

RADIO CONTROLLED ROCK AND ROLL

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Kit Reviews:



WHEELY KING

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Tear up the lounge with a real 1:36 scale micro machine

Savage X 4.6

HPI release the best ever version of the Savage with an awesome .28ci engine



SMOOTH OPERATOR

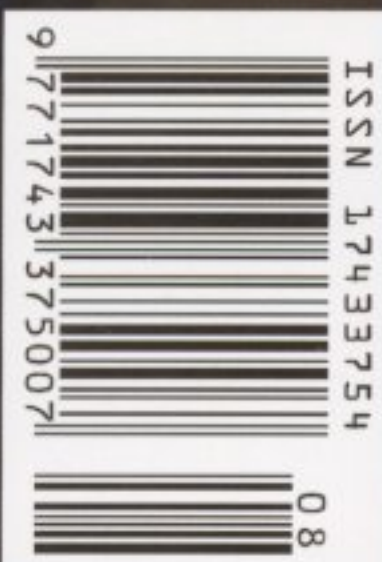
**XRAY'S XT8 AIMS
TO DOMINATE THE
TRUGGY CLASS**

Race Reports

Truggy and Truck Nationals Round 2

MaxBashing Race Day Round 3

SRS Round 2



ALWAYS FIRST WITH THE HOTTEST NEWS AND LATEST REVIEWS

Xray XT8

SMOOTH OPERATOR

By Dan

It's been a long time coming, but is it worth the wait? We'll soon find out as we delve into Xray's brand new truggy, the XT8. Truth be told I've been gagging to get my hands on this kit and even reviewed the XB8 EC last month just to get my taste buds tingling.

After all, a truggy is just a 1:8 scale buggy with an extended chassis and longer A-arms isn't it? Well, on first appearance you may be fooled into thinking that, but as you look into it, you can see an awful lot of development work has gone on to make it a kit in its own right. If you struggle to see the differences, chief designer at Xray, Juraj Hudy, has recently put a nice column up on the Xray website explaining some of the development process.



