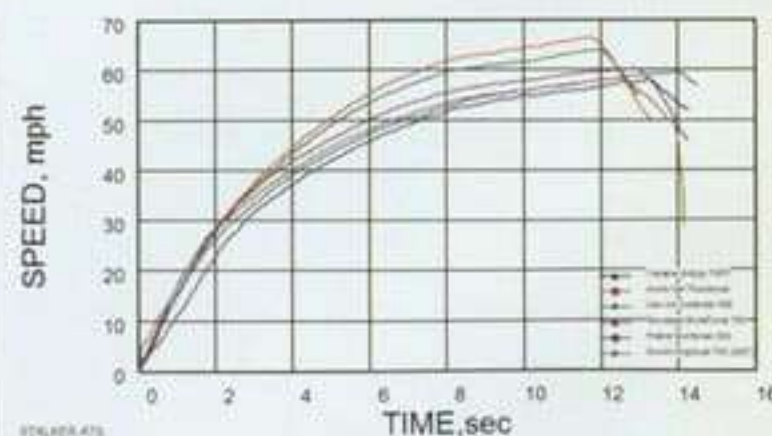
to surprise us with its handling, good or bad. We honestly don't know if the predictability of the ride we'll get from a Sportsman is because it's so good or because it's so familiar. The MacPherson front struts and the IRS rear have been on duty for more than a decade and under our butts for thousands of miles. It might be that we've driven a Sportsman through every sort of obstacle, and it has no surprises left for us anymore.

Body roll in tight or aggressive corners comes from the soft initial rate on the front struts. We'd love to see a next-generation Sportsman with a dual A-arm front end with better progression and an adjustable spring rate, and it's just a matter of time before struts are reserved for the price point machines.

The Sportsman's rear suspension is still the benchmark of comfort, and while the front end wallows a bit, the rear end stays planted to the turf and follows each contour of the earth. Several companies have made an IRS rear based on things learned from the Sportsman chassis. Though

rest of the machines in this test, save the Thundercat, with taller low-range gearing get lugged under strains that don't make the Sportsman whimper. The Thundercat just pulls by force, by the way, not really caring what gear set is chosen.

The Sportsman did nothing



RADAR

We put all the ATVs in this test against our radar gun to measure performance and acceleration. We used the same driver for optimum consistency and ran all the machines with a full tank of fuel. We ran each ATV repeatedly until we reached consistency and then let the best run (determined by the quickest elapsed time) be representative of the machine's performance. The graph shows the performance we recorded during our radar session using our Stalker ATS system. Full data is on page 44.

other factories have made them lighter and with fewer parts than this version, none of them have duplicated the ride quality.

The suspension is by far the most forgiving in this test, and aided further by a wide, soft cushion that makes for the most comfortable perch in ATV-dom. Some drivers even go so far as to call the ride mushy, citing the superior bump and ripple isolation in a comfort-tuned suspension too wallowy for a big, fast machine. Along those same lines, the single-lever braking is good for entry-level and smaller bore machines as a user-friendly feature. On a high-horsepower, fast-gait trail machine we say ditch the cost savings in exchange for separate brake levers for the front and rear wheels to add control.

Despite the single-lever brakes, stopping power is excellent and progressive thanks to the use of durable, no-squish braided steel lines. However, like the suspension isolation, our finely-tuned testing crew noted that there is little brake

feel at the lever. While this would be a serious rip on a sport quad, it's minor on this utility mount because it doesn't affect confidence. We've never had an instance where a Sportsman of any size failed to haul itself down to a stop adequately, but the reduced feel makes them less predictable and reassuring, especially when driving a heavy machine.

While heavy, the weight plays to some advantages that Sportsman owners appreciate, ride comfort just the first item of mention. The Sportsman rarely has traction issues. With its ballast, if there is a tire on the ground making solid contact this machine will move forward. The tires, too, were great in the West Virginia soil whether we were running them on clay, mud or rocks.

The handlebars have a slightly taller height for better steering leverage that positions wrists and elbows higher. The grips are thin, which makes the handlebar easy to feel, but the grip diameter is smaller which some riders didn't prefer. The grip tack, however, was great. We

noticed during wet conditions that gloves didn't lose contact. Switches don't get simpler.

The right thumb activates the front axle, which uses the Polaris On-Demand All-Wheel drive system. New this year is the ADC technology, or Active Descent Control, that is an innovative step for Polaris that takes the Sportsman from worst to first for downhill control. The rider-activated device applies engine braking to all four wheels and hauls the Sportsman and rider to a smooth, complete stop on extreme downhills without touching the brakes.

THIRD PLACE CAN-AM OUTLANDER 800 H.O. EFI

HITS

- ✓ This machine makes the best ATV engine noises ever and the power tickles Elmo from across the street
- ✓ Excellent instrumentation and DESS security remind us we're in a tech era
- ✓ The most active, fun-to-ride big-bore

MISSES

- ✗ Brake noises are more annoying than a room full of squeaking office chairs
- ✗ Rear racks bruise hips
- ✗ Throttle lever is fatiguing

OUR TAKE

A drive over the country and through the woods shouldn't be this fun.

The Thundercat is the quickest and most powerful machine in this test, but the machine that offered the greatest rush of acceleration was the Can-Am Outlander. It felt faster because of the quick-revving, responsive power and the smaller packaging in front of the driver.

The Rotax 800 V-twin hits the hardest off the line and gives the impression that it has the most power and speed. Bill Lanphier, our driver during all the drag runs said, "This one has to be the fastest" when stepping off the Outlander — and that was after driving the mighty T-Cat for its speed run previously.

Stable handling, a well-tuned exhaust note and responsive power yield the sportiest ride of all the big bore contenders.





(above) Sporting grips back up the Outlander's already playful demeanor.
(left) We're still waiting for a version that plays Tetris, but Can-Am's new gauges are currently the top of the heap in style and functionality.

Shifting on the Outlander wasn't always cooperative. The gated shifting mechanism is in a decent location and moves freely, but the machine itself would

need some nudges to get the selected gear engaged. Once triggered, though, both high and low range on the Outlander produce responsive thrust accompanied by a spectacular exhaust note.

This machine inspires throttle mischief. It's just too much fun to use lots of thumb. The good news for throttle addicts is that Can-Am claims an 11 percent increase in fuel efficiency thanks to revised fuel mapping.

In slow-speed, technical driving, the Outlander's throttle is difficult to modulate because the ultra-responsive power builds so quickly and with minimal lever travel. It makes the Outlander feel jerky in tight and technical areas when drivers get a burst of forward momentum when they want a smaller dose, most notably in low range. But once the

Groaning brakes will make themselves known on long descents, especially in the wet. Engine braking is commendable, though, and stays engaged at moderate speeds.

trail opens up, the engine makes this machine one of the most exciting ATVs to ride aggressively for the same reason, and that is the excitement purposefully designed into this machine.

The Outlander's terrific engine is well suited to faster trail driving and the suspension is up to the task, too. It's comfortable, scoring high in ride comfort from our test drivers, two of them placing it second behind the Sportsman for ride quality.

Part of the livelier feel than the more-powerful Thundercat is chalked up to the sportier chassis. Whereas Arctic Cat dropped its powerhouse engine into a longer, more stable chassis, the nearly-as-powerful Outlander uses a chassis with more conventional dimensions.

It's super easy to make the front end light, which keeps riders on their toes. For enthusiastic, performance trail riders it's less of a negative than it sounds. It's a more active, involved riding experience. Though heavier, it feels more youthful and spry than both the Grizzly and Brute Force.

Because it's more active, one of the things we'd love to see changed is the rear rack design. The racks have a good surface area for hauling and look very well sculpted into the overall ATV design. However, each side of the rear rack intrudes into the occupant space if the rider is hanging off the seat. Catch a mid-corner bump and take delight showing your "I'm hardcore" hip bruises to unsuspecting coworkers for Monday morning entertainment.

The tires weren't as well-suited to the West Virginia terrain. We needed to activate the Outlander's Visco-Lok 4x4 mode in places where other machines navigated easily with only the rear wheels driving. That allowed us to appreciate one of the Outlander's 2008 upgrades, though. The Visco-Lok has a quicker engagement than it previously did to get all four wheels moving when extra traction is needed.

The lever pull on the throttle is so stiff you'd swear it was pulling a pair of round-slide carbs. There is no excuse to have an EFI machine with a throttle pull this strenuous. It's enough that the fatigue to the right thumb will cut your ride day short.

Like the Sportsman, the linked, single-lever brake system should be reconsidered for the high-performance big-bore class. The front brake disc is also a source of worry. It's exposed to all the elements and the disc can get noisy after a heavy morn-

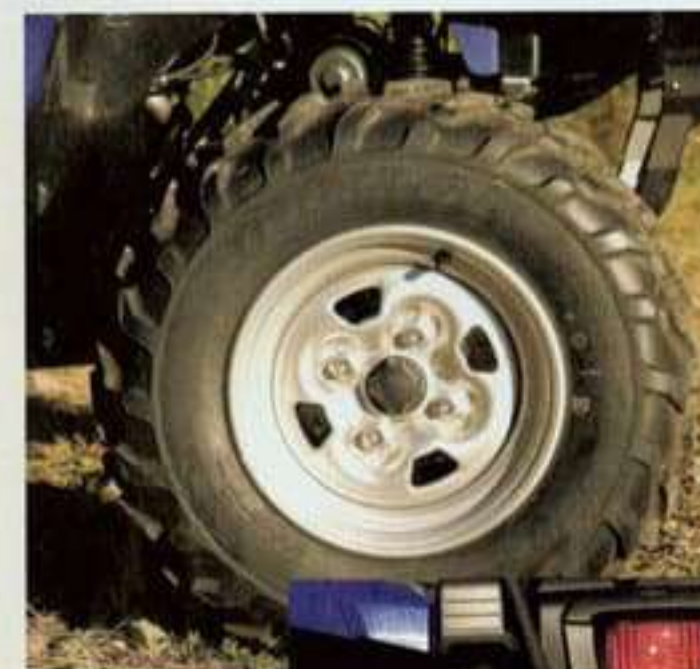


ing dew. While we've never failed to stop, the lack of good brake feel (by comparison to others here) and the racket when they are applied is disconcerting. The rear brake pedal linkage is clumsy.

It's worth calling special attention to the Outlander's new instrumentation. The info

and gauge panel is the class best. Because this is the premier class in the ATV industry with some of the biggest price tags, it's safe to call this instrumentation the best in the business to date. The Digital Encoded Security System (DESS) anti-theft device makes it next to impossible to drive the ATV away on its own power without the correct key.

We decided it's a shame the Outlander was relegated to a mid-pack finish because we feel so highly about it. Such close competition these days!



(above) Yamaha's EPS preserves a measure of feedback through the bars, but masks rim- and tire-damaging obstacles.
(right) It may be set too soft from the factory, but Yamaha's adjustable suspension is a big benefit for work or recreational riding.



SECOND PLACE YAMAHA GRIZZLY 700FI

HITS

- ✓ Power steering assist makes riding it like pressing the easy button
- ✓ Durable, lightweight design makes up for having the least power in these proceedings
- ✓ Brakes grab turf so well it wiggles needles on Richter scales

MISSES

- ✗ The power steering would be even better without the ape-hanger handlebars
- ✗ Body roll can become problematic during off-cambers
- ✗ How about some more storage, fellas?

OUR TAKE

A wonderful all-around performer with super-slick power steering.

While it doesn't have the largest displacement or class-leading power, the Yamaha Grizzly does have a class-exclusive: Electronic Power Steering (EPS). This technology is the biggest reason the mighty Grizzly vaulted to a unanimous decision as our 2007 ATV of the Year.

There was nothing to change on this model for 2008 because the machine had a full makeover in 2007, at least underneath its attractive plastics.

We've bestowed prior kudos to Yamaha for the Grizzly's engine. The fuel-injected 686cc single was installed last year, promising less vibration and a stronger low- and mid-range RPM.

The engine pulls hard, smooth and with a linear powerband, however, it sounds the least sporting and the most industrial. Thankfully, there are tons of large-bore singles in existence so this engine design will never be obsolete. Especially ones that work this well.

Though the Grizzly is the slowest to accelerate to our measured speeds and distances, the chassis delights and the ride is sporting enough that it feels faster than others. Some of that feeling may be due to sound. The Grizzly has a fair amount of intake noise that beckons riders to get caught in the rush. Response in the tight trails was instant. That, coupled with a light, maneuverable chassis, makes lofting the front over obstacles intuitive.

