

TEST DRIVE

# XRAY XT8

Finally!

Words and photos by Jason Yu



**Y**ou've seen the ads, you've heard people talking about it, you've seen pictures of it online, you probably even read Mr. Hudy's story on it. Well, it's finally here. XRay designed the new XT8 based solely off their European Championship winning XB8. With a predetermined setup, they went from the buggy chassis and made just the right tweaks and alterations to accommodate an all-new truck platform. Holding true to the world-renowned XRay quality, the end result of the new truck will easily have the most scrutinizing truggy purist drooling. Get ready, because the XT8 is quite possibly the most lavish truck you will ever see in your life.







# TEST DRIVE XRAY XT8



## Suspension.

As you would expect out of any competition-level truggy, the XT8 features all the standard features of the modern truggies, and then some! Super-long suspension arms have been fitted to the truck for the best overall performance. The arms were also designed to be as thin as possible without sacrificing durability. The reason for the slimmer design, according to XRay, is to allow the arm to flex and increase traction. But fear not, the arm retains all the necessary reinforcement in the important areas.

Both front and rear towers provide an obscene number of shock mounting positions for the hard-coated aluminum big-bore shocks. If Swiss cheese could be jealous... The kit also includes two different style shock pistons (standard straight hole or tapered hole) in 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5mm openings.

**Drivetrain.** For optimal weight distribution, the center differential has been offset to allow the engine to sit closer to the centerline. As a result, the center driveshafts are angled slightly to accommodate the engine placement. Also, the spur gear tooth count has been cut down, thanks to the 3.69:1 internal ratio. By doing so, XRay was able to place the center differential lower in the

chassis while reducing some of that rotating mass.

XRay also claims to have the lightest drivetrain in the world sitting in the XT8. Using their "top secret" spring steel, rotational weight has been reduced on the driveshafts, outdrives, and the diffs.

**Steering.** The XT8 makes use of the dual-bellcrank, adjustable servo saver system. Ball bearings support the bellcranks on both the top and bottom of the steering posts. Ackerman and bump steer adjustments are made available in the steering setup, which is helpful because the kit settings for bump steer seem odd. (This will be tinkered with later.)

Throughout the suspension, XRay has also incorporated their eccentric bushings, which allows caster and antisquat changes without having to change any major parts.

**Chassis.** When I used to roller skate back in the day, Swiss bearings were the bearings to have because of their high quality, smooth, free-spinning nature. Of course, there were also Swiss Army knives, Swiss watches, oh, and Swiss chocolate. Mmmm, delish! The point is,





Swiss quality has been nothing short of first-rate. Having been exposed to that Swiss quality, it delights me that the XT8's chassis is, in fact, crafted from high quality Swiss metal as well—7075 T6 aluminum to be specific. What does that mean? To be perfectly honest, I have absolutely no idea; I'm not exactly a metal specialist. But what I can tell you is the quality of the chassis and all the XT8's aluminum is superb.

The layout is also a little different from the typical truggy. It's

subtle in appearance, but makes a big difference in the truck's handling. If you haven't already noticed, the chassis is a little narrower than most. This is because the fuel tank and the engine both sit closer to the centerline of the chassis for optimal side-to-side weight distribution. The electronics have also been tucked in to get the weight closer to the centerline, all of which wraps around the offset center diff and angled driveshafts.



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## Performance Testing

To get a good feel for the truck, I drove out to Ontario, California, home of Revelation Raceway, to test the XT8. The track had been rebuilt with a lengthy 200-foot long straightaway. It rained the night before, so the dirt was still pretty muddy in the morning. With nothing to do but twiddle my thumbs, I opted to tinker on the truck, just to make it feel like I was being productive. After several hours of waiting for the track to dry, I decided to give it a shot and see just how bad it was. Most of the track was dry, but one section right before the straight was a complete mud bog. So much so that the truck sank into the mud on throttle and had the XT8 literally crawling out before pulling itself out onto the drier straightaway surface. Having run only three laps, the next two hours were spent cleaning mud out of every crevice of the truck. Not fun.

