

HM Review

Dennis Andreas

Duratrax 835B Buggy

This is not your grandma's Volkswagen.

Duratrax was there at the beginning of the RTR (Ready to Run) craze producing a touring car, a few buggies and a monster truck. Duratrax still has both nitro and electric vehicles in its lineup and they've now added the 1/8 835B Nitro 4WD 2.4GHz RTR Buggy.

The 835B is packaged nicely in a large windowed box with the accessories safely tucked below the vehicle. The included two-channel radio system is a basic Futaba brand 2.4 GHz system. The transmitter is standard in layout with the trims and reversing switches all in easy reach.

The designers did go an additional step and protected the trim controls on the top of the transmitter with plastic stanchions between and on each side of the trims, thus protecting the trim controls from accidental rotation or damage. This is a nice feature rarely seen on a transmitter of this nature.

Batteries for the transmitter are not included so be sure to add a four-pack of AA's to the sale.

Looking the buggy over, one is immediately impressed. This is a beefy vehicle with a length of almost 20 inches, and one quickly notices that it includes many of the hop-up parts expected on costlier vehicles. While looking at the steering and suspension, there are additional



high end parts to be found. Big bore aluminum oil filled shocks, aluminum shock towers, aluminum axle carries and torsion bars are all included. What I like is Duratrax did not go overboard with machined aluminum. Too much metal in a suspension system can lead to massive damage as a result of an unplanned impact.

The parts that need to flex or at times need to be sacrificial to avoid extreme damage are made from a thick glass filled nylon composite material. These parts include items like the control arms and tie rod ends. Duratrax has even included a five-cell NiMH 1300mAh receiver battery and wall charger.

Off-the-shelf vehicles generally include a dry-cell type of receiver battery and one of the first items those of us who run surface vehicles immediately upgrade to is to a battery pack of this configuration. This is done not only for power, but also for steering speed.

In addition to the nickel battery Duratrax has installed an SX-500 Digital High-Torque Metal Gear Steering Servo. Between the five-cell battery and SX500 servo, steering control is mighty crisp.

The installed motor is the proven Super Tigre G-27SX, which is coupled with an aluminum tuned pipe. The motor is fed by a large 125cc fuel tank that is accessi-

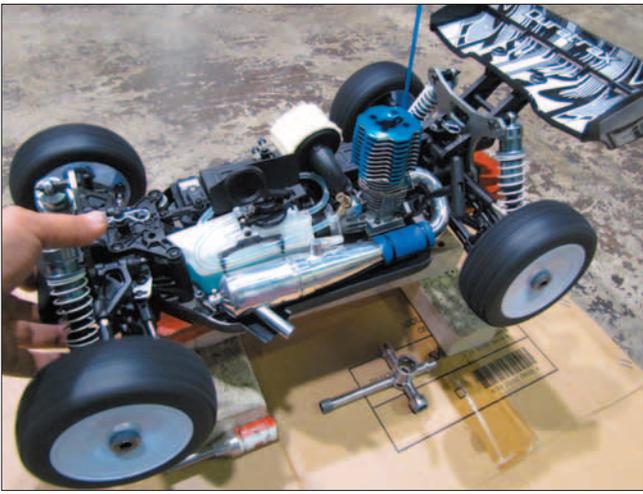


Left: Power is supplied by a reliable SuperTiger G-27 CX glow motor. Right: The suspension is plenty beefy, and it could take any sort of abuse, accidental, or intentional, thrown its way.



Features

- Ready to run with everything needed in one box.
- Comes with a Futaba brand two-channel radio system.
- Includes a five-cell rechargeable chassis battery.
- The suspension is equipped with massive oil-filled shocks.
- The 835B handled extreme abuse with no damage.



All glow motors require a break-in period prior to aggressive running and the 835B is no different.

ble with the body on, and this allows for non-stop racing action. To help shed heat and keep everything straight and aligned, the motor is mounted to a thick, 3.25mm, chassis plate. As an added detail all of the screws located on the bottom of the chassis are counter-sunk and flush with the surface. What this means is no worn heads to deal with at repair time. All the hardware is hex-head metric, far better than the soft JIS (Japanese Industrial Standard) screws usually provided on RTR vehicles.

Enough with the spec's, it's time to get the buggy going. While the receiver battery is charging, go over the buggy completely. Check for any loose or missing hardware, something as simple as a loose or missing steering screw can

make for an exciting albeit short first run. Like all glow powered models there is a procedure to be followed during initial startup. Be certain to stress to the purchaser to read and follow the guidelines in the manual. What is done on the initial startup of an engine will affect its performance for the rest of its life.

Now that the motor has had several short runs and cool down periods to get everything seated, it's time to pull the trigger and see exactly how the Duratrax buggy performs. For the evaluation, other than setting the high speed and low speed needles, on the engine, and centering the transmitter steering trims, the 835 was left exactly as it comes out of the box.



The flying part of the evaluation consisted of jumping the buggy by using a homemade wooden ramp.

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Not by my choice, but under the direction of this magazine's editor, even when using rather bland 15% nitro fuel this thing gets up and goes.

Acceleration is brisk and top speed is estimated to be slightly over 45mph on flat surfaces. A few of my friends had gathered and we put together a technical course on the packed dirt and gravel parking lot the 835B was being driven on. Maybe the term technical course is a bit of a stretch. The most scientific

part of the evaluation seemed to include lots of sliding donuts with massive amounts of dust and rocks flying about. Have I mentioned we had a good time? The 835B is an absolute riot to drive, and it can take a ridiculous amount of abuse, both accidental and admittedly intentional. Before I knew it, we had gone through a half gallon of fuel, and the sun was starting to set. It was time to call it a day.

The true test of any vehicles ruggedness is determined back at the shop. I'm pleased to report there were no broken parts after the testing. The way the body fits and the angle of the tuned pipe are great at keeping oil and goo out of the chassis. The steering servo arm jumped a spline, but that's minor. All that was needed was some compressed air to clean out the debris from the nooks of the chassis. Once



As evidenced by the mud and dirt streaks, the 835B was not babied at all during the evaluation.

the body was cleaned with some window cleaner and warm water, the Duratrax 835B was ready for another day, passing all of the tests (more like abuse) that it could be put through.

My overall impression of the 835B is that Duratrax has hit the mark both in price and performance. The vehicle comes with a powerful engine that starts consistently. At one point the tank was continuously filled for a non-stop run that was over 40 minutes long. The

Duratrax 835B seems slightly heavy, but it is big and this is an attribute that helps keep the buggy in control. Let's face it, you can't steer it if the wheels aren't on the ground.

The 835B is a vehicle worth keeping in inventory, and one to definitely recommend to the glow buggy enthusiast, regardless if he's new to the sport, or an experienced driver. As dealers we are always looking for add-on sales beyond the fuel and starting battery, so don't forget to offer your customers a Duratrax Hex Driver kit for maintenance. As with any radio control vehicle it is necessary to go over the entire car after each running session to tighten any loose hardware.

The bottom line is this buggy is a winner. Like all Duratrax products the 835B is available exclusively through

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