

DRIVEN REVIEW

Text by Greg Vogel
 Photos by Walter Sidas

FAST FACTS

MANUFACTURER: Duratrax
VEHICLE: Raze
PART NO.: DTXD76
CLASS: 1/8 Off-road buggy
DRIVER: Entry level 1/8 driver
KIT TYPE: Ready-to-run
AVERAGE PRICE: \$285.99
SPEED: 39.61 mph



DURATRAX
RAZE

Big nitro-burning 1/8-scale buggies tend to be intimidating; not so much because these eight-pound machines can reach speeds of well over 35mph, launch high off big jumps, and scare small children with the sound of a screaming big block engine. The intimidation factor has often been centered on getting the crow bar into your back pocket so you can hoist out a load of change to purchase one. What if I told you that there's a new buggy that will allow you to enjoy all of the exciting elements, but with a price that the average RC enthusiast could afford? Got your attention, right? Put a pillow on the floor in front of you, because your jaw is about to hit the ground. DuraTrax developers have created an entry-level, ready-to-run buggy that needs only fuel and batteries—all for around \$280. Let's see how they made it possible.

E i g h t t o t h e b a r



TIP

Upgrading the four-cell battery to a five-cell rechargeable hump pack will help boost the performance of the stock servos.

PERFORMANCE

JUMPING AND HANDLING—Bench testing should be considered evaluation, because way before the Raze hit the track, the suspension got a big workout on our work table. When Bob, Frank and I gave the buggy the time-honored *squish* test, we all thought the Raze had a nice plush and reactive feel. This translated to the same feel on the BMX track where we took the buggy for a beating.

The Raze felt at home launching off the big tabletop jumps, and took only a few test runs to feel out the attitude of the jumping style—not before some harsh tumbles that the Raze survived unscathed. The buggy likes to hit a jump at full throttle, and as it meets the face of the jump, let off the trigger, which will net a level attitude as it leaves for some hang time.

Up next for the Raze was running it through some harsh dirt terrain out behind the BMX course. The suspension got a good workout and kept the buggy stable and under control. However, while we cornering through the rough, the Raze's lack of sway bars became apparent. It had a tendency to roll, as the bars weren't there to keep the chassis level. If you want to take the Raze racing, you might want to pick up sway bars. For bashing around the backyard, the suspension system is up for the job.

RATING- 8.5

ON AND OFF POWER STEERING—The setup in this department is very good for the entry-level driver, as it exhibits a little off-power push, and even more when on power. This allows new drivers to learn to brake and reel the car in rather than have it hook or hit boards at the entry of a corner. Don't expect to dart from corner to corner; the Raze needs some finesse and brake to get around a track, and it wants to push entering corners fast and when transitioning through the tighter sections of the course. An upgraded battery pack for the stock servos is the best place to start to get more steering before upgrading the servo. For stock out of the box, the backyard basher will have more than enough turning ability to get the buggy around makeshift tracks and obstacles.

RATING- 8.5

ACCELERATION AND BRAKING—SuperTigre's G-27CX engine, coupled with the composite three-shoe clutch, accelerates the Raze hard and has enough power behind the trigger to give the car the grunt it needs to come out of corners hard and launch off of jumps with ease. On the Raze's glory run, the buggy pulled off a 39 mph pass on a very hot, humid day; under pleasant conditions, expect your buggy to rip some passes at over 40 mph.

Braking, on the other hand, is not the Raze's strongest suit. With the braking set as best we could tweak it, we could only get the buggy to slow marginally, and even at that, we noticed some fade over long periods of running. The braking is suitable for backyard use, but if you try to hit the track, you'll want to upgrade the servo for some stronger pull.