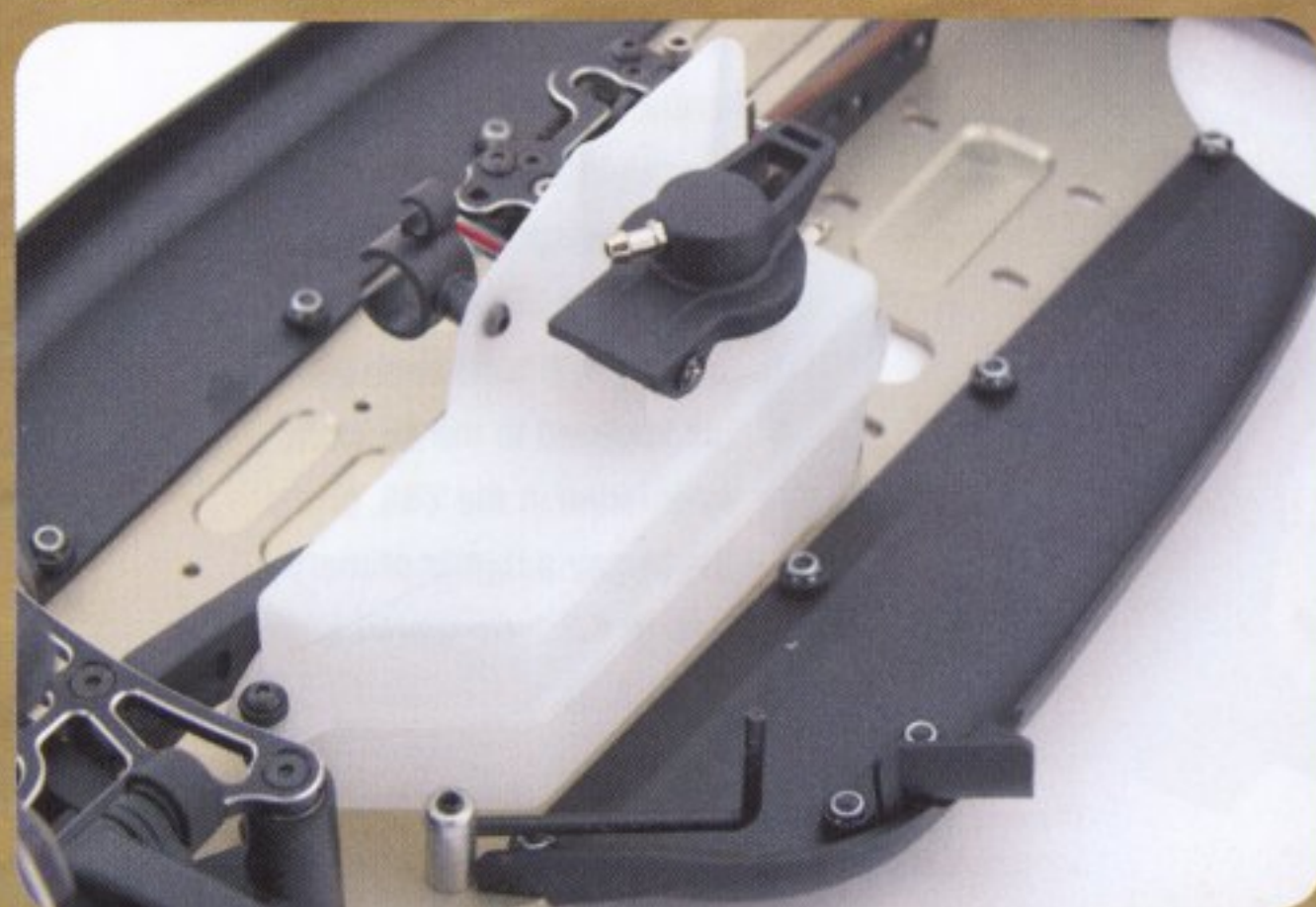


AN INSIGHT

I won't take the easy option and copy the entire content of Juraj's column, besides, he deviates into boring car talk at the end, however it's interesting to read that development on the Xray truggy actually started two years ago. Of course the norm then was to whack hub extenders on a 1:8 scale buggy and stick on some raised shock towers. That was fine until Hot Bodies launched the Lightning Stadium and redefined the class, then Hong Nor followed suit with the X1 CRT and the battle of the truggies began. Add to this the fact that Juraj just wasn't happy with the way their first attempt handled and you can understand why the project was shelved.

Seeing the development in the class, Xray knew a whole lotta work needed to be done. Purpose made A-arms needed to be designed and if they were going to get it right, a whole new drive train needed to be added. Fortunately they're a clever bunch at Xray and these revisions were duly made and we got our first glimpse of the XT8 at the International Toy Fair in Nuremburg at the start of the year. Unfortunately further changes were required after its first outing at the Pro-Line indoor challenge at Easter, since the smaller 125cc fuel tank it was packing proved to be a real disadvantage when everyone else was using a larger 150cc tank and stopping less. Xray were then stuck between a rock and

a hard place, do they delay the kit further and produce a new tank, or get it on the shelves and keep their customers happy (albeit that they would moan about the small tank). Thankfully Xray made another correct decision and delayed the kit for another month while they produced a new larger fuel tank. ↙



A new 150cc fuel tank delayed the release of the XT8 but is a very worthwhile addition

BUILD ME UP BABY

As I've already admitted, I was quite keen to try this truggy out and amazingly (for me) I started building it within 24 hours of it arriving! Fortunately building the XB8 the month before proved to be a real advantage because not only was I very familiar with the build process but I could also easily spot the differences.

Again I'll try to avoid going through every stage of the build because it doesn't deviate too much from every other buggy and truggy kit out there. This does mean that you start by building the diffs and while Xray provide you with a basic set-up sheet, I wasn't too impressed with it and was therefore very glad when Jon Dell sent us a copy of Xray's top team driver Jon Hazlewood's set-up. It was an added bonus that this set-up was from round one of the truggy nationals at our very own MaxBashing track, I almost feel special!

DRIVE RATIOS

As part of Xray's commitment to making the XT8 a kit in its own right and not just a truck version of their buggy, the overall drive ratio has been altered. This is essential for any truggy as its wheels are a whole lot bigger and if a normal buggy gear combination is used, the acceleration would be slower than my reactions first thing in the morning. The cop-out option here is to considerably increase the size of the main spur gear and whilst this achieves the desired objective, it does mean that you are raising the overall centre of gravity as the centre diff needs to be mounted even higher.

In order to avoid having a spur gear that runs the risk of slicing a hole in your body's roof, you need to change the size of the crown and pinion gears in the diffs. This is just what Xray have done and the XT8 features 10 tooth pinions and 43 tooth crown gears

rather than the 12 tooth pinions and 40 tooth crowns found in the XB8. This gives the XT8 an internal drive ratio of 3.69:1 compared to the buggy's 3.54:1. Interestingly (well, if you're a bit geeky) we've heard some of the Xray buggy drivers are using the XT8 pinion and crown gears in their XB8s to lower the rotational mass and improve its acceleration.

The new diffs feature a larger 43 tooth crown gear which provides a higher internal drive ratio of 3.69:1

Changing the crown and pinion gears doesn't completely overcome the difference the larger wheels make though and a slightly larger spur gear is still needed. Therefore the XT8 comes with a 48 tooth spur as opposed to the 46 tooth spur found in the XB8, giving the truggy a higher primary ratio of 4.3:1 compared to the buggy's 3.33:1.

The new 48 tooth centre spur gear gives a primary ratio of 4.3:1

All these changes obviously affect the final gear ratio (I bet you were just thinking that weren't you?) and the XT8 therefore ends up as 15.88:1 whereas the buggy is 11.79:1. If you're wondering just what the final gear ratio actually is, it's the amount of times the engine turns over during one revolution of the wheels and because the XT8's wheels are much bigger than the XB8's, it needs this higher ratio in order to have decent acceleration. I hope that all made sense because it confused me to start with and I must give my thanks to the guys at Apex Models and Kev's Racing for helping me get my head round it all!



SET-UPS

With the drive ratios all understood and taken care of, the other thing that will affect your truggy's handling are the oils used in the diffs, and whilst Xray's basic set-up suggests using 7,000 in the front and rear and 10,000 in the middle, Hazlewood's set-up uses 5,000 in the front, 7,000 in the middle and 4,000 in the rear which seems a much more sensible idea - I mean, 7,000 in the rear, where on earth did that come from?



