

Ed Rogala

# R/C Report

## ARRMA Granite

**A Monster truck with menacing features and great performance.**

Whoever invented the first Monster Truck probably never imagined that someday this genre of vehicles would ever be a popular radio control vehicle category. R/C vehicles have developed into a worldwide activity and are a staple product in hobby retail stores in virtually every developed country in the world. Part of the appeal of R/C vehicles is their intrinsic ability to not only be easily controlled, but a human's fascination with anything that mounts wheels.

The ARRMA Granite is a typical example of what a monster truck enthusiast would expect in such a vehicle, yet offers some very revolutionary, almost frightening features that will attract consumers. Fans of this vehicle type are what we commonly call "bashers" and enjoy doing nothing more than driving these monster vehicles around, happily bashing — dare I suggest crashing — these over-sized vehicles in any number of terrain settings.

This is a good sized vehicle, and it is quickly apparent when one first views the box, which measures 21 inches long, 8.5 inches deep and 14 inches wide. The box features two Granite vehicles on the main panel, clearly showing the unique metal chassis along with the menacing looking front grille. The vehicle is photographed and presented in a variety of running poses and conveys the idea that the Granite has presence and power. The remainder of the carton calls out and illustrates the rest of the features and attributes the product offers the consumer. I am not a big fan of today's multi-lingual packaging protocol, but in the case of the Granite, the use of a single color and uniformly sized fonts, does a good job of minimizing this all too prevalent practice.



Everything needed to get the Granite up and running is supplied except for the batteries and charger. A 7.2V 1500 mAh battery pack is specified and 4 AA alkaline batteries will be required to power the transmitter. There is a nice set of metric hex wrenches and a cross wrench. Plastic pre-load spacers for the shocks are also included along with two spare steering servo arms.

The instruction manual is referred to as a "Quick Start Guide". It is rudimentary and only eight pages long. On the front of the Quick Start Guide, users are directed to a web-site where, after providing the serial number of the product and filling out a form that collects information

from the consumer, he can download a complete manual. Doing so provides the end user with a six page owner's manual for the ATX300 transmitter and a 14 page owner's manual for the Granite truck and chassis. The serial number is located in two places, a pressure sensitive label attached to the bottom of the chassis and on

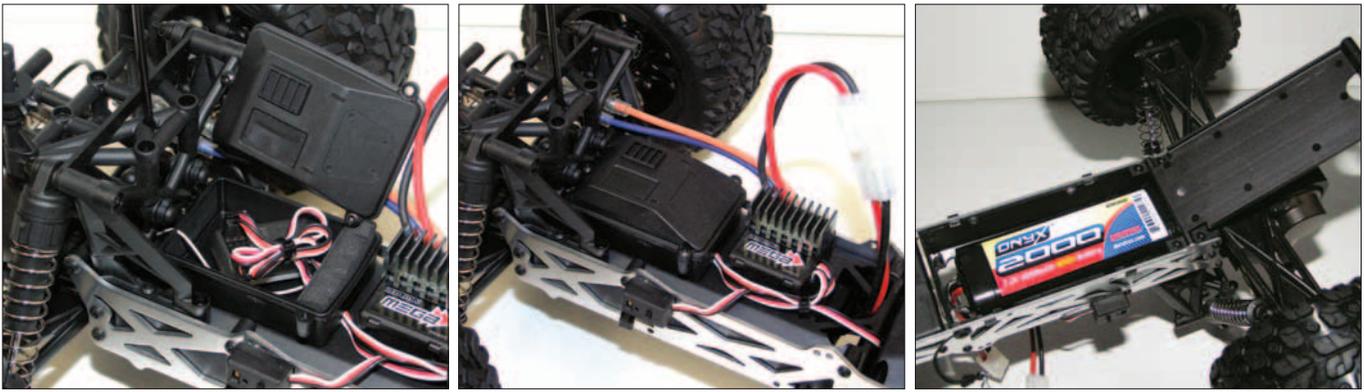


Left: All of the components are attached to the TVP (Twin Vertical Plate) chassis which is formed from 2mm thick stamped aluminum. Right: The ATX300 transmitter is brightly colored and features a steering wheel that can be adjusted in six positions for either right or left handed users.



the outside of the carton next to UPC label.

Dealers may wish to share this information with their customers to alleviate confusion. While we all understand the cost saving benefit associated with not having to print the instruction manual, dealers may prefer to offer this as a service before the customer leaves your store, it will definitely provide a positive impression.



*Left to Right: The receiver is housed in a box designed to keep this valuable component safe. The on-off switch is located on the side of the chassis and can be reached without removing the body. The quick-change battery compartment is accessed from the underside.*

Everyone that buys a Granite will need a 7.2V 1500 mAh NiMH battery pack, charger and 4 AA batteries. To make this decision easier, The Duratrax Power Kit for RTR Vehicles #DTXP4615 is the ideal add-on sale to suggest to the purchaser. Be sure to locate this next to your Duratrax vehicles in inventory.

Upon removing the Granite from the box, one of the most striking features noticed is the bold and menacing looking grille. The styling of the body is pleasing to the eye and the attractive paint scheme gives the Granite presence, sort of a cross between several full-scale pickup style monster trucks.