And what if you cream the obstacles any-



(above) It may not have the most entertaining engine in the group, but the well rounded Grizzly is still near the head of its class.

(right) Yamaha's Ultramatic transmission has a solid-feeling shifter that allows confident gear changes and positive engagement.



way? The Electronic Power Steering (EPS) has your back. More than just a steering assist to make turning the machine easier, it also has a steering stabilizer effect that calms rut chasing and unwanted directional changes. Based on our tests and knowledge of Grizzly behavior without EPS, this latter benefit is the greater triumph as long as operators aren't so careless they damage wheels and tires with alarming regularity. Those kind of financial consequences are most often self-correcting, however.

On flat, higher-speed trails, there is great feedback from the front because the power assist doesn't make steering too light. Because it kicks in only when needed, the system erases negative handling inputs everywhere.

The Grizzly is a machine you climb onto and sit atop. Because riders sit tall on the seat (comfortable, by the way) it exaggerates the chassis body roll because there is lots of rider movement topside.

It's a bit of a compromise, but what is gained in return is a lighter, more nimble feel. The dimensions are in line with the rest of the class, but the Yamaha feels the smallest. Due to the light weight and easy steering, this machine is also the most flickable.

There is a bit of a learning curve to drive the Grizzly at its potential. Conventional woods riding might include ham-fisting the throttle and throwing a good shove into the bars to initiate a turn. That doesn't fly very well here. Drivers hopping from a different machine to the Grizzly found themselves fighting over steer — the front end is that responsive to inputs. It takes a while before realizing its easier and the machine more responsive and predictable to just steer lightly and let the EPS do its thing.

There is little to talk about with suspension action because it has mid-pack performance — nothing fancy, and nothing either a glaring malady or cause of



WEIGHT

While manufacturers publish a dry weight, it means little when it comes time to climb aboard and ride the machine. We had our friends at Intercomp loan us a set of their certified scales in order to give you a meaningful running weight. We weighed all the big bore ATVs when they were assembled, fully prepped and ready to ride. When the machines went on the scales (one under each wheel) they had a full tank of fuel. In order to compensate for the different fuel capacities, to get a more accurate comparison, we deducted the fluid weight of fuel (6.133 pounds) times the manufacturer's spec for fuel capacity less the weight of one gallon. Both the dry weight and the corrected running weights are listed.

ARCTIC CAT THUNDERCAT

Claimed Dry Weight: 716 lbs.
Observed: 772 lbs.
Corrected Running Weight: 738 lbs.

CAN-AM OUTLANDER 800 H.O. EFI

Claimed Dry Weight: 657 lbs.
Observed: 738 lbs.
Corrected Running Weight: 711 lbs.

KAWASAKI BRUTE FORCE 750 4X4I

Claimed Dry Weight: 605 lbs.
Observed: 652 lbs.
Corrected Running Weight: 627 lbs.

POLARIS SPORTSMAN 800 TWIN EFI

Claimed Dry Weight: 770 lbs.
Observed: 808 lbs.
Corrected Running Weight: 788 lbs.

YAMAHA GRIZZLY 700FI

Claimed Dry Weight: 600 lbs.
Observed: 654 lbs.
Corrected Running Weight: 628 lbs.

SUZUKI KING QUAD 700 (2007 model)

Claimed Dry Weight: 601 lbs.
Observed: 662 lbs.
Corrected Running Weight: 640 lbs.

celebration. It just works, with the occasional bouncy feel that is mostly a result of the machine's weight (the King Quad and Kawasaki have similar behavior). Heavier vehicles isolate bumps better, and that's a fact be it ATVs or the Chevy model lineup. Once in a while the Grizzly will bounce itself off course slightly, but the rider control and manipulation over the machine weight is the effective countermeasure.

Engaging the 4x4 mode is push-button, and another push-button behind a flapper locks in the front differential. It's a tad cumbersome with gloved hands, but it's a straightforward process. Another benefit of the power steering assist is the reduction in steering effort with the front wheels turning, which was especially arduous with the diff locked. It's better with EPS, but Yamaha still limits speed in the locked mode to 22 MPH because of the added steering difficulty.

Applying the brakes halts the Grizzly in a hurry. The tires have great traction and the separate levers for front and rear mean the

driver can control handling with independent brakes. One test driver who used the rear brake pedal thought it didn't release soon enough and caused unwanted sliding.

Instrumentation is full of good information, but the rider sits tall and the gauge is mounted low. There isn't a handlebar pod, so there's a long distance from eyeball to bezel. It's easy to read the digital readouts when idle, but an analog needle position like some of the others is easier to spot with a glance when on the run — if knowing your forward progress is important.

The Grizzly has an annoying amber light that glows the entire time the vehicle moves about in high range. A similar lamp serves as a warning for overheating, so the glow was a constant distraction to a gauge we couldn't read well anyway.

Good power, fine trail manners and a reasonable sticker price create a great all-around machine in the Grizzly. We're big believers in the EPS and think it's just a matter of time before other manufacturers work around the patents and introduce their own version.

FIRST PLACE KAWASAKI BRUTE FORCE 750 4X4I

HITS

- ✓ Faster than Marion Jones hopped up on 7 Red Bulls and a shot of roids
- ✓ The EFI upgrade refined this engine package immeasurably
- ✓ Champion multi-tasker

MISSES

- ✗ The cumbersome diff-lock lever is a dated solution to get all the wheels moving
- ✗ Belt whine may have you reaching for ear plugs
- ✗ Sealed storage is nice but more volume, sir

OUR TAKE

The machine that best combined power, sport and comfort scored the win.

While it doesn't have the power of the Thundercat or the Outlander, the Brute Force, with its 750 V-twin, still packs a thrill. On our radar comparison the Brute ranked behind the Thundercat and Outlander, respectively, which isn't a surprise. All use the same basic 90-degree engine configuration.

It might not win on the drag strip, but it's a delightful engine to drive on the trails. The Kawasaki Brute Force 750 has a rip-roaring attitude. Test drivers thought the Brute had it all: a strong bottom end, a healthy hit of power in the midrange and a top end that kept pulling without any difficulty controlling it, regardless of RPM. The sweet exhaust note was a bonus that gave us wide, toothy grins.

Think the Brute Force 650 is fast? Wait till you try the explosive 750. For recreational riding, this engine is as good as it gets.





Suzuki engineered the LT-R450 for experienced riders. Suzuki QuadRacer® ATVs may be used only by those aged 16 and older. Suzuki highly recommends that all ATV riders take a training course. We'll even pay for it. For safety and training course information, see your dealer or call the SVM at 1-800-852-5344. ATVs can be hazardous to operate. For your safety, always wear a helmet, eye protection and protective clothing. Always avoid paved surfaces. Never ride on public roads. Never carry passengers or engage in stunt riding. Never ride under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. Avoid excessive speed. Be extra careful on difficult terrain. Suzuki, the "S" logo, and Suzuki model and product names are Suzuki trademarks or ©. © American Suzuki Motor Corporation 2008



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Best of all, the new EFI engine was far less fatiguing to operate when the carbs were ditched in favor of throttle bodies — at least one driver thought there was still too much throttle effort for a fuel-injected machine. The throttle pull may be more fatiguing (not as poor as the Outlander, however) but it is smooth.

A smooth throttle is one of the requirements to have seamless engine operation, appreciated when driving in technical terrain. Compared to the previous Brute where the engine lacked a linear power curve, the EFI update is far better. The power was more manageable through technical terrain. Like most EFI systems, a throttle position sensor helps feed inputs to the ECU for the correct fuel map.

(left) The trademark Kawasaki belt whine can be tiresome, but great handling, clever packaging and endless power more than make up for it. (below) It may be a simple setup, but the Brute Force gauge cluster is easy to read and clearly displays all the necessary information.



ACCELERATION TEST

	0-30 MPH SEC	0-30 MPH feet	0-60 MPH SEC	0-60 MPH feet	0-500 ft MPH	0-500 ft SEC	660 ft MPH	660 ft SEC
ARCTIC CAT THUNDERCAT	2.16	50.28	7.36	416.75	62.35	8.29	64.38	10.01
CAN-AM OUTLANDER 800	2.22	54.25	8.24	483.43	60.21	8.43	61.77	10.22
KAWASAKI BRUTE FORCE 750	2.18	55.19	12.65	840.49	56.48	8.67	58.40	10.57
POLARIS SPORTSMAN 800 EFI	2.46	61.92	-	-	54.83	9.07	56.97	11.02
YAMAHA GRIZZLY 700FI	2.77	63.67	-	-	54.11	9.39	55.95	11.37
SUZUKI KING QUAD 700*	2.26	60.32	-	-	54.79	8.86	56.63	10.82

*2007 MODEL



Where the driveline is less refined is getting it all the way to the ground. In the transformation from Prairie to Brute Force the familiar and notorious transmission whine didn't vanish. It's not a huge problem, but it's an unnecessary noise that is also a grimacing reminder that past Kawi V-twins with the similar transmission (and noise) have had a miserable belt life with frequent service intervals.

Getting the transmission into gear was simple. The shifter was easy to reach and locked into every gear position with a positive detent without being notchy.

The Kawasaki is the lightest on the ground at 627 pounds, just one pound lighter than the Grizzly. Like other machines of a similar weight, the suspension is not as comfy as the heaviest three machines in this test. But it is compliant.

We had the chance to test suspension action on a gnarly uphill section and a vicious downhill. Even with adjustable preloads on both, it wasn't sprung as softly as the Grizzly. Despite what felt like stiffer spring rates on all the corners, the Brute didn't bounce or kick back as much, either, which means the shock valve stack is well calibrated for the machine.

The front can bounce and swap, but only after cycling fast when taking repetitive bumps. It never hops out of line and our test drivers favored the Brute's suspension over the Grizzly for both confidence and sporty trail driving. As a reminder, we rally around the Sportsman

as the comfort champ. But the Brute nailed the middle ground between plush and responsive.

The steering is not as light and nimble as the Grizzly, but it doesn't have EPS, either. The Brute's steering gets cumbersome when in 4x4 mode, and downright uncooperative when the diff-lock lever is squeezed. The lever, by the way, isn't a friendly device.

Kawasaki's reasoning is sound: full traction is needed only temporarily. While

functional, the lever isn't easy to engage in a flash, and if riding in a technical situation using body English, it may require letting go of the left handgrip for an adjustment to reach it. By that time momentum could be lost, and that same situation might make it challenging to keep the lever squeezed.

Much of our trail testing site was on rocky grades. During descents, the engine braking on the Brute Force was second only to the Polaris' ADC system. On a steep, rock-strewn downhill we let off the throttle at 10 MPH and the ATV scrubbed down slowly and calmly to a 2 MPH crawl.

Stopping and slowing the Brute is accomplished easily on flat ground, too.

We felt it was unfair to compare the 2007 Suzuki King Quad 700 in most categories. We're curious to see how the bored-out '08 750 will measure up.



We like the independent brakes on big bores and the Kawasaki is so equipped. The levers had great precision and feel that were easy to modulate for effective stopping on all the corners. A sealed rear brake is a nice feature that is well protected.

The wheels on the Kawasaki were excellent. Why pay special attention to them? For one thing, they are factory made instead of outsourced and it shows. They were the best in the test and they were matched with great tires that did everything well. They slid when they needed to slide, and they gripped when the ATV needed to press on. The ground contact and the predictable suspension helped us drive the Brute confidently, and the engine begged us to drive it playfully.

Rider comfort is terrific. While not as soft of a cushion as the Sportsman's seat, the Brute's perch had comfortable, supportive padding for a long trail cruise. Handlebar positioning was ideal and the grips were comfortable. There is little storage offered, but the Brute makes good use of space with its fender-mounted storage areas that do an OK job keeping small articles dry.

At the end of the day, we could find a compelling reason to buy any one of these machines and would be happy with any of them in our garage. What gives the Kawasaki the nudge to the first-place position is the wonderful engine package that has the magic combination of power

and user-friendliness. It also has the suspension and handling that is the best compromise of plush and responsive. Added together, it's the most playful machine in the test when we were looking to crown the best big-bore for weekend getaways.

2007 SUZUKI KING QUAD 700

HITS

- ✓ Like the Brute Force, the King Quad finds middle ground between plush and responsive suspension
- ✓ Seat is so comfortable we caught night watchmen snoozing in the cockpit
- ✓ Great levers activating powerful calipers means two-finger braking

MISSES

- ✗ Tall gearing in low range misses the engine's sweet spot
- ✗ Steering often feels disconnected from the terrain
- ✗ 700 engine spits and backfires; it's getting replaced, maybe smoothed out, too?