Hinge pin retainers on the front upper A-arms can be changed to alter the kick up and sway bars front and rear aid in the tuning

The only other major change from Hazlewood compared to the stock recommendation comes in the shock set-up. Both suggest using the supplied dark blue (firm springs) and 600 (or 60) weight oil, however the stock set-up suggests using two 1.4mm holes in the front pistons and two 1.5mm holes in the rear shock. But after a bit of a chat with Jon Dell (Hazlewood's mechanic/pit man extraordinaire), he said to use four 1.4mm holes in all of the pistons because

(according to Dell) after building it the pack of the shocks was too much so he drilled two additional holes in the shocks. Dell was also kind enough to point out that if you don't have a 1.4mm drill piece you can cunningly drill two 1.5mm holes in the pistons that come already supplied with two 1.3mm holes to achieve the same effect (this is what I did).

Two 1.5mm holes were added to the 1.3mm pistons to give an average of four 1.4mm holes



PURE QUALITY

As I continue through the build I've got to admit I was constantly impressed with the quality of components used in the kit, this wasn't a great surprise having built the buggy but it is so nice to see and makes the process a pleasure rather than a pain. There wasn't one instance where something didn't quite fit right or indeed was actually missing. The manual makes the build a very painless process and is very well explained and like the buggy, all the components for every stage are in separate bags so if you finish a stage and there are parts left, you've screwed up somewhere.



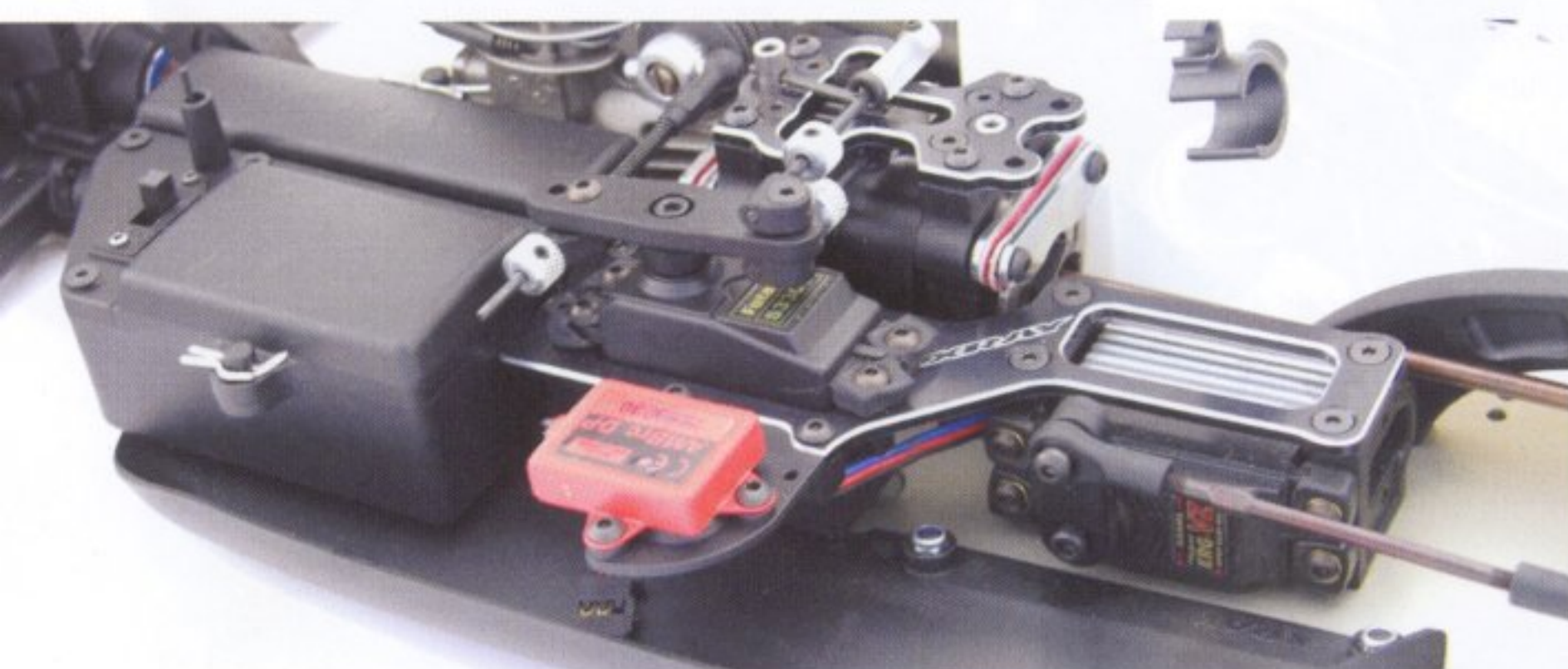
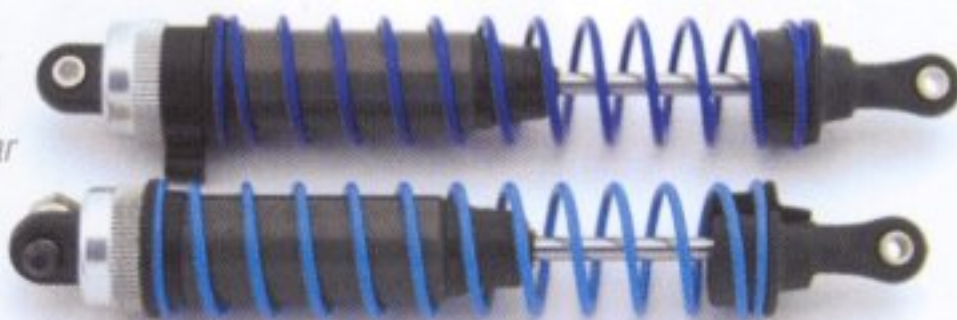
Plastic knuckles decrease the un-sprung weight and include a steel bushing moulded into the top and bottom for extra strength