All of ARRMA's vehicles are built around what is referred to as a TVP (Twin Vertical Plate) chassis. Formed from .080in or 2mm thick stamped aluminum, this basic frame is what all of the various chassis components are attached to. There is an additional aluminum front skid plate on the bottom of the chassis offering protection from dings.

The shocks are oil-filled and feature performance springs. There are also four pre-load shock spacers that will allow a certain degree of adjustment. The dog-bones are metal and metal turnbuckles allow for chassis tuning. The brushed motor is mated to the all-metal transmission and connects to the fluid filled differential. The slipper clutch is easily accessible for adjustment should this be necessary. The massive tires, five inches in diameter and 2.5 inches wide, are referred to as dBoots Copperhead tires and feature eye-catching chrome rims. Ball bearings are standard on all axles as well as the transmission and differential. Again, from the TVP chassis plates and sturdy shock and substantial shock towers, this Monster Truck definitely features tough construction.

The receiver is housed in a splash-proof, dust-proof case that features a rubber gasket to ensure this valuable component stays safe and dry. The ESC is called a MEGA waterproof brushed model, and it is designed for use with ARRMA brushed motors. It comes preset for use with

7.2V NiMH batteries, but the downloaded manual includes a very thorough section that describes in detail how the end user can change settings for 7.2V LiPo and 6.6V LiFe batteries along with explaining how to program the ESC for the control of reverse speed, initial acceleration and braking.

A very thoughtful feature is the incorporation of a quick-change battery hatch located on the bottom of the chassis. This allows the chassis batteries to be removed without having to remove the truck body, a nice touch.

The rest of the chassis components are sturdily constructed and feature ARRMA's two-year warranty protection, a strong selling point. ARRMA has engineered its products so that 47 percent of the replacement parts are interchangeable throughout the line. This thoughtful engineering process will allow dealers to minimize the amount

of skus needed to service the brand, a very dealer-friendly move on ARRMA's part.

The ATX300 transmitter is completely different from any other entry level transmitter you've seen or sold before. Starting with the futuristic looking design, and utilizing some unique colors, the ATX300 is molded in a gun metal appearing plastic and has yellow highlights. The rubberized palm guard on the back of the transmitter fits the palm of one's hand nicely and provides a cushioned feel. The yellow on-off switch is easily



*The dBoot Copperhead tires provide plenty of grip and provide rapid acceleration on most surfaces.*

accessed with a thumb and the yellow LED indicating power is on is bright and easy to see.

There are digital trim buttons for the steering and throttle that beep when pushed. There is a rotating wheel just ahead of the throttle trigger which adjusts steering rate and throw. The steering wheel can be adjusted with a series of six preset stops that allow the entire wheel to be rotated from the right side of the transmitter to the left side. This gives consumers the option to switch to the mode that feels most comfortable — you can sell this to a "righty" or a "lefty". This is a feature never before available on an entry level surface transmitter. Make sure you point this out to

prospective customers.

The Granite was initially run at a local playground that is located next to a small lake. This provided the opportunity to operate on gravel, grass and in sand all at one location. Acceleration is brisk and the tires really grab the running surface. The suspension handled the various surfaces with no difficulty at all. There is minimal body roll and the dampening action of the shocks was great. The suspension travel definitely adapted to these various surfaces and the Granite was a joy to run. Later, on pavement, the braking action of the ESC is equally as impressive. The chrome rims really add to the eye-appeal of this monster truck and I cannot say enough about how well the dBoots Copperhead tires grabbed any surface the vehicle was operated on.



The suspension is able to articulate and keep the tires in contact with the surface in the roughest of conditions.

Run times on a freshly charged 1500 mAh and 2000 mAh packs averaged from 5 to 6 minutes. After the battery runs down, the ESC will shut the motor off to prevent the components from getting overheated. The battery packs were noticeably warm after aggressive running and the convenient battery hatch located on the underside of the chassis that allows for quick battery removal and replacement was really appreciated.

The ARRMA Granite is a solid offering. The features make for a very appealing overall package. The aluminum TVP chassis and robustness of the running gear will be acceptable to novices and experienced users alike. The ergonomically designed transmitter with its multiple adjusting options is unique. The Granite is loaded with cool features, such as the TVP chassis, waterproof ESC, cool

looking wheels and easy-access battery hatch and this shows much thought was given to the design. It is not another "me-too" monster truck.

The decision to not include the battery and charger allowed ARRMA to provide more value-added features in this product, plus it provides the retailer an opportunity to make some nice additional sales on important stuff like batteries and charging options.

There are a variety of after-market parts such as pinions and spur gears, which allow the purchasers the ability to upgrade as their skills progress. Take a serious look at this product, you will be delighting your customers by doing so.

The entire line of ARRMA products is available exclusively through Great Planes Distributors. **HM**

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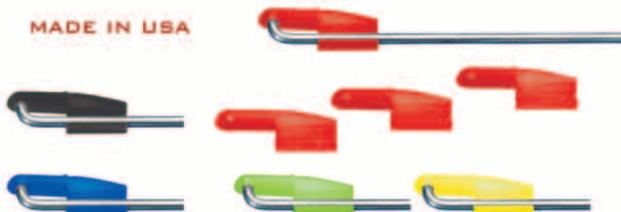
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