When the dirt had dried a little more, I was finally able to get a good run out of the XT8. The box stock setup actually isn't too far off for Revelation's track. The truck's initial turn-in is aggressive but tapers off toward the middle of the turn. At the exit, the truck has a tendency to push to the outside. But given enough throttle, the truck will step its rear end out and get the truck shooting into the next corner. In some of the driest corners, the truck just felt like a drift car, where it would just slide into the turn totally sideways. It's fun, but not the fastest way to get around a turn.

In the air, the XT8 jumps very, very flat and easily corrects itself with little throttle and brake input. But after the first big jump, the truck handled differently. It veered to one side, left turns were inconsistent, and it slapped on landings. Curious what went wrong, I brought the truck in.

Some disassembly revealed that the right rear shock piston had snapped in half. Fortunately, extra pistons were included in the kit, so it was a quick, painless fix. I know XRay had issues with their pistons in the past, but they should have fixed it by now. This one may have been a bum piston. Several minutes back out on the track, a similar issue reoccurred. Only this time, the washer underneath the piston cracked in half, and the shock shaft went through the piston itself. This happened to both the rear shocks and by this point, I was out of extra 1.5 pistons. The washers were replaced with Associated washers and I resorted to using the 1.5 taper hole pistons. The pistons were set up so the shock would rebound faster than it would compress, but on the track, the difference is very subtle. In fact, it still felt like the suspension could have been set up a little softer. Unfortunately, the day was over so I took the truck home and prepped for the next day.

The conditions of day two at Revelation were much more suitable. The sun shone, the track was dry, and I was finally able to work on the truck without shivering. Shock issues seemed to have been resolved, but on



## TEST SETUP

### Setup We Used:

Caster.....	17 deg.
Camber.....	-2 deg. ft, -3 deg. rr
Roll Center ....	Kit setting ft, bottom inside rr
Kickup .....	Kit setting
Toe .....	-1 deg. ft, 3 deg. rr
Antisquat .....	Kit setting
Diff oil.....	7000 ft, 10,000 ctr, 3,000 rr.
Shock oil .....	600 ft, 500 rr.
Shock piston.....	1.5 ft, 1.5 taper hole rr.
Preload .....	15mm, 20mm
Shock position .....	Kit settings
Sway bar .....	Kit settings
Brake bias .....	50/50

**Test Track:** Revelation Raceway

**Track Conditions:** Prepared track

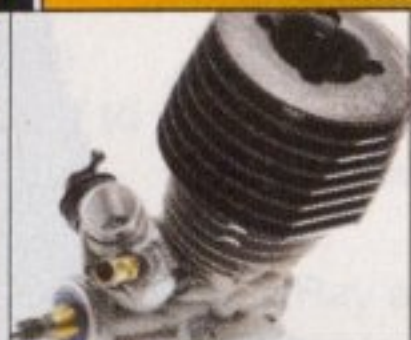
## TEST EQUIPMENT



**Radio:** Futaba 3PK (#LWR817, \$350)



**Servos:** St. Hobbico CS170 (\$90). Th. Hitec HSC5997TG (\$120)



**Engine:** Werks TL21B3 Pro (\$250)



**Pipe:** Werks 2013 (#WRX6658C, \$100)



**Battery:** Racer's Edge 1600 (#RCE5088, \$30)



**Fuel:** Werks 30% (#WRX60 30, \$23)



**Tires:** Werks Lugz (#WRX7110R200, \$25)



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that day the truck was being tested with thinner oil in the rear, to keep it from skipping around in the rough parts. Several other changes over the course of the day included the caster angle, rear diff oil, rear camber angle, rear roll center, preload, and a lengthened wheelbase. Needless to say, the truck was gradually getting dialed in to the track.

The caster change calmed the truck down immensely, smoothing out the overall steering response. And the changes to the rear end planted the truck down much better in many of the corners. In the dusty, dry dirt, the truck was still loose, but in the areas where the track was watered, the truck hooked up and jammed around the infield. The XT8 is a very, very good handling truck and it only got better as changes were made throughout testing.