Captured hinge pins on the knuckles and upper A-arms are more in line with the quality you expect to see

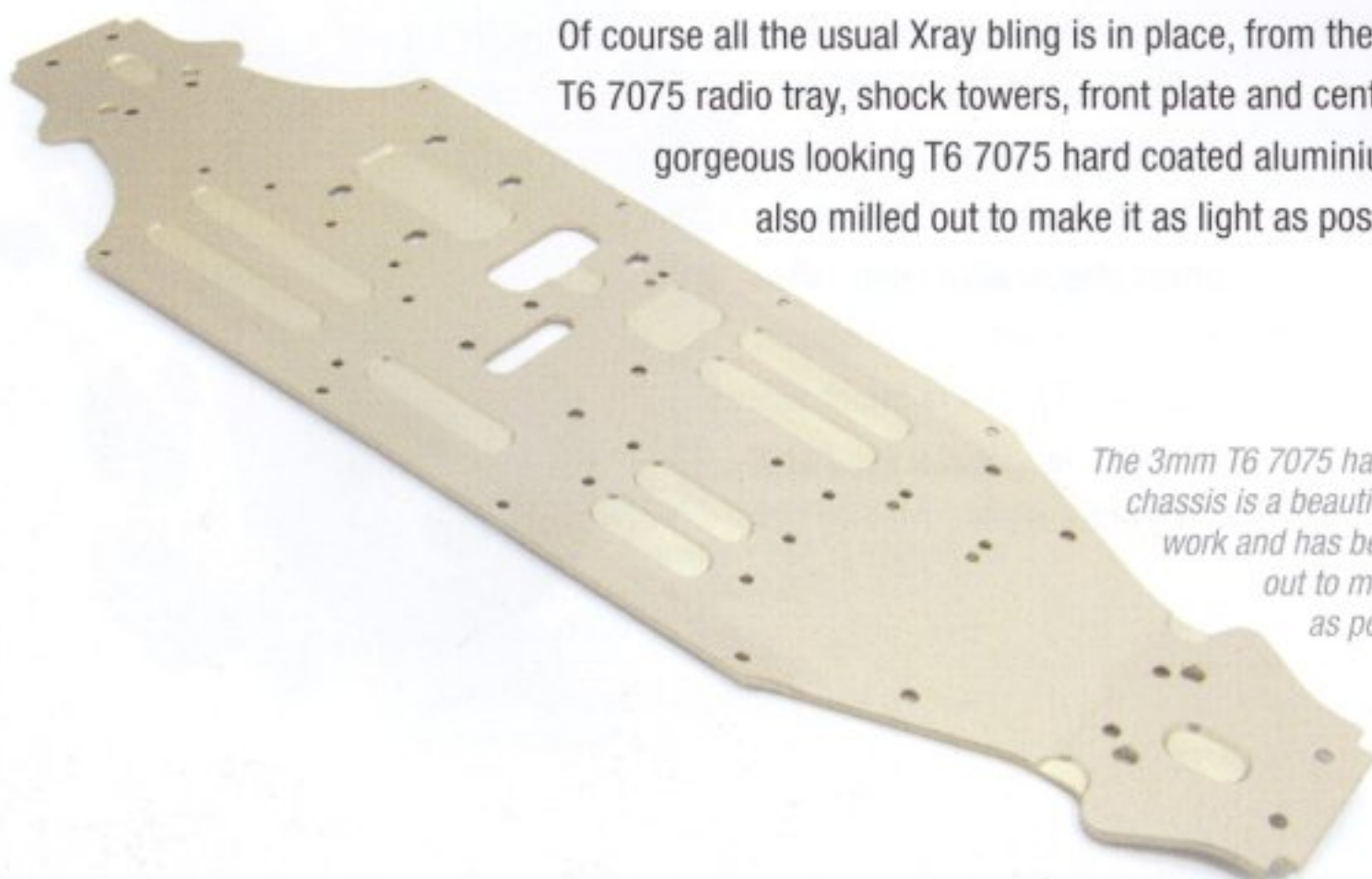
Ferodo brake pads give excellent grip on the front and rear disks

New longer shocks are used on the XT8 and can be seen here next to a rear shock from the XB8 EC



A PT mount is provided and for a pleasant change, the radio box is large enough to fit in just about any type of receiver

Of course all the usual Xray bling is in place, from the black anodised T6 7075 radio tray, shock towers, front plate and centre diff brace to the gorgeous looking T6 7075 hard coated aluminium chassis which is also milled out to make it as light as possible.



The 3mm T6 7075 hard anodised chassis is a beautiful bit of work and has been milled out to make it as light as possible



HUDY Spring Steel is used on all the drive line components for added strength and the top plate along with all the aluminium parts features chamfered edges for an added bit of bling

Xray's trademark HUDY Spring Steel is also used throughout the kit, the pure strength and bronze colouring of this really makes things like the turnbuckles and CVD drive shafts stand out and of course, set this kit apart from any other manufacturer.