OUR TAKE

A capable chassis that carries forward into 2008 with a power-up to 750cc.

The Suzuki King Quad on hand was a 700cc 2007 model. In 2008 the biggest King Quad is a 750, but our test couldn't wait and it happened before Suzuki's 2008 models were coming off the production line. Comparing it directly to the rest of the big-bores would be unfair, when Suzuki has replaced the model with something presumably better — at least in engine performance.

The 700's strong suits were smooth, linear power that should be preserved. Maybe the revision will help the King Quad's power delivery in technical situations. The low range on the Suzuki is geared tall which makes it feel like it's underutilizing the sweet spot of the rpm range in extreme, technical terrain.

Shifting the Suzuki transmission is easy and seamless. The shifter is in a logical place and engaged everything as expected with a positive detent.

We expect the chassis to stay the same, however. Like the Kawasaki, the King Quad we tested has a good combination of comfort and response. There is a softer initial rate of suspension travel, though, that creates more body roll with the King Quads.

It's a good machine to drive casually, but the nervous front end gets outpaced quickly by the others and loses its planted and predictable feeling. The steering is so light in two-wheel drive mode that the machine feels twitchy during quick maneuvers. The bar throw is so wide,

too, that it's easy to oversteer and get a rapid shift in the center of gravity.

Driving the King Quad in four-wheel drive actually made the machine more predictable. The engaged front wheels helped keep the front end better planted and also made the steering more stable. The turning radius on the King Quad is terrific.

Like the other machines with independent brake levers, the braking was a strong point that gave the driver good control. The rear brake pedal was difficult to find at times because the clutch cover

It gets the job done, but the King Quad's simple gauges are another hint that this platform is ready for a refresh.

Suspension comfort and adjustability remains a King Quad hallmark, granting this quad a light and playful demeanor.

intrudes into the right footwell.

The right footwell doesn't make the stance uncomfortably wide, though. Overall the Suzuki has great ergonomics that should carry over to the new 750, too. The handlebars are on a great plane and the controls are in easy reach. The grips are adequate, but they slip more than others after getting wet. The footpegs are great and an example for others to copy. Sharp serration held boots firmly in place through the nastiest conditions.

Our next big bore shootout will certainly include the latest Suzuki and every other model befitting the class. But next up will be an in-depth ride review of the new Suzuki King Quad 750. Stay tuned. **ATV**

On downhills, with the weight shifted to the front, it became clear that the King Quad's front end stability was the poorest of the bunch.



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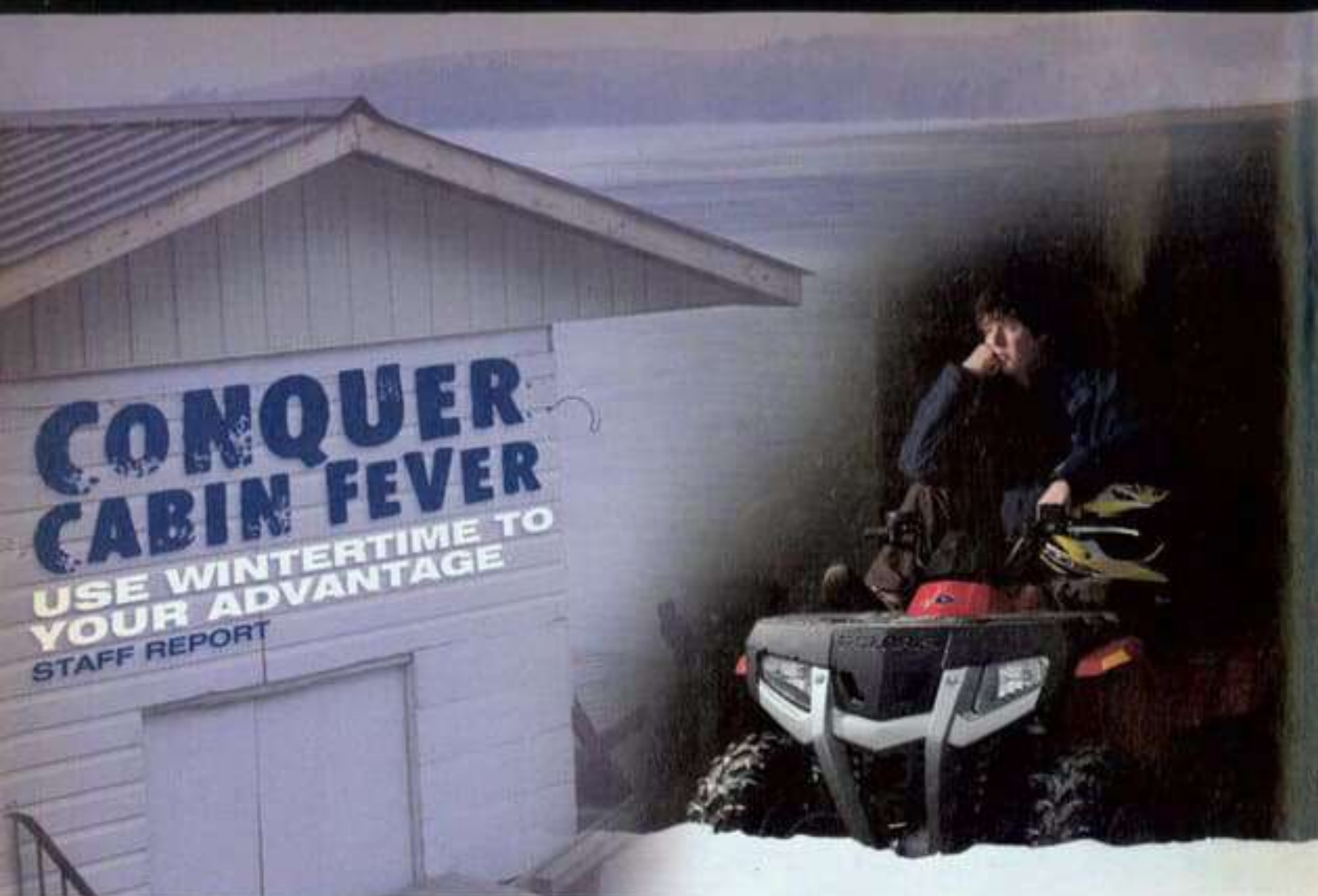
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Bad things can happen when you're marooned at home in the dead of winter. The mind starts to wander, the waistline begins to expand and a despondent, gloomy attitude takes over. Without going into historical examples of snowbound survival gone wrong, there are plenty of reasons to stay active during the winter and ways to use the off-season to your advantage.

Perhaps knitting, cross-country skiing or ice skating isn't your thing. No worries; as your four-wheeler can be an all-season vehicle to save you from boredom. Aside from keeping your battery alive throughout the season, riding your ATV can get you over the mid-winter slump. Here are our suggestions for warding off boredom, while getting your ATV fox this winter.

RIDE LOCALLY

That's right. Why not ride in the winter? Rear-wheel drive and slippery terrain can make things especially entertaining and four-wheel drive can usually keep you moving, even in the deep stuff. But where can you ride in the winter, you ask? Many snowmobile-friendly areas have shared-use trails that allow ATVs to ride all year.

ATVs are also a great way to conquer the white stuff at home. Forget shoveling your way through the season. Take that 4X4 quad and add a plow or a snow thrower kit to move serious amounts of snow in a hurry. Watch out, as plowing can become addictive. You might make some new friends in the neighborhood, though, after compulsively plowing out all of your neighbors.

ADD A TRACK KIT

We'll admit it: Enough snow can stop any ATV in its tracks, especially the deep fluffy stuff. While they're not cheap, track systems will allow your ATV to get through any blizzard without a hitch.

Some are designed for all-season use, while some models are snow-specific. All-terrain track kits are usually heavier and slower, so choose accordingly. For installation, budget an hour or two and get yourself an assistant. For riding, bring a saw if you're heading into

Track kits provide surprising traction and a fun way to ride all year.



the woods. While you will never run out of traction with a track system, fallen logs can become an impassable hang-up if you straddle them with the tracks.

GO ICE FISHING

Depending on where you live, ice fishing is also a great excuse to pull your quad out of hibernation and put it to good use. There are numerous ATV ice shelters out there, and accessories for staying warm while you ride. Do as the snowmobile riders do and dress for the conditions. Windproof jackets,

hand guards, electric hand warmers, balaclavas and specially designed cold weather riding gloves can make things much toastier for winter riding. Don't forget the goggles, if you're not wearing a full-face helmet, and cover any exposed skin!

Because of their lighter weight, superior traction, cargo capacity and go-anywhere ability, quads are a better choice for serious ice fishing than a snowmobile or a truck. With mobile shelters, there's nothing stopping you from picking up and moving to new waters if nothing's biting. Just make sure the ice is thick enough before you head out there.

HOOK UP AND GO

Surveys show most Americans are choking on vacation days — our companies give them to us, but we all feel like we're too darn busy at work to actually use all of our hard-earned vacation days.

Don't be "that guy" that loses his vacation days and retires with too few memories. Instead, load up your ATV and point yourself south, or west or wherever the great ATV riding awaits. Many of the best and most famous ATV riding areas have year-round trails that are not crowded in the winter and early spring. Leave Cancun to the granola-eating types and spring breakers — take a quality winter vacation doing something you truly love.

PLAN A PROJECT

You thought about it last summer, you considered it last fall — you know, that pesky project that you really *should* do, but didn't have the time to plan out and execute? Maybe it's the retaining wall and landscaping project. It could be the food plot you've been thinking of putting in. Does the yard need a complete overhaul? Is there a chunk of your property where you'd like to cut a trail?

Use wintertime as planning time. Think about what you want to build, how you'll get it done, and the pieces of equipment you'll need to complete the task.

SHOP!

Once the holiday expenditures have started to clear their way through your credit card bills, it might be time to buy a little something special for the four-wheeled friend sitting in the garage.

How about a storage box for the rear rack? Maybe a gun boot for hunting season, or a pull-behind trailer for getting projects done around the yard? From new riding gear to hard parts for your machine, there are plenty of options available.

PLAN A SPRING GETAWAY

Maybe you've read about the great trails of West Virginia's Hatfield-McCoy, Missouri's Chadwick or South Dakota's Black Hills, or dreamed of playing in the sand at a place like California's Imperial Sand Dunes, Oklahoma's Little Sahara or Idaho's St. Anthony Sand Dunes. "We've got to get there one day," you and your friends tell

(right) Aside from a buddy, an ATV is the best ice fishing accessory.
(below) The dunes make a great winter ATV escape.



each other. Well, we hate to break it to you, but you're not getting any younger sitting on the couch!

This winter, take the time to do the research, plan ahead, get a group of family and/or friends lined up and plan a trip for the coming riding season. Read the magazines, search online and plot out the trip of a lifetime. You'll be glad you did.

BUILD YOURSELF A WORKSPACE

Be a man; build a workspace. Move all those storage bins filled with holiday decorations, garage sale items and junk. Hang the kids' bikes, wagon, the baby stroller, ladders and other items from the ceiling or wall. Once you've cleared an area, focus on building an ATV shop complete with a bench, proper lighting, great tools and various ATV parts and supplies. If your garage is not heated, bring in one of those propane or torpedo heaters to force yourself to work. The more room you create for you and your ATV, the more you'll enjoy wrenching on that bad boy.

However, if you move all your stuff and still don't have room in the garage, pitch the wife on letting you add on, or at the

least, park her minivan outside. Better yet, get one of those backyard sheds to store all your junk. That way, you can build a quad shop that would make Tim "The Toolman" Taylor jealous.

TAKE ON A PROJECT

Don't be surprised one day if your ATV decides to quit on you. How do you think Green Bay Packers legend Brett Favre has lasted so long? Protection and maintenance, that's how. You need to rejuvenate your quad every year so it continues to soldier on. Make time this winter to fix damaged or worn parts and do normal maintenance.

If you've never greased a zerk, try it — you'll like it. Clean or replace the air filter to give your quad its lungs back. If you own a quad with belt drive, open it up and examine the clutch assembly and belt for excessive wear and tear. If the silencer sounds spits, leaks or sputters, think about refurbishing or replacing it. This is also a good time to replace the brake pads and bleed the system.

Fun, fast projects include adding new wheels and tires, a thumb throttle extender, replacing handgrips, adding a new

seat or seat cover and bolting on ATV armor so your quad is tougher. Use the winter to transform an ordinary ATV into a serious hunting vehicle: by adding camouflage skin, a cab enclosure, winch, mud tires and more.