## What Did We Like?

I personally love the quality, the handling, the ease of tuning, and the overall elegance and luxurious look and feel of the chassis. XRAY has got a pretty darn good setup with their first outing on this platform.

## What Would We Change?

Most of the changes have already been done, all of which are in setup. But one major change that stands out is the shock piston situation. I would like to think that maybe we just got a bad run on the plastic and the washers, but realistically, there may be others who will encounter the same problem. A change in the materials to something less fragile would be good.

## Conclusion

The XT8 is fast, it handles well, and it circles the track like an Olympic runner on steroids. Conversely, the truck still has that new-kid-on-the-block mystique that has you somewhat skeptical of its capabilities. I know I certainly was. I mean, what kind of truck has to knock off Pro-Line for a body and tires? But after the hands-on time with the truck, I was pleasantly surprised with its performance, in spite of the shock dilemma, and began to really, really like the truck. It just takes a little longer to get the truck dialed in. For a company with absolutely no prior experience with truggies, XRay certainly did a good job on their first attempt. The best thing about the truck is that the XT8 can only get better as it progresses and earns its credibility.

XRay has a fantastic truck that will quickly stand up to the likes of any Kyosho, Mugen, Losi or any other competition truggy out there. The XT8's performance is outstanding—it drives like it's got a point to prove,

and its elegance and quality will have you wanting to clean the truck after every run just to watch it gleam in the light. The XT8 is an awesome machine that I would recommend to anyone with chassis tuning experience. □

## THE FINAL CALL

**Highs:** Excellent handling, lots of tuning capability, exceptional parts quality.

**Lows:** Brittle shock pistons, unimpressive tires.

**The Final Call:** The XT8 is a great truck with enough tuning options to make anyone's head spin. The quality is absolutely superb and the truck's performance on the track is even better. The XT8 will be a force to be reckoned with if you have the skills.

## ON THE OTHER HAND...

**Stephen:** Several of my friends own this truck and have allowed me to wheel their machines, and I drove Jason's test sled quite a bit as well, so I feel like I know the truck. Like all XRay vehicles, I'm impressed with the truck's fit, finish and parts quality. Spring steel outdrives, driveshafts, and high quality aluminum makes the truck one of the more durable, wear-ready platforms available. Just be prepared to spend some time tuning on the chassis, since there really isn't a strong "all around" setup that makes the truck feel good on every track. I've complained about XRay's billion chassis adjustments in the past, and I will again, only because 90 percent of the truggy racers out there will be overwhelmed with the number of available adjustments on this truck. If you're a guy who likes to tinker, fiddle with and fine-tune your ride, the XB8 is for you. Otherwise you may be better off with a simpler, less complicated truggy.