THE DOWNSIDES

I must admit the smile was wiped off my face a of couple times during the build but I solved this by making another Jack Daniel's and coke! However it is a real disappointment to see the use of E-clips and plastic hinge pin retainers on the lower A-arms at the front and back. Xray make a big thing about their Integrated Suspension Settings (I.S.S) and one of the key points of this are the varying sized caps used in the aluminium hinge pin retainers. On the XT8 however, you're just given a standard plastic brace and the option to have two or three degrees of toe-in on the rear.



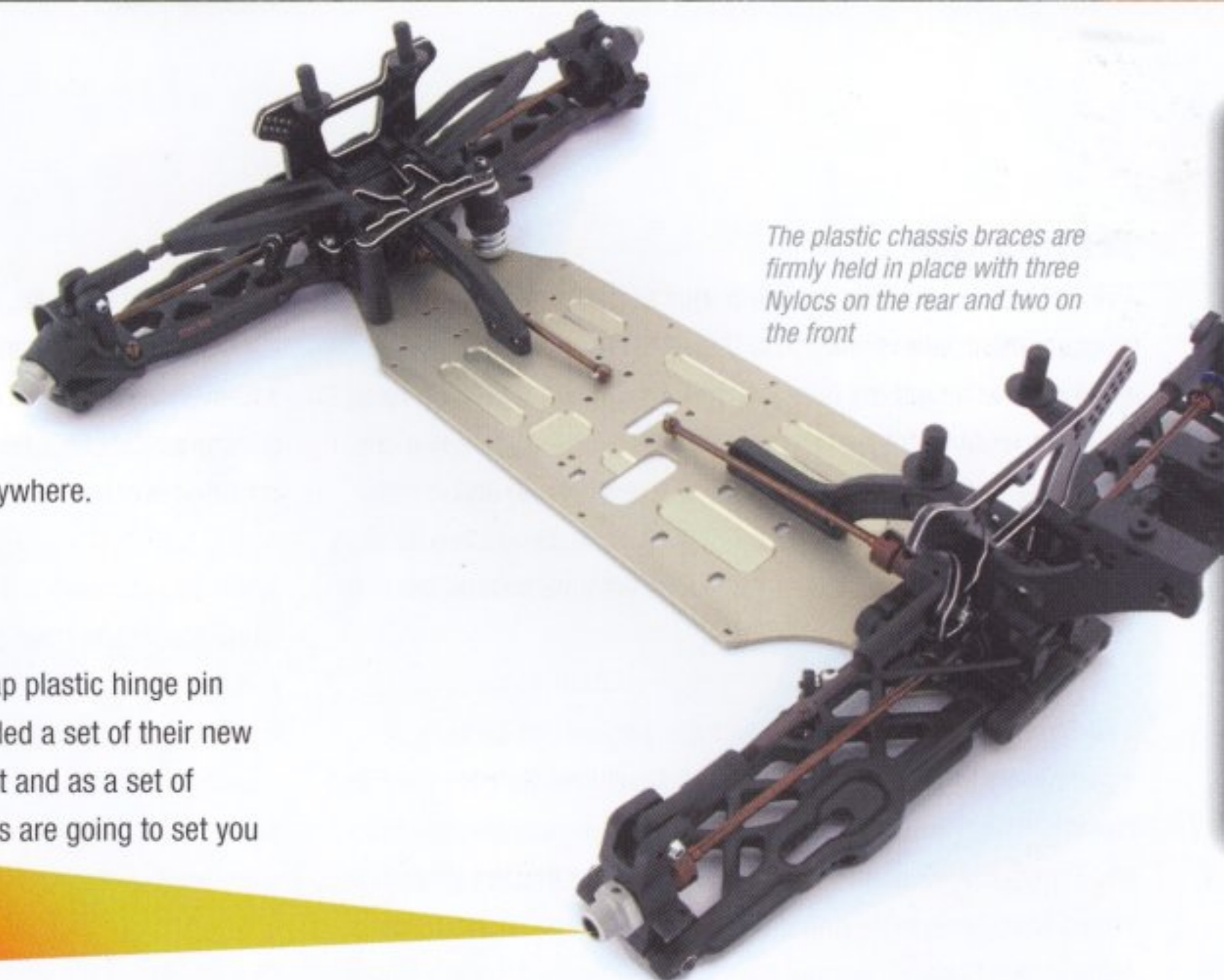
It's slightly disappointing to see plastic hinge pin braces and E-clips holding in the lower hinge pins



There is a beefy bit of alloy hiding behind the plastic braces though

When you build up the rear end you'll also spot that you're only given plastic braces to sit between the wing mount. Similarly the engine mounts are just plain aluminium compared to the lovely finned ones found on the XB8 EC. Okay, neither of these make much of a difference but when the rest of the kit is so blinged up, parts like this would just add that finishing touch.

The other noticeable cut back is the use of composite plastic chassis braces, this isn't such a disappointment as the current trend is to use plastic over aluminium braces because they allow slightly more chassis flex and therefore give the rear end more traction. Add this to the fact that the rear brace is secured to the chassis with three Nyloc nuts and the front with two and you just know that they aren't going anywhere.



