

HM Review

Brandon Wright

Airtronics M11

Here's the super radio from an industry leader in competition-level air and surface RC system design and manufacturing.



System Features

- FM frequency modulation
- 27 or 75 mHz operation
- LCD programming screen
- Dry, NiMH or NiCD capable
- DSC standard
- 30 model memory with 12-character naming

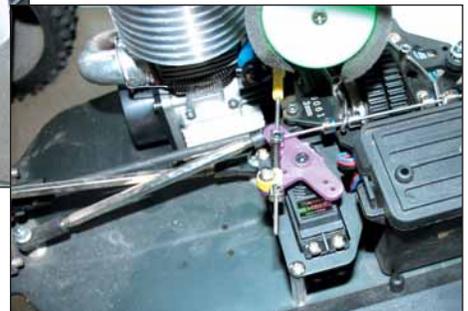
Programming

- Dual rate steering
- End point adjust
- Expo with tweak
- Anti-lock braking
- Traction control
- Selectable audio tones
- Vibration Alarm
- Trim assignment and more

The latest addition to the Airtronics lineup of surface radio systems is the M11, the next generation of their very popular and highly successful M8. The new M11 has many upgraded features and functions from the M8. The first things I noticed were the much larger LCD screen and the comfortable feel of the radio. Most of the the buttons remain the same, and the menu navigation is also unchanged. These characteristics make the transition from the M8 to the M11 that much easier for drivers, which is helpful.



There are four ways to get the new M11. It comes as an FM transmitter/receiver (TX/RX) combination on 27mHz with two 102Z servos, an FM TX/RX combo on 75 mHz with two 102Z servos, and as an FM TX/RX only combination on 27mHz or 75mHz. I used the 27mHz set



For testing the M11 for Hobby Merchandiser, Brandon wright chose the Airtronics 94360Z High Torque Digital Servo with aluminum heat sink for steering, and an Airtronics 94758Z High Torque Digital Servo for throttle.

with 102Z servos, although I conducted my driving tests with Airtronics 94360Z and 94758Z High Torque Digital Servos in a large-scale off-road buggy. The M11's packaging is top notch, and it includes all the necessary hardware and servo horns. Also included are a switch harness with the Z-style connector and a AA battery holder for the receiver pack.

If customers are apprehensive about operating an advanced computer radio, feel confident that the instruction manual is one of the best I have ever seen. It's very well illustrated and clearly written, with step-by-step instructions and pictures for every aspect of the programming process. That manual is one of the most helpful features of the whole M11 package because it makes learning and programming the radio a breeze. I had my first model set up and ready to go in no more than 15 minutes after starting to learn it.

Compared to the M8, some of the improved features on the M11 are the much larger screen, which can be backlit in either blue or white at the user's discretion. The backlighting shuts off a few seconds after using any program-



Despite its four-channel capability, Airtronics receiver is able to fit into common two-channel locations.

ming buttons. The M11's screen has no printed words, just a cursor that moves around. The entire screen is blank when powered down, a feature that I really like. It makes programming easier since you can see the menu titles better, and using less space on the screen gives users a larger viewing area for the programming menus.

The M11 is a four-channel transmitter when selected from the two- or four-channel menu option. That's a great new feature for people running monster trucks with multiple steering or separate brake servos, or boats with more than just a throttle and rudder to push around. It's also nice for quarter- or fifth-scale racers who often use multiple steering and brake servos.

Want more? Thirty model memory may sound like overkill, but I know that it will come in handy for drivers like me, who have several cars and trucks, and more always on the way. Many of the people who want a radio of this caliber have several vehicles in their stables, and the high memory count can't hurt to have on hand.

In the hand is important, too, and the M11 has an elastomer handle that gives a soft and slip-free grip. A trim button on the front of the handle can be assigned to any function in the radio needing a switch for activation. Two buttons under the screen are also assignable for Timer, Anti Lock or any other function that might benefit from easy access. Several built-in timers are available, and can be set to run lap times, overall time or anything else. A new feature there is the addition of a vibrating function you can assign to the timers instead of audible noises. You can also select several different sounds to identify one timer from another.

The M11 transmitter case can be easily changed from right-hand to left-hand operation, and the spring tension is also adjustable. The many but-



It all works. The M11 is an outstanding surface RC system, able to deliver anything today's competition racer needs.

tons are assignable, and each one can control up to three functions. All active mixes are displayed in the right-hand side of the screen; you can see what is and is not active with a quick glance. The M11 has several new programming features in addition to Direct Servo Connect. DSC lets you set your vehicle up without transmitting a signal, great when someone shares your channel at a race.

Here are some of the additional M11 features not found on most other radios. You can reduce the speed of the steering and throttle servos to suit your driving style. One of my trucks has overly effective brakes, and by using the adjustable speed reduction feature, I've eliminated my overpowering brakes and made the vehicle much easier to drive fast, and turn faster lap times.



M11's LCD readouts are large. Once you know what to look for, they're easily visible at a quick glance.

The M11's Traction Control works a lot like the Anti Lock in reverse. I found it to be very helpful with my over-powered brushless mini truck. I could use the power more effectively and not spin out or flip over so easily.

My M11 got a lot of attention at the track. Everyone wanted to try it and check out all the new functions. The M11 performed flawlessly. I won the first race I ran with it, and all the great features really helped to shave my lap times. The Anti-Lock feature works unbelievably well, and

the Traction Control is right up there, too. The feel of the radio is perfect as far as I'm concerned, and the buttons and trims are placed for easy access on the fly. Fit and finish of the radio are outstanding.

Whether you're a hardcore racer or a backyard basher, Airtronics has their ultimate radio waiting for you. For additional information about the new M11, see the ad on page 57, or call Airtronics, Inc. in Anaheim, California, at 714-978-1895. **HM**