## SPECS

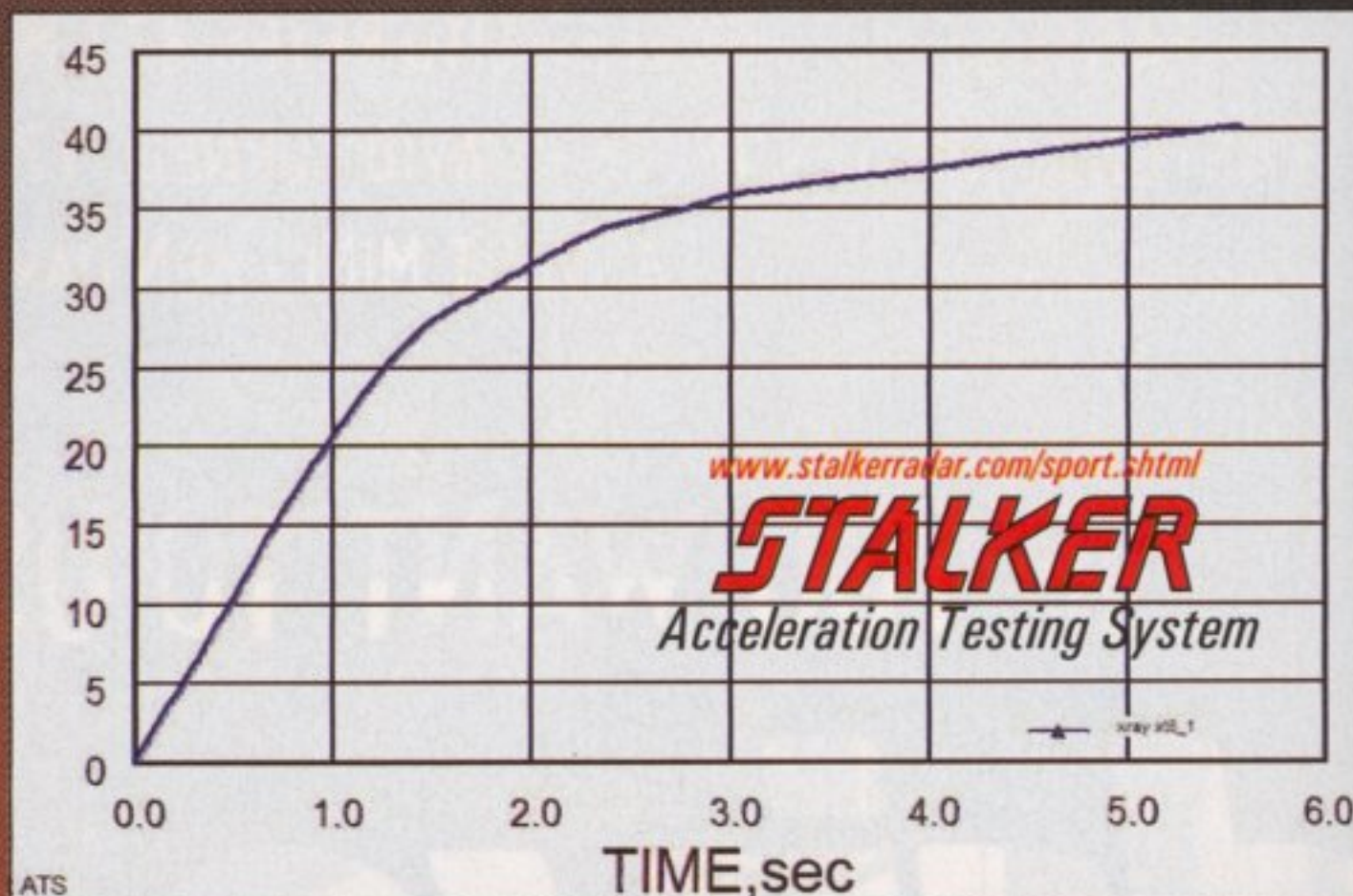
**Vehicle:** Xray XT8  
**Type:** 1/8-scale 4WD nitro truggy  
**Street Price:** \$600  
**Class Rivals:** Kyosho ST-RR, Team Losi 8ight T, Mugen Seiki MBX5T

## DIMENSIONS

**Width** .....16.92in. (430mm.)  
**Wheelbase** .....14.45in. (367mm.)  
**Length** .....22.05in. (560mm.)  
**Weight** .....139.4oz. (3,952g)  
**Ground clearance** .....1.77in. (45mm.)  
**Chassis:** Aluminum main deck, radio plate, plastic chassis braces.  
**Thickness** .....3mm.  
**Suspension** .....4 wheel independent, adjustable upper arms.  
**Damping** .....Oil filled, aluminum coil over shocks  
**Swaybars** .....2.4mm ft., 2.8mm rr.  
**Drivetrain** .....4WD, 3 differentials  
**Pinion/Spur** .....10/43  
**Final Gear Ratio** .....15.88:1  
**Differentials** .....6-gear oil filled differential  
**Bearings** .....rubber sealed

## PERFORMANCE DATA

**Zero to 100 feet** .....2.89 seconds  
**Zero to top speed** .....5.54 seconds  
**Stalker ATS verified Top Speed** .....40.2 mph



## SOURCES

• RC America, 167 Turtle Creek Boulevard Ste. C, Dallas, Texas 75027 • (214) 744-2400 [www.rcamerica.com](http://www.rcamerica.com)