

## NTRO TESTING

Following up from the main review of the Xray NT1 2009-spec, we took a leisurely drive down to the Cotswold track to complete our test and put the nitro tourer through its paces...

Early morning starts aren't 3 one of my favourite things in the world, so I like it in the summer when the sun shines well into the evening. It means that you haven't got to be up mega early just to make a practice day worthwhile. A few days earlier I had e-mailed the Cotswold Chairman to see whether the track would be open for practice on the following Saturday. The answer was a positive one and that he expected a few people to be down running cars so I arrived at the track at around lunchtime. I was expecting a mostly empty track with a few club guys racing around, but instead what I found were around 20 electric touring car drivers who had been there since the crack of dawn practicing for a National meeting that was to be held on the following weekend! This put an end to my hopes of a relaxed afternoon playing around with the NT1 2009-spec and instead the focus

shifted and now the priority was trying not to look stupid!

## **PREP WORK**

I had spent the evening beforehand running the engine in at home. This consisted of running half a dozen tanks through the engine at idle using a rich mixture to ensure that all of the internal engine components bedded in and seated properly. Ordinarily I would also run the car at low to medium speed for a few more tanks, but this was made difficult by the fact that the car requires a super smooth tarmac surface. With this in mind the first few tanks used on the track test were with the rich run-in carburettor settings. The car was really slow on pick-up and top end and was chucking out loads of smoke, but I wanted to be certain of not damaging a brand new engine!

For the first couple of runs with a rich engine, I focused on setting up

the clutch and two-speed. I had got the clutch setting fairly close on the bench at home, but running the car on track was required to achieve the optimal setting. Adjusting the clutch is really easy; it is a Centax-style design as seen on most of the current nitro on-road cars where there is a preload spring and nut arrangement that can be adjusted to make the clutch engage at the desired engine revs. Adjustment is made externally using a hole in the clutch bell. Despite having to stop the engine to do this, no disassembly is required thus making adjustments quick and easy to perform on the bench.

Setting of the two-speed is slightly less straightforward. There are two pairs of grub screws on the two, second gear fibre shoes. The assembly itself works in basically the same way as a 1:8 off-road clutch, except the spring preload and the gap between the shoes and bell can be adjusted without the need to change any parts. A good base setting for the clutch gap was relatively simple to achieve. I followed the instruction manual and set the two grub screws so that they were flush with the top surface of the shoe.

The spring preload setting was more difficult to determine, and really required running of the car on track as it is difficult to hear when the second gear is engaging when the car is on the bench. Luckily there was plenty of prospective help on hand and Mark Wallace offered to lend a hand as he had some experience of preparing 1:10 nitro cars. In the end it didn't take us long to get our heads around it and although the settings we achieved were far from optimal, they were perfectly good enough to run the car on track at a reasonable pace.

I tweaked all three jets on the carb as there are low, mid and high





Our tester completed many laps around the track as can be seen from the dirt build-up on the chassis and body (, ter

Nosram VTEC foams were fitted to the NT1 2009-spec for testing at the Cotswold track at Kemble

Xray's own team driver Elliott Harper got to put our review car to the test and complimented us on set-up. More time would have allowed us to play with the engine settings to achieve ultimate pace







The two-speed unit works like a centrifugal clutch. The point of engagement can be adjusted using an allen key shown bottom right



TEST SESSION

The first few runs gave the driver plenty of feedback and confidence

We made sure that the Sirio engine was set to be a little rich to complete the break-in on track



jets on the Sirio carb just to make things even more complex! The idle was also reduced by a small amount as the car was revving a bit too high when on the bench and I felt this might have caused the car to 'run on' a bit on corner entry.

The first few runs left me with a very positive initial impression of the car. The out-of-the-box settings made for a safe and forgiving car to drive and at no point was I concerned that it would bite me when I wasn't expecting it. For a competitive race situation I would have attempted to dial in some more front-end bite and mid-corner rotation, but my limited knowledge and experience with nitro cars suggests that they tend to be slightly less responsive and nimble than their electric counterparts anyway. The car was easy to place on the line and the grip from the Nosram VTEC tyres remained consistent throughout.

## **WORLD CLASS**

I took my camera along to the track test to get some on track snaps of the NT1 '09, but in my infinite wisdom I hadn't accounted for the fact that I wouldn't be able to use the camera at the same time as driving the car! Luckily there was a plethora of talent on hand, which included several European and Worlds Championship A finalists and even a World Champion! One of the aforementioned happened to be Elliott Harper, so I handed my transmitter to Elliott for one of the runs, which enabled me to get some action shots of the car. Elliott commented on the cars good lateral balance and how easy it was to drive, but also stressed that Xray team driver Alex Hagberg's own NT1 that he had driven felt both faster on the straights and more nimble in the corners. I wasn't surprised by this, as our car was still running a bit on the rich side and had the kit set-up. Despite this, Elliott was still able to match the lap times achieved by some respected electric TC drivers.

Due to its technical and somewhat complex features, I wouldn't recommend the NT1 2009-spec as a beginner's choice. However, the car is aimed at the highest level of competition so isn't intended for novices anyway. Some experience with nitro models and a sound technical understanding is all that I basically have and I experienced no real issues with building or running the car.

It is quite surprising for me that this class isn't more popular in the UK. Numbers at the Nationals are steady but could be higher, which isn't what I'd expect for a class where the cars are competitive and nice to drive straight from the box with no modifications. Perhaps the initial set-up cost is what puts people off? Having said that, they aren't really any different to 1:8 off-road, which is massive in the UK. Maybe people just prefer mud and jumps to tarmac, or perhaps the small number of suitable on-road tracks in the UK steers people more towards off-road?

What I can take away from my day was that there was little doubt that the set-up could be improved upon, but overall the test yielded positive results and I left the track with a smile on my face.



( ter





A powerful Sirio .12 Evo 2 engine was used along with matching pipe. Although this was set a little rich, it performed very well

The two-speed fitted to the chassis. Access to the adjusting screw is made through the alloy body of the unit located behind the plastic spur gears

Here you can see the Centax-style clutch with the bell removed. The nut at the front determines the biting point





Left: Nosram VTEC foam tyres -before the long test session



## CONTACT:

RC Disco Tournament Way Ashby de la Zouch Leicestershire LE65 2UU

E-mail: sales@rcdisco.com Website: www.rcdisco.com www.teamxray.com