GET INVOLVED

It may not be the most amusing way to kill time, but use the off-season to form an ATV club, get involved in a local trails project or attend land access meetings in your area.

The U.S. Forest Service is re-evaluating motorized access across the country and many districts are hosting a series of public meetings to find out if people care about maintaining or expanding ATV trails. Make your voice heard! All too often riders do not become involved until it's too late. Such meetings are a great way to meet fellow riders in your area, who may become future riding buddies or club members.

GET ELECTRONIC

Consider this your last

resort. Sometimes the beauty of winter means planting your toekus on the couch for an afternoon. All things in moderation, right? Whether it's quality time with the kids, or keeping yourself entertained on a snow day, cable ATV shows, extreme riding videos or the latest generation of off-road games can offer a much-needed electronic ATV supplement.

If the phone lines are still up, cruise the web for discussion forums or new places

Whether it's a trip or setting up the ultimate garage, anything ATV-related beats a winter on the couch.



to ride. Use the downtime to book hotel rooms or cabins early, research riding areas or to map future routes on your GPS in advance. If you're feeling really motivated, check out state laws and trail fees so you can have a turnkey trip waiting for you as soon as the spring thaw comes. **ATV**



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“One thing's for sure: Can-Am ATVs always have uniqueness going for them.”

CAN-AM'S
RENEGADE 500 IS
A TAMED BEAST

BY TOM KAISER

GOING MAINSTREAM

Any way you slice it, Can-Am's product line is a bit atypical. Futuristic styling, Surrounding Spar frames, a range of V-twin engines, inboard disc brakes, steep price tags and proprietary features such as the D.E.S.S. security system set the company's ATVs apart from the competition. One thing's for sure: Can-Am ATVs always have uniqueness going for them.

If anybody had their doubts, the wild, new-for-2007 Renegade 800 put them to rest. Its menacing quad-headlamp face came straight out of left field, but the big burbling V-twin came right out of the company playbook. Can-Am likes to go big.

For the Renegades, the company took its Outlander, switched out the plastics, removed the racks, added more aggressive wheels and tires and swapped in dual A-arms up front instead of the utility's MacPherson struts. The promise of a sportier Outlander with less weight, but the same powerful 800cc V-twin, was intriguing and our testing proved its on-the-trail performance was athletic. But then came the \$9,299 price tag. For some, this machine was perfect for making a statement and winning drag races. For the rest, it was an ATV exotic: beautiful, fast and different, but a bit too expensive. To reach a broader audience with this competent

and interesting ride, the company engineers dropped in the 500-class V-twin from the mid-size Outlander 500 to build the Renegade 500. The outcast has gone mainstream.

BRINGING A GUN TO A KNIFE FIGHT

Looking at its closest 4x4 competitors, the Polaris Scrambler 500 and Yamaha's Wolverine 450, Can-Am's Renegade 500 brings big ammunition to battle. Electronic fuel injection, the most powerful engine in its class (and the only V-twin), the automatic Visco-Lok front differential, ritzy center-cast aluminum wheels with ITP Holeshot tires, five-way preload adjustable shocks, projector beam headlamps and an elaborate digital gauge cluster all give the baby Renegade plenty to brag about.

Thankfully, the company took the re-engineering opportunity and corrected an early faux pas on the 800 — as of 2008, all Renegades now get independently controlled front and rear brakes. For fun, safety and performance's sake, something this sporty needs independent control. We'd even go as far to say all ATVs should have them, but maybe that's just us. The CVT compartment was also revised to better resist intrusive water.

The Renegade 500 rings up \$1,700

(above) Don't let the mid-size engine fool you. This Renegade is still a rebel. (right) Compared to the 800's high-pressure gas shocks, the Renegade 500 is fitted with more conventional Motion Control shocks.

cheaper than the 800, at \$7,599. That total is still well above the Wolverine and Scrambler, but those machines are quite dated and deliver fewer thrills. Based on appearances and specs, the Renegade 500 looks good.

TAMING THE BEAST

The hills of the central Appalachian Mountains were our setting for the test, in the midst of our recent ATV Trials event. With impressions of several sporty rides still fresh in mind, we hit the trail. Saddling up was a quick reminder that the Renegade is a very comfy ride. It's a wide machine, due to the CVT, but the seat-to-tank relationship is admirable, providing a nice perch to ride hard. The seat foam is soft and is a very

welcome respite compared to riding pure sport quads.

With significantly less horsepower, the Renegade 500 clearly lacks the punch of its larger brother, but it's not down on power as one might expect. Long, steep hills pose little challenge, and this is still a speedy ride. In terms of power and refinement, it is more than enough to trump the Scrambler and Wolverine. You won't break

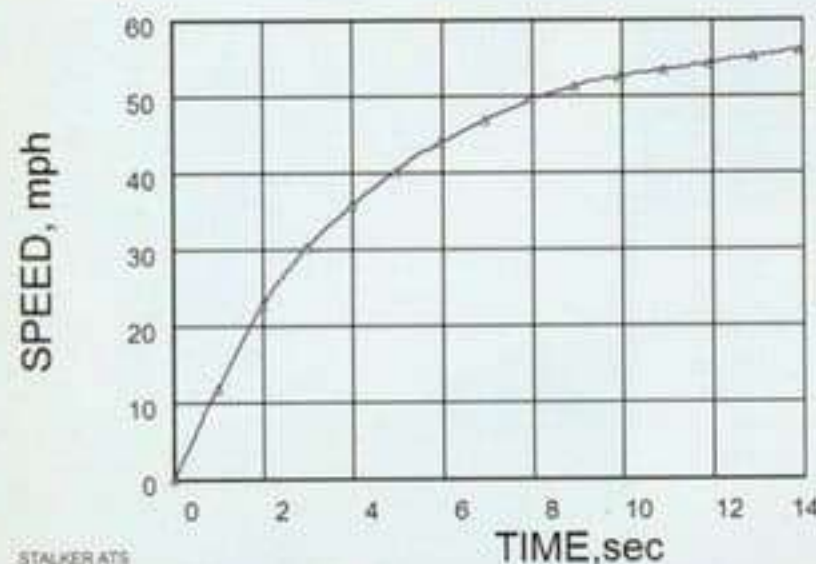


the tires loose from a dead stop, but the mid and top ranges are sufficiently strong for the trail.

Can-Am said it recalibrated its Visco-Lok automatic front differential to activate the multi-plate clutch six full turns quicker this year and we believe it. While we typically like more direct control over the 4WD/differential system, like Yamaha's company-wide two-button system, automatic engagement works well for a trail cruiser such as this. We never spun the wheels on wet uphill trails, and the Visco-Lok operation was smooth and transparent.

Ergonomics have recently been a

It's not as fast as the 800, but the Renegade 500 still hit 30 mph in 2.91 seconds, and got up to 54 mph on our 660-foot time trial run.



Can-Am strong suit, and the 500's low, adjustable bars fit well, allow plenty of leverage and are covered with effective all-new waffle-type grips. Down below, feet are held in place by industry leading serrated metal foot pegs with aggressive kick-ups to prevent sliding off the ends. In the mountains, the solid ergonomics keep the rider planted and in control, but there's only so much body English one can do to manipulate 600-plus pounds. It's more of a hang-on-and-ride vehicle, rather than a playful sport quad.

BRAKE CHECK

As we mentioned, we were happy Can-Am choose to outfit the Renegade twins with independent braking. It makes a big difference and quells our biggest complaint with the original version.

There's still work to be done on the brakes, though. Like the Outlanders, the inboard disc rear brake is an all-or-nothing affair that's accompanied with a lot of mechanical chatter once it locks up. Sure, some other ATVs do this, but Can-Am's brakes often seem to make the most racket. Stopping power is good, though, and there's great engine braking that's predictable and doesn't allow unexpected freewheeling down hills.

The biggest annoyance was the brake pedal that's mounted too high in the floorboard for quick, natural use. You need to lift your whole boot to get your toe on top of the pedal. Every test rider noted this flaw and most migrated to using the hand levers only. Examining the problem further showed that the entire linkage is feebly designed, something we've previously noted on the 800.

Aside from our braking grievances, there's much to like about this new Renegade, especially the way it handles. The 500 and 800 have the same dry weight of 607 pounds, which is a lot of machine to manhandle around in sporty fashion. But it absorbs bumps admirably and never transmitted jarring shocks to the rider, through the seat or the bars. For economy's sake, it comes with Motion Control shocks, versus the high-pressure gas shocks on the 800, but performance does not suffer. Body roll was hardly a factor.

LESS WOULD BE MORE

In a post-ride conversation with a Can-Am representative, your author was told that



Aggressive footpegs, with kick-ups, keep feet planted and are among the best in the biz.

Can-Am aims to be the BMW of ATVs. With the knockout good looks, top-end engines and high-dollar features, the company is not far off from that goal.

There are two problems, though. Even with a smaller engine, the Renegade 500 is just too heavy and expensive. Our unit measured 697 pounds ready-to-ride on our Intercomp scales, with a full fuel tank. That's a lot of mass for a 500cc engine to scoot around, even with two cylinders. Sporty performance is all about less weight, more power and agile handling.

If we had our way, we'd take this directive one step further and ditch the digital gauges, security system and fancy (but flimsy) rims to save on price. This quad is leaps and bounds more refined than its competitors, but it would be a better value if it competed better on price, too. **ATV**

RENEGADE 500 H.O. EFI 4X4

PRICE: \$7,599
ENGINE/DISPLACEMENT: 499cc V-Twin four-stroke
FUEL DELIVERY: EFI
STARTING: Electric
TRANSMISSION: CVT w/high, low, park, neutral & reverse
DRIVE SYSTEM: 2/4WD, shaft driven w/Visco-Lok
FRONT SUSPENSION: Dual A-arm
REAR SUSPENSION: Trailing Torque
RACK CAPACITY F/R: NA/35 lbs.
DRY WEIGHT (POUNDS): 607
GROUND CLEARANCE (IN.): 12
TOWING CAPACITY: 1,300 lbs.
FUEL CAPACITY (GALLONS): 5.3

(left) We didn't spend much time looking down, but the digital gauges display more than the usual amount of information. (below) ITP's Holeshot tires suit this quad well. Unfortunately, the rolled edges of the aluminum wheels are weak and overly susceptible to rock damage.



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Touring FOR TWO



Polaris' Sportsman 800 Touring Scores High Marks

By Chris Vogtman
Photos By Wayne Davis

Multi-passenger riding has taken off in recent years. The burgeoning side-by-side market along with increasing demand for 2-up ATVs has resulted in a vigorous effort by manufacturers to accommodate consumers who want the option of riding with a passenger.

Arctic Cat was the first OEM to offer a 2-up ATV with its TRV line and Can-Am quickly followed suit with its Outlander Max. Polaris responded by engineering the unique X2, which features a transforming rear seat/cargo box. While the X2 is still being manufactured, Polaris wanted to offer a more comfortable 2-up ATV for owners who dedicate most of their time to trail riding, opposed to working. Enter the new Touring models for 2008.

When we first tested the Polaris Sportsman 800 Touring 2-up ATV, we felt it was a little out of its element. Thanks to a whooped out riding location north of Reno, Nev., deciphering ride quality was infinitely tougher than answering Jeff Foxworthy's "Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?" questions.

After bouncing around the choppy Hungry Valley Recreation Area terrain that caused white-knuckled riding for our passenger, we realized a fair evaluation needed to occur at a riding location of our choosing. We took the Sportsman 800 Touring to the Appalachian Mountains to further investigate this 2-up machine's ride quality.

Since our first chance to test the Touring at the Reno press launch, Polaris updated the rear suspension, so we paid close attention to the changes when riding solo or with a passenger. Let's dig into this 800 Touring model.

Walk Around

The 800 Touring EFI uses the same engine as the Sportsman 800, a 760cc parallel twin four-stroke engine. Changes to improve clutching for faster acceleration and more low end torque result in about 10 percent more power. An inline shifter navigates high, low, neutral, reverse and park gears and was slightly modified with increased detents for positive engagement. Engine braking and the unique Active Descent Control (ADC) gadgetry are standard on the Touring.

Up front, the dated MacPherson strut suspension has 8.2 inches of travel and the fully independent, progressive rate rear suspension allows 8.75 inches of travel. The rear suspension received new spring rates to provide a smoother ride when riding in pairs.

Like the rest of the Sportsman line, the

(above) Comfort is one of the most important features when riding 2-up and the 800 Touring hit its mark. The perch is comfortable, and several well-thought features keep the ride comfortable over the long haul.