The plastic chassis braces are firmly held in place with three Nylocs on the rear and two on the front

RUBBER INCLUDED

On the flip side of the cheap plastic hinge pin braces, Xray have included a set of their new Thrax tyres with the kit and as a set of truck tyres are going to set you

back at least forty quid, it goes some way towards compensating things. The tread on these Thrax tyres bears a remarkable resemblance to Pro-Lines' Crime Fighters although there is no internal ribbing and they haven't got such a low profile but they should be a

good option for dirt and grass surfaces. The tyres mount onto the supplied 17mm white dish wheels, which have a very slight offset (around 1/4" or 6mm). This gives the XT8 a slightly wider stance but more importantly means the inside of the wheels don't rub against the steering turnbuckles! Do bear in mind though that if you are using non-offset wheels on this kit you will need a minimum of 6mm extended hubs (these are available from Kyosho and HoBao).

The new Xray Thrax tyres bear a remarkable resemblance to Pro-Line's Crime Fighters and hook up very well on loose dirt and grass

EXTRAS

As this is a pro kit, you're going to need a few bits and pieces to get it up and running. For a power plant, I opted to use the Falcon M21B engine and coupled this to a Jammin JP-3 pipe and let it drink away on some Tornado 30% fuel. I did have the option of using the new Falcon .28ci truggy engine but having run this in the Hyper ST, I felt it was just too powerful for a pure bred racing machine and of

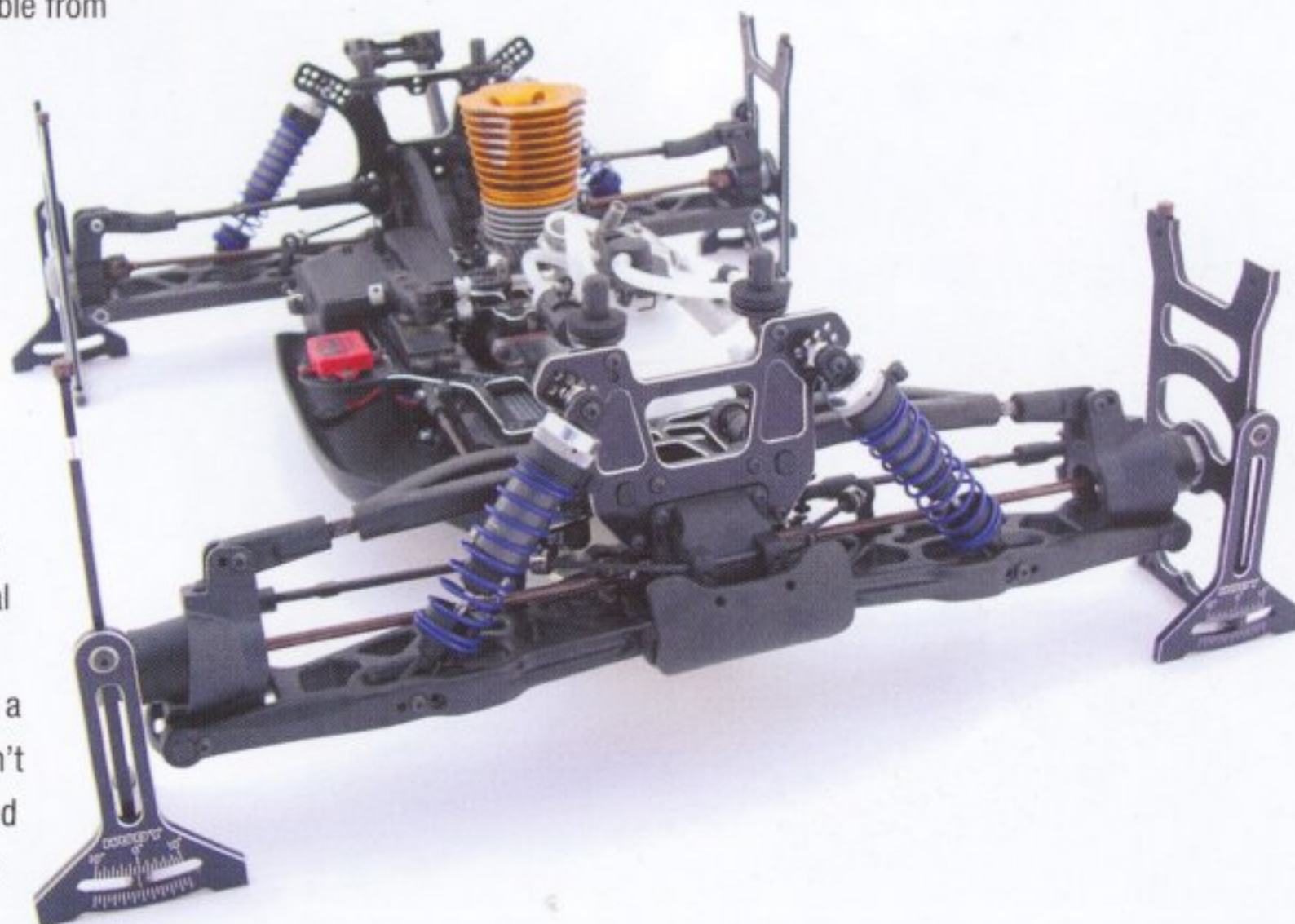
course it drinks more than an Australian on Foster's day! For servos

I used the trusty combination of a Sanwa ERG-VZ for steering and because this servo is quite expensive, I used the more economical Futaba 3035 for the throttle/brakes.