RATING- 7.5



INFO CENTER

CHASSIS—The Raze is a large departure from DuraTrax's previous buggy, the Axis. This Raze appears to have soaked up some inspiration from some of the racing buggies already on the market. Starting from the main deck, the chassis is 3mm thick blue anodized aluminum with angled edges to increase rigidity. Above the deck, two long plastic struts act as supports to the chassis to the steering stiffener plate up front and the gear case in the rear. To chop some cost off the car, DuraTrax used a composite servo tray, which mates up to the rear-mounted receiver and battery box. A transponder mount is included if you want to go racing. A large 125cc tank features a flip-top lid for quick refuels. **SUSPENSION**—Aluminum front and rear shock towers offer numerous holes to reposition the shocks for tuning. The shocks are oil-filled aluminum with collar clips to slip in between the blue anodized cap and spring to alter ride height. The shocks damp wide suspension arms both front and rear. Rounding out the double wishbone suspension are adjustable upper tie-rods. DuraTrax includes several pivot blocks to aid in fine tuning the Raze to your track or driving preference. **DRIVETRAIN**—The wheels receive power through a standard dogbone and differential setup. The gear diffs are sealed and grease-filled from the factory, but could be refilled with silicone fluid for tuning. All the diff drive gears are hardened steel. Ball bearings support all of the rotating components. Braking is accomplished by single discs in the front and rear of the center diff. The discs are vented steel and are clamped by fiber-lined pads. Drive is sent to the center diff via a composite three-shoe racing clutch. **STEERING**—The steering servo links up with a servo-saver bellcrank that swings an aluminum drag link that offers three possible mounting locations for the adjustable tie-rods. The tie-rods mate up to cast aluminum steering knuckles. **WHEELS AND BODY**—Topping off the Raze is a chassis-hugging buggy body, pre-painted from the factory in a single color. Ours came in red, but purple, orange, blue, green and black bodies are also available. Six-spoke white rims are wrapped in spiked chevron tires and fitted with foam inserts. Downforce is taken care of by a dual-deck wing extending off of the rear wing risers. **ASSEMBLY**—This vehicle is ready to run and requires very little to get it rolling; just apply the included body graphics, install the batteries, fuel it up and get going. Beginners should expect to drive the car within a half hour of opening the box, performing the aforementioned steps, and reading the included detailed manual.



SuperTigre's big displacement .27 sits on heatsink aluminum engine mounts. The mill features a large blue heatsink head, pull start, and two-needle carb for easy tuning. Exhaust duties are taken care of by a wrap-around header, silicone coupler and long chamber pipe, which is great for top-end power.



The sealed center diff incorporates a steel spur. Front and rear vented disc brakes control stopping, and are actuated by cams with ball-and-cup levers.



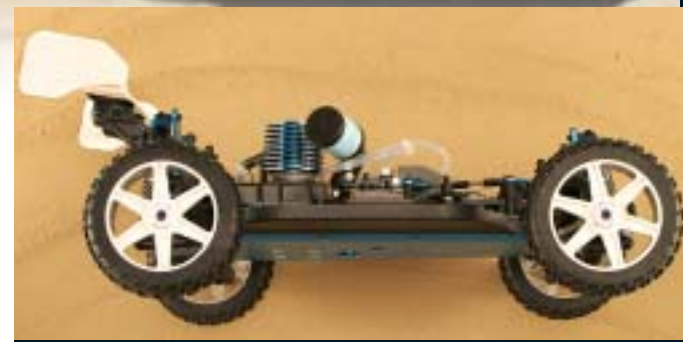
Six bevel gears make up the differential's internals. Here, light, green grease is used to lubricate and add friction to the diff's action.



An aluminum top plate secures the steering posts, while a composite strut extends to brace the front of the chassis. The servo-saver bellcrank features an adjusting nut to add tension to the crank assembly.



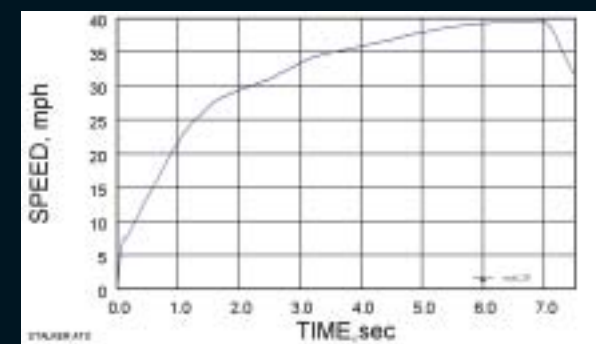
Two DuraTrax SX300 servos are mounted to a composite servo tray to take care of steering and throttle duties. A transponder mount is included in case you want to go racing.



TECH SPECS

SCALE: 1/8
DRIVE: 4WD
LENGTH: 18.5 in. (470mm)
WIDTH: 11.7 in. (298mm)
WEIGHT: 7.7 lbs. (3500g) approx.
WHEELBASE: 12.91 in. (328mm)
TREAD (F/R): 10.63 (270mm) (28mm)
GROUND CLEARANCE: 1.1 in.
ENGINE: SuperTigre G-27CX .27 cu. in.
PINION/SPUR: 13/ 46
PIPE: Aluminum-tuned pipe
TIRES: Spiked chevron style
WHEELS: White 6-spoke
SUSPENSION TRAVEL (F/R): .87 in. (22mm)/ 1.36 in. (35mm)
ACCELERATION:
 0-10 mph: .30 sec.,
 0-20 mph: .89 sec.,
 0-30 mph: 2.19sec.; 6.91sec @ 39.61 mph in 319.88 ft.