Touring employs single-lever braking that splits stopping power between the hydraulic disc brakes front and rear — the front brakes take on about 60 percent of the stopping duties. The rear brake can be operated independently with the foot brake pedal.

Durable cast aluminum wheels feature Polaris' exclusive PXT tires — 25 x 8-12 front and 25 x 11-10 rear — developed by Carlisle. To accommodate two passengers comfortably, the 800 Touring comes with a 57-inch wheelbase — compared to a 50.75-inch wheelbase on the standard Sportsman — and measures 86 inches long, 48 wide and 48 high.

Aesthetically pleasing, automotive-style painted plastic (nine times more scratch resistant than standard plastic) is a feature one shouldn't overlook. And, like the Sportsman 800, the Touring model comes with dual canisters that expel a quiet but cool exhaust note.

Key features for this 800 Touring model include a class-leading seatback height, dual cup holders designed into the molded rear rack, three-position overmolded passenger hand grips and adjustable foot rests.

Ride Evaluation

Simply put, the Sportsman 800 Touring is a trail riding king. At a location more suited toward the type of riding this machine was developed for, the 800 Touring received high marks for linear, broad power, a stable and smooth ride and an ADC platform that sold us on the concept after the first steep black diamond descent was behind us.

The power from the parallel twin isn't overwhelming and is easy to control with one or two passengers on board. A linear powerband further enhanced the stable feel of the machine. As one tester said, "The power is there, but it's not going to surprise you or try and get out from under you." There was plenty of available power when climbing sharp uphill grades, and low range worked well when climbs had obstacles to crawl over.

Polaris claims a dry weight of 770 pounds for its largest Touring model. We measured a wet weight on our Intercomp scales at 841 pounds with the 6-gallon fuel tank topped off. With two riders, expect to be toting half-a-ton of weight or more when navigating the trails. As high as that figure sounds, the 800 Touring carries it well and the powerplant still has pep when pulling that much weight.

On downhills with the ADC system engaged, the 800 Touring handled its mass

with grace. "The impact of ADC can not be understated. Especially on the trails we were riding," one tester noted. "ADC completely sold me on this machine. The engine braking itself was fabulous. Equally, however, it was appreciated that you could turn off ADC when you wanted to go on a spirited trail ride and not feel like you've thrown out an anchor every time you let off the gas."

In ADC mode, the hydraulic brakes shared stopping duties and were taxed less. This is the best way to ride if traversing rolling hills or mountain grades. On flat land, turn off the ADC and let the brakes do the work. Without ADC assist, the braking felt plenty responsive and managed our downhill tests well in slick conditions. We might sound like we're beating a dead horse here, but we'd prefer Polaris get rid of single lever braking on top-of-the-line models.

With the long wheelbase and 48-inch width the machine felt stable and inspired confidence. The 800 Touring felt well bal-

anced from front to back, riding solo or 2-up. However, we just aren't fans of the dated MacPherson strut front end. It doesn't devour terrain like the rear suspension. You might be wondering if Polaris will ever enter the new era of ATVs with a dual A-arm setup and preload adjustable suspension. We think, and hope the change will be made for 2009. But the good news is the rear suspension worked great with a passenger on board and soaked up some of the jars that would otherwise have been sent to the passenger.

Even with a longer wheelbase, turning wasn't compromised and the 800 Touring can manage a mid-trail turnaround all right. In tight sections, expect a few more maneuvers to turn the ATV around and heading the

Some people might call the front storage bin a gimmick. But we used it often to store jackets, tow straps and water bottles. In addition to the large front storage bin, the rear compartment is large enough to accommodate trailside tools or tire repair kits.



direction you want. Ground clearance was as good as expected with the 57-inch wheelbase and riding 2-up. Under suspension compression, especially up front, the 11 inches of ground clearance was reduced and enough that we scraped over a few large rocks other ATVs didn't touch.

In wet conditions, the PXT tires hooked up well, even over a few rock crawl sections. The PXT tires mated to cast aluminum wheels kept the Touring chugging through the toughest terrain and resisted failure. Expect to get your money's worth and more out of the tire/wheel combination.

2-Up Ergos Analysis

Real-world testing will quickly reveal flaws when it comes to ergonomics. And, let's face it, ergos are almost as important as engine and suspension performance when riding 2-up. Fun trail cruises can be neutered quickly if one doesn't feel com-

fortable, no matter what speed.

We like where Polaris is headed with its 2-up comfort. The rear perch is set higher than the front seat and provides decent sight lines. Shorter passengers will have to lean a little to see the terrain ahead of the driver — to be expected.

A taller backrest is comfortable to lean against and provides ample support. However, one tester said it reclined a little too much, forcing her to lean back and took her out of an attack position for the terrain ahead. The recline did have one major benefit, though, as it gave space for both riders and helmets rarely knocked against each other. Overall, the seats received high marks and were adequately comfortable for medium-paced trail rides.



The overmolded passenger hand grips are not hard-fixed and flexible, which means wrists won't be punished by the occasional square-edged hit. Said one tester, "I liked the flexible passenger handles, and there were hand holds to use a forward grip or rest my arms at my sides. Depending on the terrain, it was nice to have different hand hold locations to grip." The three-way adjustable foot wells had ample traction, but our tallest rider said the lowest height was still a little too high and it was hard to stretch their legs out.

"I rarely felt uncomfortable riding 2-up as the driver," one tester said. "Occasionally, I felt like I was closer to the bars than I wanted to be, but it wasn't a nuisance and it was usually when terrain

(above) While the grips aren't our favorite, we like the digital instrumentation that has a speedometer, odometer, tachometer, trip meter, hour meter, clock, gear indicator, fuel gauge, hi temp/low battery lights and a standard DC outlet.

(left) The Active Decent Control sold us on this machine from the get-go. We're glad Polaris gives the rider the option of turning the engine braking system off if desired.

demanding more rider effort. I still felt more comfortable than I have on competitive machines."

Overall, we are very impressed with the Sportsman 800 Touring — at \$9,299. The machine was stable, powerful and comfortable. We think Polaris hit its intended market dead-on. The Sportsman 800 Touring is an upgrade to first class from coach, and the ticket to ride is certainly worth the price. **ATV**





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FLEX OPTION



BY TIM ERICKSON

CHEVROLET'S SILVERADO OFFERS E85 CAPABILITY



PSST, HEY BUDDY, WANT BETTER MILEAGE OR A FLEX FUEL OPTION?

It's widely assumed that high oil prices are here to stay. Whether North America ever breaks away from overseas energy supplies, discovers new oil fields or Washington allows oil companies to tap into the existing oil supplies still in our home turf is all TBD.

In the meantime, a consumer's appetite for gas doesn't seem to slow down despite it costing a couple bucks more to fill a lawn mower than it used to. Instead, we look to the automotive future with optimism hoping the boys in Detroit will solve our energy demand with high-powered vehicles that sip gas.

There are no magic carburetors, but modern technology has given us better fuel management than we've ever had on tow vehicles. While not as green as a hybrid, drivers might find peace of mind hauling ATVs to a trailhead with Flex Fuel badges on their tow rig.

We tested a 2008 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Crew Cab with GM's Flex Fuel capability as well as its Active Fuel Management technology. Chevrolet claims its engine platform has segment-topping fuel economy. In this day and age, that's a powerful sales pitch. But how good is it?

MORE THAN THE BASICS

After a ground-up redesign and a round of accolades last year, there weren't too many changes and updates for the 2008 Chevrolet Silverado series. Some creature comfort upgrades to the seating, standard XM radio and a few tweaks to the dash are the most noticeable.

Chevrolet is proud of its muscular look to the point they made its bow tie logo larger than ever on both the grille and the tailgate. There's no mistaking it for anything but a Chevy. Behind the grille on our test vehicle was the optional Vortec 5.3 liter V8 LC9 engine.

The LC9 designation refers to an aluminum block. There is a cast iron version of the same engine (LMG) with the same Flex Fuel and Active Fuel Management as our test model, also with the same output: 315 hp and peak torque of 338 pound-feet.

The only transmission choice is the Hydra-Matic 4L60, 4-speed auto. We've been pleased with the performance of previous test vehicles with the 5.3L/4L60 combination relative to its displacement, commenting previously about reduced



The rear seats are easy to access with passengers doors that open to 170 degrees. The rear seat is also stadium hung, allowing for underseat storage.

driveline lash relative to other GM engine/tranny combos.

The crew cab configuration we tested came with the Z85 handling and trailering group. It's one of five suspension packages available to the Silverado, which by design is for enhanced handling while towing.

Towing is one of the Silverado Crew's claimed strengths, at least on paper, with a capacity at 7,500 pounds on our test model. More on that later.

We had the LT2 trim package, which included power bucket seats and the most popular consumer optioned niceties, such as steering wheel audio controls and remote entry. An additional LT2 Convenience Package on our test truck was a \$595 options package that included a remote vehicle starting system, the cold-weather-friendly heated window washer system and deluxe exterior mirrors with signal indicators that were heated, power-folding and auto-dimming.

There were also optional bells and whistles on the equipment list. Touch-screen navigation with an XM radio (\$2,250) and a rear seat DVD entertainment system that came with two pair of infrared headphones and a remote (\$1,995) were expensive upgrades. A powered sliding moonroof (\$685) and a powered, rear-sliding window (\$200) were other options that helped drive the as-tested price up from its base price of \$34,710.

Leather upholstery, front and rear, was supportive and comfortable. The Crew Cab model we had is the most family-friendly. Rear seat legroom is 38.7 inches, enough for six-foot-tall adults to find comfort on a road trip. Owing to its family-friendliness and government requirement for light trucks, the rear seats include LATCH anchors for child safety seats.

Getting into the rear seat, whether loading people or cargo, is easy thanks to doors with a 170-degree opening. Crew cab models are equipped with stadium-

style rear seats without floor support under the cushion, which allows storage under the seats when occupied or a flat cargo area on the floor when the seats (60/40 split) are folded.

PULLING WITH FOUR

The 5.3 engine and driveline, when mated to the four-speed automatic transmission and 3.73 rear end final gearing, is not the most stout combination for towing, but it

does line as a vehicle that pulls trailers occasionally.

First gear has a grunting 3.06:1 ratio that eases smoothly off the line. We didn't feel the transition to second and third gears, we just heard the shift points as engine pitch and rev drop. This is a smooth shifting transmission in normal driving or when the towing mode is engaged.

Towing and hauling results were adequate, but competing trucks in the half-ton segment offer five- and six-speed transmis-

“Leather upholstery, front and rear, was supportive and comfortable. The Crew Cab model we had is the most family-friendly.”



(left) The instrument cluster was one of the few upgrades to the 2008 Silverado.

(below) For family-friendliness or for long road trips with riding buddies, the rear seat DVD entertainment system allows rear seat passengers to have different audio through infrared headsets.



sions. For now, the Silverado has to make due with its four-speed, but it bears pointing out that GM already uses a six-speed transmission in its upscale SUVs such as the GMC Yukon XL Denali and Cadillac Escalade. With mounting competitive pressure, we expect the six-speed to expand to the half-ton Silverado platform to make the Silverado a better trailer hauler even without opting for the more-stout 6.0-liter engine and 4.10 rear axle gearing.

The V4 mode only engages when coasting during the trailer mode, so there isn't a real mileage benefit. Our observed towing mileage, using gasoline, was only 9 mpg.

ON BOARD EXTRAS

When the late November temperatures dipped into the Fahrenheit teens, the 40-degree swing altered the tire air pressures. The warning icon on the instrument panel lit and the information panel told us to check the pressures. The on-board monitor indicated 28 psi in the right front. Actual

tire pressure indeed was 28, down from the normal spec of 32 psi.

One of the advantages to the onboard tire monitoring system is that it prevents poor gas mileage. Under-inflated tires are the chief cause

(below) The touch-screen navigation system is an expensive option, but it gives turn-by-turn driving directions in addition to mapping capability. The touch-screen also serves as the radio controls and a DVD monitor, but viewable only when the vehicle is parked. (bottom) The 5.5-foot cargo bed of our test truck was equipped with a \$95 cargo management system with multiple tie-down anchor locations. Handy!