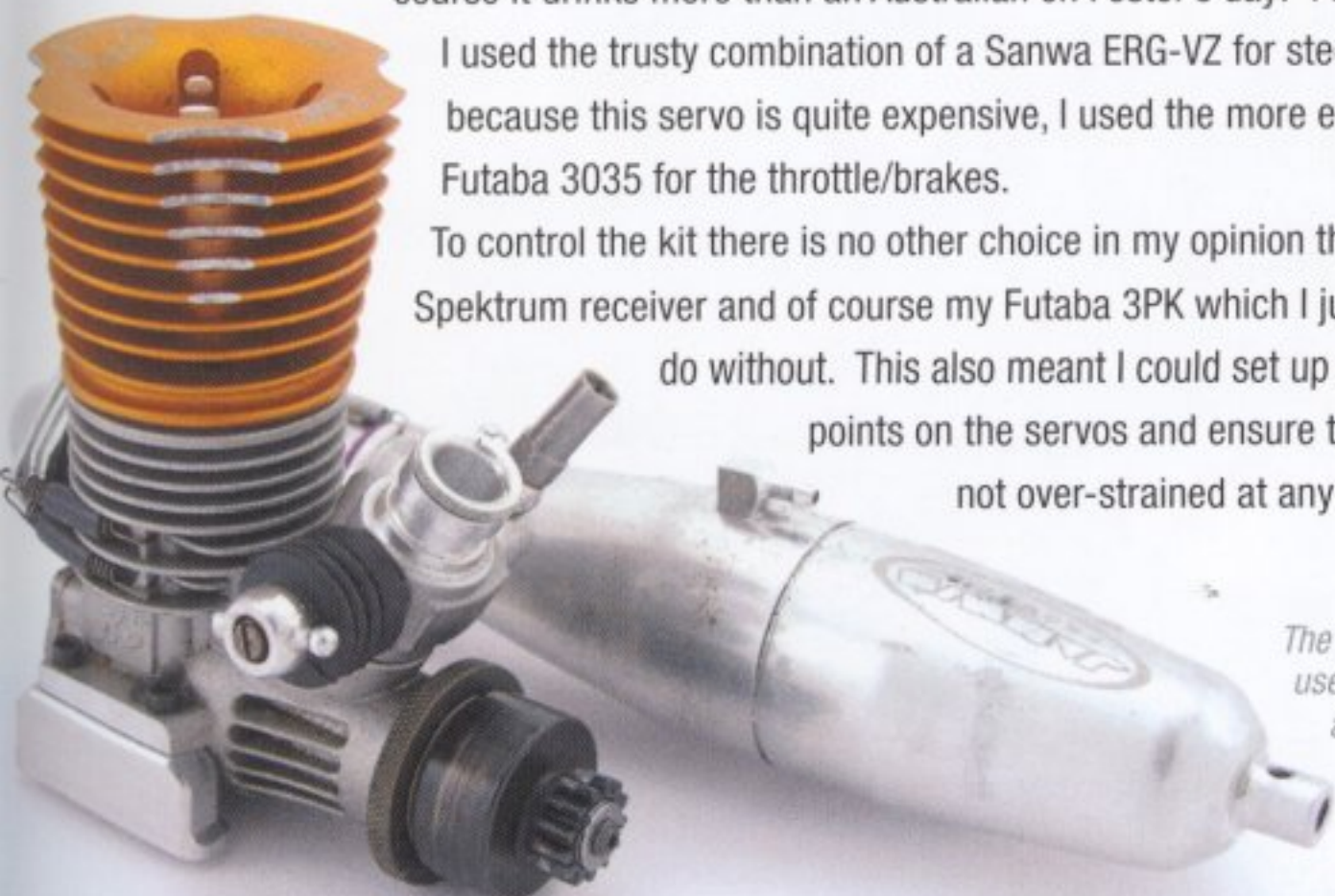
To control the kit there is no other choice in my opinion than using a Spektrum receiver and of course my Futaba 3PK which I just couldn't do without. This also meant I could set up all the end points on the servos and ensure they were not over-strained at any point.

FACE LIFT

With just about everything looking so damn fine inside this kit, it would be criminal not to finish it off with an expertly painted body shell, and of course we turned to Jim at Absolute Control who did us a massive favour by turning it around in no time at all (and it only cost us an extra crate of Jack Daniels). I decided not to get too flash with the design and opted to have a slightly simpler version of the scheme Xray use on the actual box. Of course Jim's more than talented enough to produce an exact replica but considering that he only had one evening to do it so we could get the review in this issue, I thought it best not to push my luck!