RADAR DATA



HELPFUL HINTS

GOT TO GET: Fuel

RECOMMENDED UPGRADES: Gandini Mounted Atomic Tire- GMX05A, Front Universal Drive Shaft - DTXC4316, Fr/Re Anti Roll Bar Set- DTXC4322, Aluminum Servo Tray- DTXC4324, Steering Turnbuckle Set- DTXC4330, Front Turnbuckle- DTXC4331, Rear Turnbuckle- DTXC4332, Aluminum Fr/Re Center Brace Set- DTXC4307, Aluminum Servo Tray Post- DTXC4302
COMPETITORS INCLUDE: OFNA Violator, Hot Bodies Lightning, Sportwerks Turmoil

DURATRAX RAZE



Tucked inside of the radio box is DuraTrax's three-channel RX-300F FM receiver. Next to the Rx box is the four-cell battery holder box.



Here is a good look at the cast aluminum knuckles that support the steel axle and 17mm wheel hex. Bulky C-hubs mate up to the knuckle and pivot on E-clip-retained hinge pins. The upper arms are adjustable to alter camber.



The rear hub offers several mounting locations for the rear adjustable tie-rod to alter the buggy's roll. Notice how the arm features a molded support that wraps around the hub to connect the two sides of the pivot to reduce flex.

Inside the front diff, you'll see the red O-ring that seals the diff. The unit is filled with a fairly heavy brown grease to slow the reaction of the diff.



AUTHOR'S OPINIONS AND RATINGS

Ratings: 1 to 10 (poor to excellent)

Rating Category: Entry Level Buggy

■ **CHASSIS**—The components are basic and shouldn't be too intimidating to entry-level drivers. The 3mm chassis is solid, and braces should keep the buggy sturdy. Low-profile mudguards keep debris out, and the radio box will accept upgraded electronics if you add them down the road.

RATING-9

■ **DRIVETRAIN**—The drive system is hefty and should hold up well over time. Braking is minimal due to the limited pull of the standard servo, but brake fade is also evident. A larger splash shield would be nice to protect the front brake.

RATING-7.5

■ **STEERING**—The steering system works well and is adjustable through the rods and drag link, and the servo saver can be tightened. The cast steering knuckles are a pleasant feature on this affordable buggy.

RATING-8.5

■ **SUSPENSION**—You've got to love the DuraTrax Stress Tech guarantee: break one of these parts in your first 12 months of owning the car, and DuraTrax replaces it for free. The shocks work great, but I'd like to see a dust boot on them, and the rear tower is a little on the thin side.

RATING-8

■ **BODY, WHEELS AND TIRES**—The meats and hoops on the Raze are a great all-terrain package. The body looks good with the graphics; however, it could use some more trimming to get it to fit better.

RATING-8.5

■ **DURABILITY**—To durability test the Raze, we handed the radio to Bob. Bob is to breaking things as Mikey is to liking things. Some wild tumbles, cased jumps and rolls ensued with the crazed driver grabbing gobs of throttle. In the end, we didn't have any components dangling to take advantage of the Stress Tech program.

RATING-9.5

■ **EASE OF USE**—The simple layout of the chassis makes maintenance easy. While checking the diffs, we found removing them to be simple. Starting and tuning the engine was also a breeze; the SuperTigre engine often fired on the first pull.

RATING-9.5



What we liked—

- ◎ Bargain for the price
- ◎ Powerful and reliable SuperTigre engine
- ◎ FM radio system with steering dual-rate adjustment
- ◎ Includes support gear such as glow-starter and fuel bottle
- ◎ Nimble handling

What could be improved—

- ◎ Thick rear tower, just like the front
- ◎ Body could be trimmed to fit better

CONCLUSION

Power, speed and excitement can all be found through the experience of a 1/8 scale buggy, and there is a new buggy that fits this bill without costing too much cash. DuraTrax has a hard-to-beat machine on its hands for the entry-level 1/8 crowd. This buggy is easy to get rolling and runs reliably. Through the backyard and at the track, the handling was great, and the setup is right for anyone to take hold of the pistol and wheel the Raze around with style. ◎

Links

DuraTrax, www.duratrax.com, (217) 398-8970

Werks Racing, www.werksracing.com, (408) 365-1000

For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 193.



ITEM USED—
Werks 30%
Fuel

TEAM LOSI SPORT LST