SPECIFICATIONS

2008 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Crew Cab LTZ

PRICE
Base Price: \$34,710
Price as tested: \$43,025

ENGINE
Displacement/Type: Vortec 5.3L V8 w/Active Fuel Management and Flex Fuel Capability
Net Torque: 338 lb-ft @ 4400 rpm
Net Power: 315 hp @ 5200 rpm
Fuel Delivery System: EFI

Fuel Capacity: 26 gallons
Fuel Requirement: Regular Unleaded, ethanol blends or E85

DRIVETRAIN
Transmission: Hydra-Matic 4L60, 4-speed automatic
Rear Axle Gears: 3.73:1

BODY/CHASSIS
Body/Frame: Body on frame
GVWR: 7,000 pounds

SUSPENSION SYSTEM
Front: Independent, coil-over shock
Rear: Solid axle with semi-elliptic, variable-rate two-stage springs

BRAKE SYSTEM
Front: 13-inch disc
Rear: 13.5-inch disc
Assist: 4-wheel ABS w/Dynamic Rear Proportioning

STEERING SYSTEM
Steering Ratio: 16:13:1 variable ratio
Turning Circle: 55.1 feet
Wheels (optional): 17-inch aluminum
Tires (optional): LT265 All-Terran

DIMENSIONS
Wheelbase: 143.5 inches
Track (front/rear): 68.1/67 inches
Overall Length: 230.2 inches
Overall Width: 80 inches
Overall Height: 73.7 inches
Curb Weight: 5,371 pounds
Payload: 1,629 pounds

TOW PACKAGE
Max. Tow Rating: 7,500 pounds

FUEL ECONOMY
EPA Mileage (city/highway): 14/19
Observed:
Non-towing: 15.1 mpg
Overall Towing: 9.05 mpg

of flats, and they also take more energy to spin, which robs precious miles per gallon.

Mileage savings, which is demanded from both consumers and the EPA vehicle fleet requirements, come with the Silverado's variable displacement technology, standard on the 5.3 and 6.0-liter engines. The engines disable four cylinders during times of light-duty driving for a mileage savings. Half the cylinders will never equate to twice the mileage, but we estimate that it accounts for a mile-per-gallon advantage. Without a consumer's ability to disable the system it's difficult to test, but GM claims up to a 7 percent fuel efficiency advantage.

What's easy to test is the accuracy of the

trip computer and the mileage calculator, part of the instrument package on the Silverado. During one portion of our testing, we drove 202.5 miles on a mix of both highway and local roads. When we parked at a fuel station, the Silverado's information display told us we burned 12.6 gallons of



(above) Part of the driver information available is a transmission temperature reading, useful if pulling near the Silverado's towing capacity. (right) This badge means the vehicle is equipped with GM's 5.3 V8 that runs on E85 fuel.

FLEXFUEL
E85 ETHANOL

SILVERADO

gas, resulting in 16.1 mpg. When we filled the tank, however, the vehicle took 13.4 gallons. Our actual mileage was 15.1 mpg.

Our Silverado had Flex Fuel capability. It's an option for owners who choose to run E85 fuel, but users of E85 should expect a 25 to 30 percent mileage loss.

At the time of our test, we filled the truck with gasoline at \$2.92/gallon. The fuel tank holds 26 gallons, which using our observed mpg figure, should result in a range of 392.6 miles for a cost-per-mile (fuel only) of \$0.19. Estimating the mileage of E85 fuel at the 30 percent loss results in 10.6 mpg for a range of 275.6 miles. At the time of our test, E85 was \$2.32/gallon. Though 60 cents cheaper, the loss of mileage translates to a cost-per-mile (fuel only) of \$0.22.

Though not cheaper at the present time, and with much disagreement to the long-term future of corn-based ethanol, a Flex Fuel truck might be more of a public relations vehicle than it is an energy-conscious one. But, the capability and even the marginal mileage improvement with GM's Active Fuel Management mean it's good public relations and peace of mind for both Chevrolet and Silverado drivers. **ATV**

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“One fringe benefit of the coal operations is the sporadic sound of blasting echoing through the hills, sometimes loud enough to have you searching the horizon for a thunderhead or a mushroom cloud.”

RIDERS on the STORM

Braving the elements at Hatfield-McCoy's Browning Fork | By Tom Kaiser Photos By Wayne Davis

Planning our annual ATV Trials event is no small task and choosing a location is the top priority. We need great riding, and a lot of it, to effectively evaluate a wide range of both utility and sport quads. It's also important to choose a location that's not too cold for a solid week of testing in late October. Once again, we searched far and wide, but unanimously decided to go to West Virginia's sprawling Hatfield-McCoy Trail System.

There are plenty of top-shelf riding areas across the country, but Hatfield's blend of typically good weather, challenging terrain and elevation make it hard to beat for our autumnal event, so we chose the enormous system for a second year.

clean and, from our experience, the staff is helpful and friendly. Because there is still active mining in the area, it's important to keep an eye out for the occasional pickup truck doing its rounds on some of the shared use corridors and on the entrance road.

One fringe benefit of the coal operations is the sporadic sound of blasting echoing through the hills, sometimes loud enough to have you searching the horizon for a thunderhead or a mushroom cloud.

Trail 10, which heads out of the Rockhouse Trailhead for about 7 miles, was a fun jaunt for starting and ending rides.

There is terrain for every type of rider. Ramp-like jumps allow fast sport riders to sail as they climb the mountain and casual riders can meander along not missing the fabulous scenery. The hillside trails offer great views of the canopy and valleys (they're called hollows in these parts), and this particular route makes a great first impression.

As far as difficulty, 49 percent of the

(below) In the hills, a little rain changes everything. Miniature waterfalls appear out of nowhere, and the trails become a lot more slippery.

(inset) Once you make it up to the top of the ridge, the scenery stretches as far as you can see. The best part? You'll rarely see any signs of civilization.



Browning Fork is in the southwest corner of the state, not too far from the Kentucky border, and it has about 115 miles of diverse trails that quickly wind their way steeply up into the tree covered hills of the southern Appalachians.

The surroundings are similar to the Little Coal River system we visited last year, but with more miles of trails to choose from. We had the good fortune of arriving just before the fall color peak, with bright yellow deciduous trees dotting the hilly green landscape. Unfortunately Mother Nature had a sense of humor for our trip, ending a two-month dry spell with a non-stop monsoon.

RIDING THE COAL TRAILS

Sharing an entrance road with an active coal mine, the busy Browning Fork Rockhouse trailhead in Man offers ample parking, a staffed information center and two large restrooms/changing rooms for getting geared up to ride. The facilities are

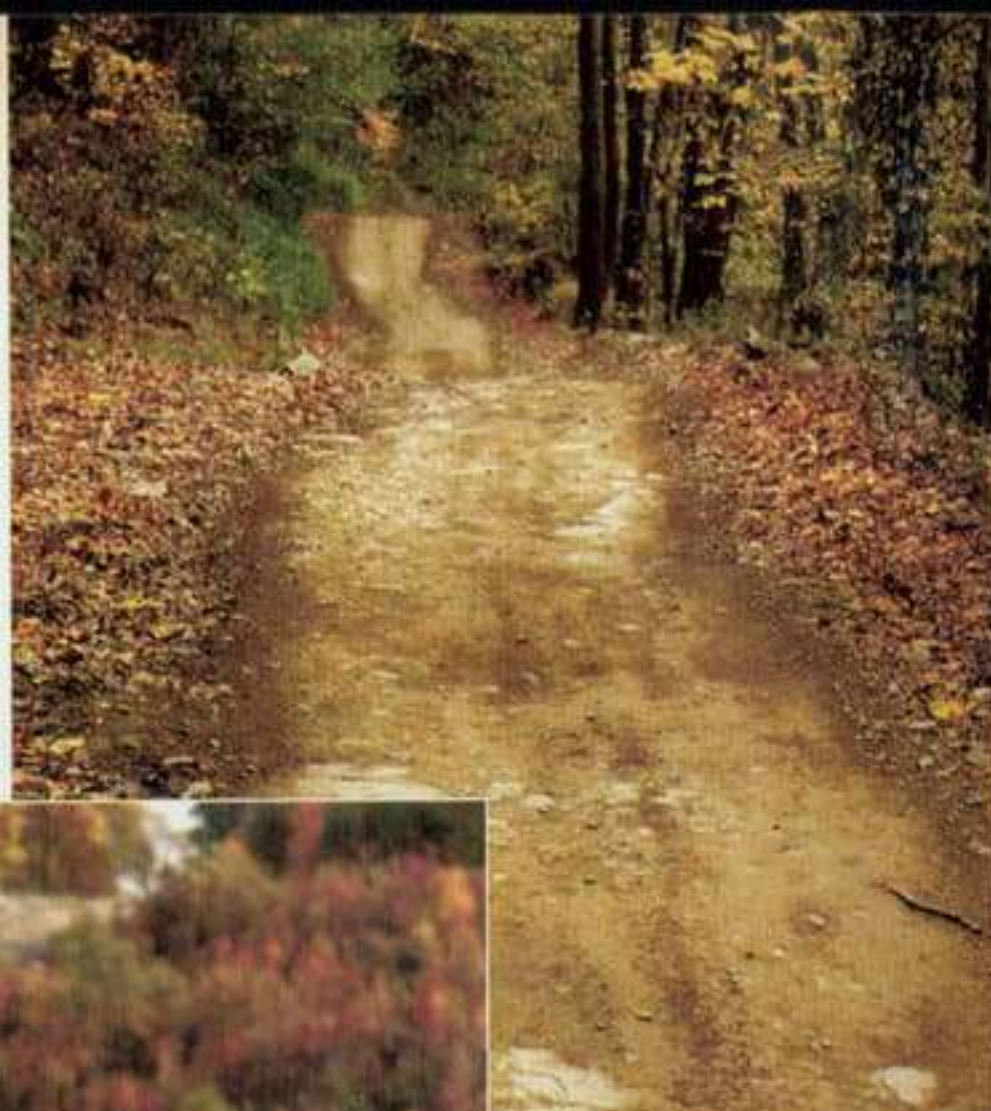


trails in the system are rated green, for easiest. Most of the green trails are connecting routes that get visitors to other, more challenging segments. Twenty-three percent are blue (more difficult), 21 percent are black (most difficult) and the remaining 7 percent are exclusively for dirt bikes.

MACHINE TESTING

When the going gets tough, the black-rated trails offer a serious challenge and were an ideal location for us to test 4x4 machines. Trail 31, with sharp decreasing-radius switchbacks and steep rocky hills, was a great place to reach some handling conclusions.

Partly due to the extremely rainy weather, we chose to avoid one steep hill climb that, depending on where you're coming



(above) Soil conditions couldn't be better, ranging from loamy to rocky. On some stretches you're riding right on top of the bedrock.

(left) Browning Fork's trails had plenty of everything, from steep hill climbs, higher-speed trails or scenic rock crawls.

from, should be a team effort. With assistants keeping the front end down, this demanding segment could be the highlight of your ride. Everything else that we encountered should pose no challenge for anyone with a reasonable amount of experience and four-wheel drive.

HOW TO PLAN IT

Part of Browning Fork's beauty is that it's a connected system. Man and Gilbert, both ATV-friendly towns, are about 22 miles apart, and there are infinite ways to get between the two, with varying levels of challenge. Wise travelers should book their lodging in either of the towns, park the trailer for the week and go quads-only for the entire stay.

We stayed about a half-hour away in Logan at the classy Chief Logan Lodge. While there are plans to eventually connect the sprawling hotel and convention center to a trail system, it's accessible only by road for the time being. Nonetheless,

should you want a luxurious room at the end of the ride, Chief Logan may be your best and closest bet. When we return, though, we'll trade the luxury for proximity and ride from a nearby hotel.

The city of Man, nearest to the Browning Fork trailhead, has retail, service stations, fast food, lodging and just about everything you would need before, during, or after a day's ride. About 25 minutes north on highway 80, Logan has an even wider complement of stores, restaurants and evening entertainment.

During our week of testing, we didn't see all the Browning Fork trails. We have no immediate plans to finish our exploration, but that doesn't mean we won't find a convenient reason to return and enjoy the trails once again. This is truly a great place to ride and so far the best we've seen of the world class Hatfield-McCoy trails. If you're not a wimp, rain only adds to the fun. **ATV**

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MORE SNORT

YAMAHA'S RHINO 700

GETS STRONGER

BOTTOM-END AND

MIDRANGE POWER

BY CHRIS VOGTMAN

PHOTOS BY JEFF KARDAS



What is Rhino? That's what Yamaha was about to explain as I pondered the question posed. Five years ago, I only knew Rhino as a large herbivore on the verge of extinction roaming the tropical bushlands, savannahs and floodplains in Africa and tropical Asia. Now, when somebody says Rhino, it has a whole new meaning to me and a much larger population.