The Falcon M21B was used to power the XT8 along with a Jammin JP3 pipe



TESTING TIME

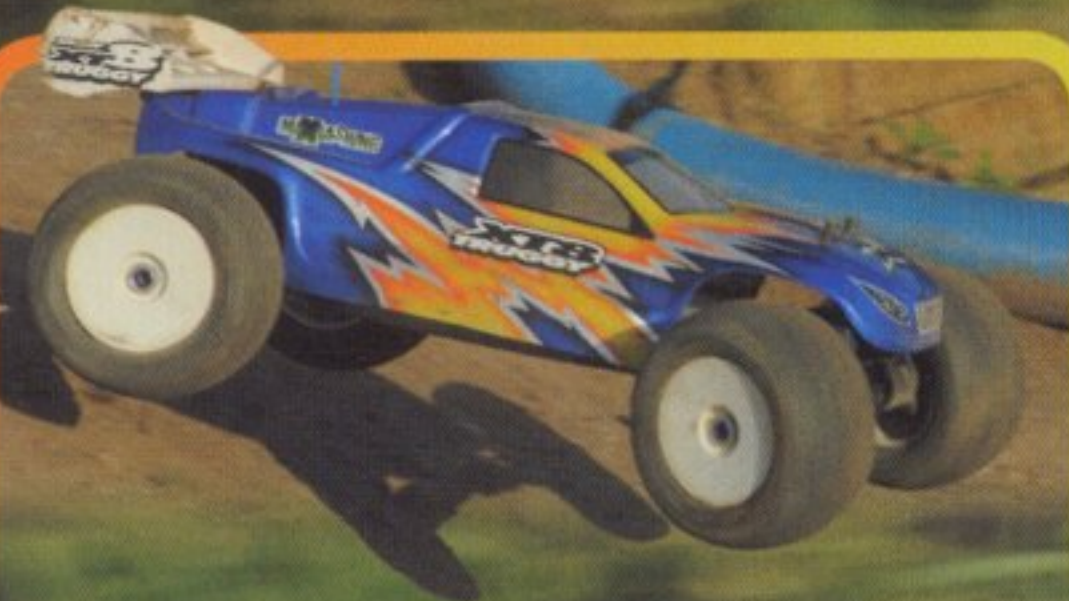
I've got quite a lot riding on this truggy as my results so far in the truggy nationals have been less than impressive for one reason or another. So I've got my hopes pinned on the fact that a top bit of kit and a reliable engine will help me beat Neil McRae (my main aim in the series along with not coming last overall) and in order to get a feel for the XT8 I took it out for a good run out on our own track and also popped down to Clanfield who are hosting the final round of the series.

The Clanfield off-road track has a hard-packed dirt surface, a good variety of jumps and a smooth flowing line. So out I went and the first thing I couldn't fail to notice was how incredibly useless the Thrax tyres were on the hard-packed dirt surface, I think there would have been more grip driving on ice! I even let their top team driver, Simon Freeman, have a go to ensure it wasn't just me who was slipping and sliding all over the place. After a few unsuccessful laps I swapped over to some Pro-Line Holeshots but as these are mounted on non-offset wheels, I needed to add some 6mm hub extenders which Tony at Bolwextric handily had in stock.

With the Holeshots on, it was a hole (pardon the pun) different story and I settled in to driving the track. In no time at all I felt completely at ease with the XT8, it handled like a dream and even with my lack of skills it looked very competent out on the track. Its balance in the air was perfect as it flew gracefully over the jumps and the high traction Ferodo brake pads provided excellent stopping and mid-air correction when I didn't hit the jumps quite right.

When you compare a truggy to a rallycross buggy, it always seems to lack in steering and while recent kits have done their best to overcome this, it still remains a concern. As Clanfield is a faster paced flowing track, I felt compelled to try the XT8 out on our new MaxBashing track which features a much tighter technical section and I'm pleased to say it coped with this equally well. Grip levels are much higher here with its grass/dirt surface and the Thrax tyres came into their own in the damp conditions. It tucked into the corners with absolute ease and wormed its way through the tighter sections like a snake on acid.

Overall I found it a very easy kit to drive, falling into that comfortable category. It wasn't biting my hand off if I made a mistake but was as competitive as the other big name brands out there. In fact I was keeping pace with Losi's, Hong Nor's and Kyosho's without a problem and it simply flowed round.





IN CONCLUSION

The XT8 in my eyes is definitely a very welcome addition to the truggy market and while it's one of the last big makes to reach us, it's certainly worth the wait. Just about every aspect of it follows the "luxury" standards you expect to see from an Xray kit with the design and engineering behind it making it so much more than a converted rallycross buggy. Unfortunately, the plastic hinge pin braces are a real disappointment, not so much because they are plastic but at this level of kit I really do expect to see captured hinge pins all round. The only positive thing to these braces are the fact that it keeps the cost of the kit under £400 and therefore in line with the others. If you really want the aluminium braces, they will set you back around £70.

Overall however, I'm very pleased with the XT8. Its smoother drive and excellent handling mean it's certainly going to be my primary choice of truggy for the rest of this season. It's a credit to Xray's line up of kits and should prove to be a real contender on the track and in the championships, although perhaps not in my hands!

WHAT WE USED

ENGINE

Falcon M1B

FUEL

Tornado 30%

SERVOS

Sanwa ERG-VZ

THROTTLE / BRAKES

Futaba 3035

RECEIVER

Spektrum DSM

TRANSMITTER

Futaba 3PK

SPECS

XRAY XT8

RRP PRICE

£394.99

TYPE

Truggy

SCALE

1:8

POWER PLANT

Any .21ci - .28ci engine

LENGTH

560mm

WIDTH

430mm

CHASSIS

3mm T6 7075 aluminium

SUSPENSION

4 x oil filled dampers

DRIVE TRAIN

4WD