Yamaha's Rhino side-by-side has turned the industry inside out as its popularity soared after its initial 2003 release. The engineering crew at the Newnan, Ga., manufacturing facility created a whole new off-road sector. "It's simply amazing what Rhino has turned into and become over the years," said Travis Hollins, Yamaha product planning manager.

“Yamaha's Rhino side-by-side has turned the industry inside out”

Official declaration from Yamaha anoints the Rhino as the “most successful 4x4 vehicle from any manufacturer.” That's heady stuff. That also stands for profit. For 2008, even superfluous John Madden could make Yamaha's marketing plans understandable. Announce a new Rhino. Ship it to dealers. Profit. Call it

popularity at its peak.

But it won't come as easy as it has in years past. The Polaris Ranger RZR has already stole a large chunk of the Rhino's limelight and Kawasaki's V-twin Teryx has managed to create a buzz without a butt sitting in it outside of Kawasaki's employees. Arctic Cat's Prowler is starting to gain traction, too.

None of these [manufacturers] have come close to offering what the Rhino has,” Hollins said. You're probably thinking what we thought: bold claim.

With competitors stealing marketshare for good reason, the Rhino sees a host of refinements for the 2008 model year. Yamaha invited us to privately-owned and spectacular — and open to the public — Brimstone Recreation Area south of Knoxville, Tenn., to evaluate the Rhino's all-new snort. Did the Rhino gain separation from the other manufacturers again? Let's find out.

DON'T SCREW WITH IT

Yamaha said it sought out customers and held focus groups to see what changes were needed. “Don't change it. It's sized right and performs right,” Yamaha said its customers remarked. “Don't screw with it.” But Yamaha said it knew it couldn't sit back.

After focus groups ended, Yamaha learned it needed to concentrate on three main goals: Make the Rhino more enjoyable on the trails; easier to go places with more comfort and less stress; and try to give customers more time driving the Rhino so they get their money's worth.

To accomplish the first goal, Yamaha pinpointed its efforts on the engine, noise, vibration and keeping sticks, mud and dust out of the cab. The Rhino received the successful Grizzly 700 FI 686cc liquid-cooled engine from its Raptor 700 sport machine. Yamaha says the new powerplant has less friction and moving parts. The piston is forged, not cast, and the old five-valve head is now a four-valve. In addition, the cam is 22 percent lighter with less lobes. Yamaha claims the Rhino revs freer with 20 percent more torque in the low end, more noticeably, midrange.

Along with more power, the new crankshaft weight results in less vibration, which in turn smooths power and increases crankshaft inertia. Essentially, this means the Rhino has more power and it's easier to manage. Reduced vibration is also gained by four-point rubber engine mounts. Yamaha says the new mounts result in 70 percent less vibration compared to the 660. The Rhino's YFI fuel-injection system allows consistent starting in cold or warm temperatures at any elevation.

With a larger heart powering the Rhino, the result is more engine heat. Yamaha increased cooling capacity by swapping out the old 4.3-amp fan motor in the 660 and installing a 7.5-amp fan motor in the 700 for more efficiency. Along with a new fan motor, a redesigned radiator shroud reduces noise.

Another significant change moves the air intake from behind and between the two

passengers to under the front hood in a higher location. The intake is in a cleaner location and sits 5 inches higher than the previous iteration. This move was made to cut heat, noise and dust from making its way into the cab. Adding a snorkel will be a little more complicated, however. Like the radiator, the air filter element needed to be modified for the new engine. What results is an element that is reusable and three times larger.

With more power being transferred to the belt, the CVT receives a stronger belt material to match increased engine performance. The centrifugal clutch is 10mm larger and gains a shoe, going from a five-to six-shoe. This allows for a lighter weight in the secondary spring and better bottom and midrange performance.

One visible change is the all-new doors, which keep trail debris out of the cab. What results is a better Rhino experience for all passengers. Of course, it also provides peace of mind and a stronger sense of security and safety — 2004 to 2006 Rhino owners can have the doors installed free of charge at a local dealer. All Rhinos now come standard with the previous Special Edition steering wheel. It is more comfortable and reduces hand fatigue and potential soreness.

A new digital meter may sound simple, but the Rhino is more enjoyable because of it. The meter features a battery voltage mode and self-diagnostic capability. Trouble codes from the Rhino's computer display in the meter. Also, hours now accumulate based on engine run time, so one can listen to their tunes without watching the machine's hours run up. This aids in sticking to a proper maintenance schedule, too.

With job one completed, Yamaha moved on to making the Rhino easier to go places with more comfort and less stress. One complaint was CV boots that were

susceptible to tears and rips, exposing the axles to harmful debris — the number one cause of broken axles. To better prevent this, Yamaha added a rear CV protector in line with the drive shaft and created a stronger Kevlar boot material. Along those lines, the CV joints are 3.7mm larger and the front axle shafts are 1mm larger. Those measurements might sound negligible, but it should result in enhanced durability.

One of the best changes is four-wheel disc braking that provides better stopping power. A separate parking brake rear caliper is operated by a new parking brake lever. All disc brakes have mud guards to scrape away grime and grit while at work or play.

The final goal was to keep Rhino owners riding longer so they can spend more time experiencing what their hard-earned money bought. To do this, Yamaha improved serviceability. The air filter is tool-free and a removable frame support allows for easier belt maintenance.

Another small modification was made behind the passengers, but in front of the box to reduce noise and dust from making it to the cab. This was accomplished by adding a small lip that closes out the gap between the cab and box where dust and noise was transferred to the riders on older models.

OUR TAKE

Brimstone provided an ideal set of terrain to test the Rhino 700. Mixed in the tight wooded trails were mud fording opportunities, steep hill climbs and descents, slick rock shelves and high speed runs. Brimstone's diversity meant we could test the Rhino in a variety of scenarios one might find anywhere in the U.S.

Our ride led us to a rocky, wide creek crossing where we attacked water as deep as two feet. The Rhino 700FI didn't skip a beat. Smooth power was delivered from the bottom end and the doors kept water from splashing into the cab. Already, we were starting to appreciate the Rhino's newest features.

The Rhino remained poised over hidden rocks and ground clearance was as good as expected, even under suspension compression. After bouncing over numerous boulders in the creek, the ride opened up and we were able to examine the new engine.

There's no doubt it's a vast improve-

The Rhino has an amazing ability to crawl over slick rock while remaining planted. Thanks to piggyback shocks on this Sport Edition model, the crawl was even more accommodating. The new passenger grab handles add a feeling of security.



A camouflage Rhino is once again offered for \$10,949. It shares all the same features as the baseline Rhino 700 FI.

ment over the 660 from the bottom through the midrange. Yamaha's claim of more midrange power was quickly evident. And the best news is the Yamaha accessories division already offers a clutch kit for the Rhino. The power delivery is smooth, and at peak speed, vibration is improved. But there's still a lot of noticeable vibration and noise clatter at idle and through the bottom end. However, intake noise seemed to be reduced compared to the 660.

Now that the Rhino roars to life with a 686cc engine, we hoped Yamaha would loosen its grip on its conservative governed speed. It didn't. The Rhino still tops out at about 42 MPH and a lot of the fun is neutered up top. If the engine was allowed to breathe, a source said the Rhino would easily top out in the mid 50s.

During our ride, we encountered several classic Brimstone mud holes. After creeping into the first puddle, mud and goop surfaced at about the floorboards. The Rhino navigated it with ease. On to the next hole we went. Before we knew it mud and water was rushing up and over our laps! Like it should be, the Rhino was at home in this mud bog. The Ultramatic transmission was smooth, the belt remained tight and we didn't notice any slipping. Using 4WD we exited the mud hole without a drop of water reaching the intake. Fun!

Often the case after running through grit and gummy mud holes, brakes have the tendency to fail. It wouldn't be long before we put the stoppers to the test. Our ride approached a steep decline where we

needed ultimate stopping power. The four-wheel disc brakes responded with ample squeezing power and halted the Rhino's momentum. We were impressed. Along with the enhanced braking package, engine braking has improved and it lends confidence to the driver.

In the Smoky Mountains, the Rhino just shrugged off aggressive uphill climbs. The engine pulled nicely through the bottom end and made a very difficult hillclimb seem easier than getting an ugly girl's phone number.

Our ride eventually came to a pinnacle when we approached shelved slick rock to climb over — it resembled what we've experienced in Moab. We dropped the Rhino into low gear, clicked into four-wheel-drive and blasted up and over without issue. The Rhino is a solid vehicle with ample armor to protect it against sharp edged rocks. In diff lock, the Rhino made attacking the slick rock even easier. To test the new passenger hand grip and strap, we rode along over the slick rock. The new grip helps turn the passenger toward the center of the machine and adds

a feeling of security.

Suspension on the baseline Rhino is adequate with five-way preload adjustable shocks all around. The front end seemed more compliant than past versions and the rear was as good as before. The 400-pound box capacity remains. For those of you who don't mind paying the extra \$1,600, we suggest purchasing the Rhino 700 Sport Edition (\$12,049). This is the machine we spent the most time in and the adjustable piggyback shocks make the ride more enjoyable over trail chatter. In addition, this machine receives a premium paint job, aluminum wheels, a Baja-inspired grab bar and an injection molded top.

Tennessee, like much of the southeast, was in the grips of a drought so the ride got dusty when the trail exited the tight woods. This is where we found little issue with dust circling the cab. Most often, any dust clouds were due to the machine in front of us. The new rear lip closeout, intake and doors helped reduce dust. Since the ride was in temperatures hovering around 50 degrees and we were heavily dressed, heat transfer to the cab wasn't noticed.

Overall, the new Rhino impressed us. It still has great styling and comes with more power and better creature comforts than previous models. Through the tight woods, anything wider than the Rhino's 54.4-inch width would be left behind. The Rhino is proven and is a tough, durable side-by-side. At \$10,449, consumers are getting a sporty UTV with some utility function.

Increased competition from machines, as witnessed by the updated Rhino, can only mean good things for the future of side-by-side riding. **ATV**

Rocks have a unique way of sneaking up on you when crossing water. When you find one it's followed by a loud metal-on-rock thud. The Rhino remained poised over rocks and easily churned through this crossing littered with boulders.



how-to

BY CHRIS VOGTMAN

PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS TROUBLESHOOTING POOR ENGINE STARTING AND IDLE SPEED PERFORMANCE



Older ATVs, like this 2004 Kawasaki Prairie 360, can experience rough idle and a sputtering engine if routine maintenance was neglected or the machine was stored improperly. To get your machine up and running well like this Prairie, work through our simple troubleshooting steps.

2007 Yamaha Wolverine loaner during a scouting mission and the quad started to choke up and sputter. After quick inspection, we realized the element was clogged with unacceptable levels of dust. The riding area had been in the grips of a drought and dust conditions were at all-time highs — air filter inspections should have occurred after each ride, but it was likely several weeks since the last time the Wolverine's owner serviced the element. To get back to base camp, we gently rubbed the element on relatively smooth tree bark.

While many new machines come with a reusable element, older ATVs often don't. If your machine's element is damaged or excessively dirty like the borrowed Wolverine, replacement may be necessary. For reusable elements, soak in approved

It happens every holiday season. You jam a bunch of food in your face, you feel bloated and you start to sputter before the night closes in. Once again, you've clogged up your system. Thankfully, it usually only takes a good night's sleep and a little exercise to get your body up and running at peak efficiency again. Too bad keeping that precious ATV running at its top level isn't as easy.

Just like your body, an ATV can get clogged up with all sorts of junk that makes it run completely out of whack. It's going to take a lot more than exercising your ATV's engine and letting it rest overnight to cure its issues. Most often tough starting, inconsistent idle and a sputtering engine are a direct result of poor maintenance. But don't fret, it's not too late to get your ATV running at peak efficiency again.

We've assembled several troubleshooting steps you should work through if your ATV's engine and idle are hesitating like its driver after a holiday binge.

STEP 1

This step may seem obvious to some, but one of the biggest causes of engine and idle hesitation is due to a clogged or damaged air filter. Recently, we were riding a

Here is a dirty air filter from a Yamaha Raptor 350. Notice the particles of dust clinging to the filter. Letting too much dirt stick to the filter can rob horsepower and cause damage to the engine.



how-to

element soap and water, dry the element and ensure it is properly oiled before installation.

If symptoms persist, check the air filter housing for dirt and clogs. Finally, inspect the air filter housing-to-carburetor air boot for leaks. A damaged boot will cause the engine to suck too much air and run lean.



(above) Remove and inspect the fuel line and fuel petcock to ensure there's no impediments or blockage. Fuel switches, like this one on the Honda Foreman, are susceptible to sediment blockage. (left) After cleaning the filter with approved filter cleaner and allowing it to dry, don't forget to saturate the element with oil.

STEP 2

It only takes a small amount of goop in the fuel valve or fuel line to cause problems and contaminate your ATV's engine. Fortunately, cleaning the fuel valve (petcock) and fuel line is easier than cleaning out your polluted arteries after eating 12 deviled eggs at your aunt's house.

Inspect the entire fuel hose for clogs. Turn off the fuel valve before detaching the fuel line. You can detach the fuel hose from the fuel tank and carburetor easily with a pliers to loosen the hose clamps. Visually inspect it for clogs. Any clogs can be taken care of with carburetor cleaner or products like SeaFoam. If the hose is cracked or damaged, replacement hose is very inexpensive and is available cut to length at most automotive retailers.

During this step, it is also advised to clean the fuel valve and, if your machine has one, corresponding fuel valve filter. A gummed up valve will result in fuel restriction and engine hesitation.

STEP 3

Many regular unleaded fuels are blended with ethanol. Ethanol fuels have a cleaning effect on fuel systems and can loosen old varnish and other deposits, sending the debris through the fuel system where they clog filters, jets and other pathways.

If the gas has been sitting for a long



This is a perfect example of contaminated gas with water settling to the bottom of the fuel.

period of time without a fuel stabilizer — generally over the winter months — drain it and replace it. Contaminated fuel is a large contributor to rough idle and hard starting. If you plan on storing your machine for long periods of time, use fuel stabilizer to avoid common issues found in the next three steps.

STEP 4

Contaminated fuel can cause a host of other issues, including a clogged fuel filter and fouled spark plug. Remove your ATV's fuel filter, unscrew the filter and inspect the brass screen. If it is contaminated, clean with STP, Gumout, Marvel or a similar product. If the fuel filter is damaged beyond repair, a new one can be purchased for roughly \$10.

STEP 5

As for the spark plug, a grayish-tan to white color indicates the plug is operating at the proper heat range. This also indicates correct jetting and that the cylinder is running well. Excessive electrode wear will cause misfires during acceleration and hard starting. A melted center electrode or chalky appearance could mean your machine is running a plug with the wrong heat range or there is a lean fuel mixture. Replace the

(below) A clogged fuel filter means it was doing its job but, as sediment builds, the likelihood of it working through the filter and reaching the engine increases.



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Faulty plugs, whether its fouled or set with an improper gap, can cause a rough idle and poor engine performance.

plug with a compatible plug in the proper heat range. If the plug has an ashy appearance with light-brown deposits encrusted to the center electrode or ground, this is often the result of oil or fuel additives. Replace the plug and re-evaluate engine performance.

An oil-fouled plug could mean worn valve guides or piston rings. If this is the case, your machine could have low engine compression.

STEP 6

So, you've jammed 1,000 deviled eggs into your pie hole over your lifespan and more greasy double cheeseburgers than you can fathom. The bad news for you is your heart is either going to stop or need quadruple bypass surgery. And worse yet, you might die.

The good news is operating on your ATV's carburetor isn't as complex nor as expensive when it's obstructed, and it can be brought back to life. Unfortunately, for many machines, getting to the carburetor will be like cracking into a rib cage. But, once you locate the carburetor, removing it and cleaning it is a fairly simple process.

Like a restricted pulmonary artery in your heart will make you short of breath, debris barricading the main jet in an ATV's carburetor will cause a lean, rough running engine and harsh idle. Generally, that debris is the direct result



of gasoline and grime drying out, which leaves a thick goo residue or sediment build-up. Along with grime, small rust particles may have worked into the jets and orifices of the carb. These fine particles build up over time along with the dried up gasoline goop and the result is carburetor dysfunction — passages that direct proper air and fuel mixture are plugged or flow is restricted.

The only fix at this point is to disassemble the carb and clean the jets, sliders, diaphragm and float bowl. Taking apart a carb might sound intimidating, but it is a

how-to

process most ATV riders with basic handyman skills can accomplish. The main tip here is to write down or chart where each part goes when taking apart the carburetor. Each part will need to be inspected and cleaned with carburetor cleaner.

If you aren't confident enough to disassemble the carb, you can usually remove the float bowl without taking the entire carb and airbox off the machine. A gummed up float bowl is generally the culprit if the ATV's rough idle or starting wasn't diagnosed in an earlier step. Clean the bowl and main and slow jets with carburetor cleaner and use a toothbrush or similar bristle brush to clean the jets. Try to get a few of the bristles in the jet holes to unclog any impediments. Do not use wire as it can damage the jet size! You don't want to accidentally re-jet your machine and cause more problems.

Finally, inspect the float bowl gasket and ensure it isn't damaged. A bad gasket will result in an improper air-to-fuel ratio and unwanted fuel leaks.

Hopefully, the basic steps we've detailed will get your machine running at its peak performance again. The key is sticking to a strict maintenance routine. And, for your sake, avoid digesting 10 pounds of mutton next time you're at mom's house. For a comprehensive step-by-step carburetor cleaning how-to, see our upcoming May issue of *ATV Magazine*. **ATV**

This dirty float bowl needs to be properly cleaned to avoid sediment working its way into the main and slow jets.



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(above) The result of residue buildup in our machine's carburetor was a slightly clogged main jet. After a few shots of carb cleaner and a date with a toothbrush, it was as good as new.

(left) This needle valve has gummy residue from poor storage prep. The old fuel that was left in a vehicle needed the same cleaning treatment as the main jet.

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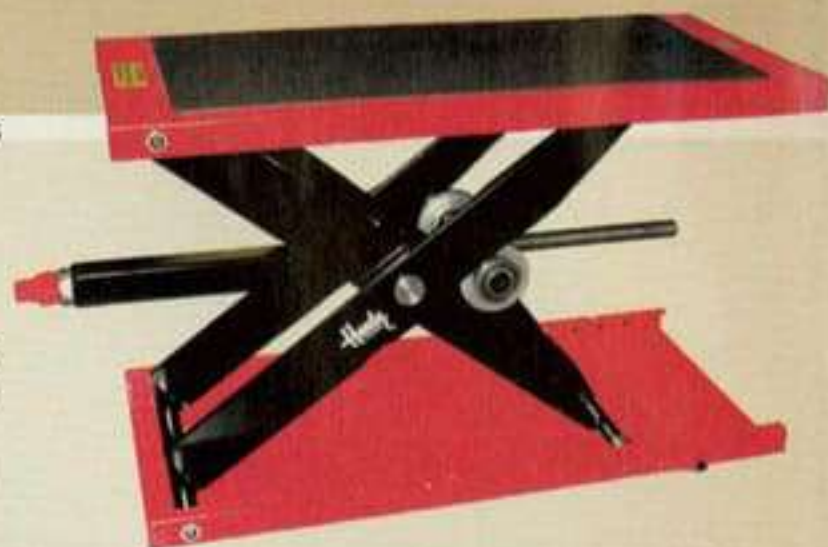


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Add a claimed 3.6 hp to your Grizzly 700 with the stainless steel slip-on M-7 system. Features include a lightweight aluminum canister, removable USFS-approved spark arrestor and high temperature packing material. Optional features include the TBR Juice Box fuel controller box and power/sound tuning tips. Price is \$330.

Two Brothers Racing: (800) 211-2767; www.twobros.com



VALLEY ODYSSEY II TRAILER BRAKE CONTROL

Billed as the next generation of brake controllers, the Odyssey II adds a preset feature allowing users to save their controller settings to one of four memory positions. Valley says it is particularly useful when the vehicle or trailer has multiple operators or the operator has multiple trailers. Price is \$190.

Valley: www.valley.us.com



TM2 REAR SUSPENSION LOCKOUT

Designed for Polaris Sportsman ATVs with wheels 12 inches or larger, tm2's lockout prevents the IRS from dragging low while towing heavy loads. Typical applications include agricultural work, hauling ice houses, moving boats or any other low-speed towing. Price is \$170.

TM2: (763) 315-0200; www.t-m-2.com



CUSTOM ENGINEERED PRODUCTS ICE-N-EASY

The camouflage Ice-N-Easy just might be the most elaborate ATV ice shelter money can buy. It mounts to all ATV brands and expands to a cavernous space that allows users to stand on the foot pegs without touching the ceiling. It measures 12 feet 6 inches across when opened and 80 inches high at the center. Easy installation means there's nothing to pull, snap or strap, and the aerodynamic shape allows higher-speed travel. Options include an underwater camera, interior and exterior LED lighting, driving lights, tackle and rod storage, a 15-inch flip-screen TV and more. Price is \$895 up to \$2,250.

Custom Engineered Products: (866) 848-1775; www.customvehicles.com



HIGH LIFTER CAB HEATER

For owners of cab-installed ATVs or UTVs, High Lifter's Cab Heater can make riding more comfortable in cold temperatures. Its swivel design also allows directing hot air at the windshield to remove fog or frost, which can hamper visibility inside cabs. Price is \$80.

High Lifter: (318) 524-2270; www.highlifter.com

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SAND DOLLARS



KANSAS OPENS FIRST ATV SAND PARK IN DECADES *By Tom Kaiser*

With shapeshifting hills, endless whoops sections and steep bowls to carve, sand dunes are a popular tourism draw wherever motorized access is allowed. As rare as dunes are, geographically speaking, it is especially uncommon for such terrain to become available to recreational riders.

In rural western Kansas, an area known for agriculture and not much else, the town of Syracuse is hoping its new sand dunes park will attract riders and tourism dollars from across the country.

SYRACUSE SAND

The ancient Syracuse dunes have been underused in the past. They were previously private property that was occasionally, and unlawfully, used by dirt bike riders in the 60s and 70s. The land was brought under the city's domain in 1995 after the town purchased the land to use for its municipal water works. After lying dormant for a few decades, an ambitious mayor and city council have dusted off the dunes and created a managed riding area aimed at sand enthusiasts far and wide. The town's goal is a world

class riding park that will spur the economy. Local investment was the first step. While the city owned most of the 1,300-acre dune field, it needed additional land to construct a mile-long entrance road. A \$10,000 grant from the Polaris T.R.A.I.L.S. Grant Program went a long way, and allowed the city to hire a park manager and bring in an office building.

Jenny Frey, the new park's manager, says the terrain has 65-foot-tall hills and a 7.5-mile perimeter that takes approximately 12 minutes to circle. She said the park should appeal to local riders and those from outside of the area, who might already pass through Syracuse to reach the Little Sahara sand dunes in Waynoka, Okla.

"We have [dunes] right here in our own backyard," she said. "This small town is

kind of dying out and we're trying to keep our own money here in our own town, plus if you can bring in some from outside of town that would be great, too."

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Since opening in July of 2007, the number of visitors has exceeded expectations, helping the park meet its long-term goals much sooner than expected. Syracuse initially planned for the park to become self sufficient in three years.

"We are actually quite a ways ahead of our expectations this year," Syracuse City Administrator John Armstrong said. "We opened July 4th, and I think our revenues for the year were somewhere over \$13,000."

While 50 acres of the sand pit area has been set aside for fishing and camping, the remaining land will include beginner, children and family areas, as well as an extreme sporting grounds.

In the near future, the town is planning to add shower and restroom facilities and modern camping, in addition to the primitive campsites already open. Long term, Armstrong said the city hopes to expand the park's acreage.

According to its grant application, the park hopes to draw from the approximately 7 million residents of Colorado's front range, including Colorado Springs and Denver. Frey said riders have already rolled in from California, Texas, Minnesota and Florida, some exclusively traveling to ride in the Syracuse sand. **ATV**

(above) Some who have visited envision the park receiving hundreds of thousands of riders a year, once word gets around.

(left) From above, the surrounding sagebrush is evident. Trails have been cut through the grown up areas, and the town hopes to eventually expand the park's footprint.



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Just another day enjoying Upper Michigan's fall paradise. (Submitted By Brian Case, Michigan)



Identity crisis "Polaris" Brute Force. (Submitted by Denis Mallet, Moncton, New Brunswick)

Neil Schotten and Ted VanEgdom using some creativity to get Ted's son's Sportsman 90 across a deep stream. (Submitted by Ted VanEgdom)



Who needs a winch? Todd Shaw prefers a Honda hernia. (Submitted by Todd Shaw, Appleton, WI)



Emma Brook Stollman, 14 months old, gets an early start ATV riding on her parents' ranch. (Submitted By Paul Stollman, DeBeque, Colo.)

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