

BIG WHEELS = BIG FUN!

NIGEL McSTAY REVIEWS THE ECONOMICALLY PRICED 'ENTRY LEVEL' TRUCK FROM TRAXXAS



After my first attempt at building a radio controlled model a few months ago, an introduction which really whetted my appetite for another go, my answer was an immediate "You bet!" when I was asked if I'd like another Truck to build. Being of the 'full 1/10 scale' type, with large wheels and tyres and more than enough ground clearance to match, I was looking forward to having some fun with the Rustler on the building site near my house. I wasn't to be disappointed!

A Lot Of Truck For The Money!

I was quite surprised to find out what the Rustler's price was after taking a look at the kit's contents: The smart moulded chassis and nicely moulded polycarbonate bodyshell, plus the massive 'Truck' wheels and tyres, four 'coil over oil' shocks, 540 motor and rotary speed controller, gave me the distinct impression that it was pretty good value for money. It was going to be interesting to see if my impression was correct...

The large construction booklet accompanying the kit is very clear, with more than adequate photographs and written instructions to follow, set out in the correct order. The booklet has a printed 'rule' at the bottom of every page to help the builder identify correctly the different sized screws. I sorted them all out before I began building, then I put each of the different sizes in empty yoghurt containers and wrote the screw sizes on them with a felt tip pen, allowing me to select screws as specified in the booklet very quickly (not that there are really that many of them!).

The Rustler was very different to the Tamiya Chevy that introduced me to r/c cars, but the instructions were just as simple to follow, and with a simple transmission due to the Rustler being 2wd, it was easy and quick to build. The rear suspension was very different, for me at least, and once it was assembled I began to

Traxxas RUSTLER



BIG WHEELS = BIG FUN!

The steering servo mounts to the upper chassis brace, both easily removable for maintenance should it be required.

The rotary speed controller is well up to coping with the job, and is situated well out of harms way.

The moulded, fixed length top links give just the right camber angle. The Traxxas shock, oil and spring combination gives good handling on even the roughest surface.

realise just how big the Rustler was going to be, and I still had those big wheels and tyres to put on, but there was still quite a bit to do before they went on. Even as a virtual novice I got the impression that the rear suspension was very strong, and I could see even at this early stage that the Rustler wasn't going to be stopped easily!

The front suspension was very straightforward to assemble, with very much the same solid design as the rear, the plain 5 x 8mm oilite bushings for the two steering blocks as well as the strong camber links finishing off the solid front suspension very well. The next stage was the part of building a car I've discovered I like doing the best; building and setting up the shocks, and with this kit you get long front shocks and XXtra long shocks for the rear, allowing the large amounts of suspension travel necessary with this type of machine. All four shocks are oil filled, are leak free with their double O-rings and plastic seals, and the shock

caps are fitted with thin rubber diaphragms. Their action is super smooth, and because the Rustler is still only the second kit I've ever built, I was very pleased when the Editor congratulated me on their action.

Simply following the instructions allowed me to put the rolling chassis together in one Saturday afternoon, without any problems at all, and without having to trim anything to make it fit.

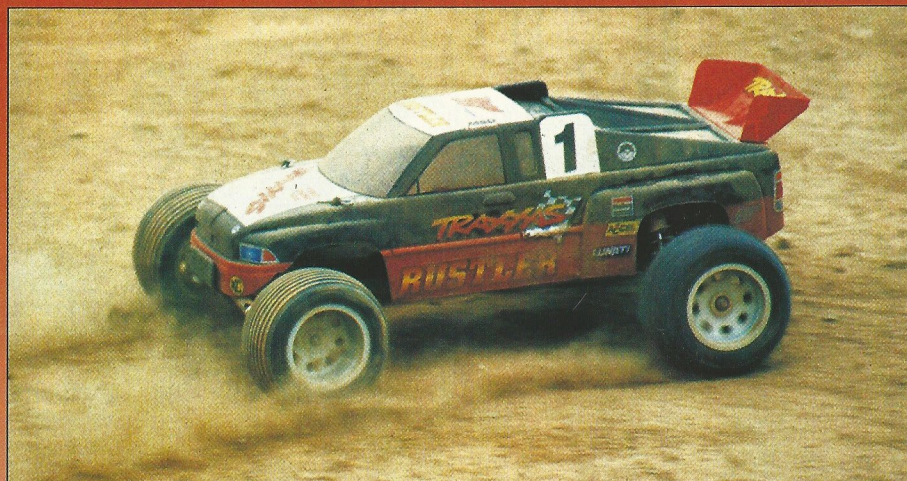
Installing The Running Gear

The steering servo is attached to the underside of the chassis bracing plate, which when fitted to the main chassis protects the servo and steering assembly when driving the Rustler through mud and puddles. The throttle servo is also very neatly

The Rustler features 'slider' type driveshafts that allow a large amount of suspension travel.

Left: Simple, uncluttered and very strong - in other words, just the job for beginners!

BIG WHEELS = BIG FUN!



The moulded 'U' shaped chassis means the heavy battery pack sits low down, whilst the raised sides give good ground clearance.

positioned behind the battery pack, with the speed controller sitting on top of the servo, the speed controller's wires neatly kept in place and threaded through the rear shock tower.

I mounted the receiver with velcro to enable me to drop it in and take it out a lot easier, a tip given to me by Jonty the Ed, so I don't have to buy a new one or keep cleaning double sided tape off when I want to put my radio in my other car. Next came a part that I do enjoy, putting the wheels on! Now the Rustler was really looking the business, I couldn't wait to get it on a bit of rough ground to try it out, but I had to be patient because I still hadn't painted the bodyshell (Thinks: I must get my girlfriend interested in doing this!).

The Last Lap

Rather than spraying the different colours, as I managed to do relatively successfully on my first bodyshell, I decided to brush paint the black and purple parts of the body shell, and to

spray the other two colours with some aerosol paint left over from my previous car. As you can see it didn't turn out too badly (well, I would say that wouldn't I?), but I must admit that I did cut out and apply some thin strips of Decatrim to cover up some minor blemishes. The sticker sheet that comes with the kit gives you plenty of choice of what colours to paint the shell, with the main stickers coming in two or three different colours. With a few RRC stickers added to the collection, it certainly looked the part!

The Building Site

What better place to test the Rustler than on a building site? I found every possible challenge to this mean looking monster that you could think of, and it certainly presented a challenge to lensman Peter Peacock! It was excellent fun spinning it around in the dust, but the real test was on much rougher ground, with which the Traxxas had no problem, jumping nicely out of holes, over piles of earth and

sand as well as bricks and other bits of rubble lying around. I was just so impressed, as were the young lads who had spotted the Rustler shooting about, so I soon had quite an audience. What a blast!

The Rustler coped with everything I threw at it, was very stable, and even when I did run into anything the front bumper and large squidgy tyres protected the bodyshell nicely.

As for speed, it was quite fast enough using the standard 540 motor because the area was very bumpy indeed, and it provided more than enough go using my 'sport' battery pack. As the Ed says, at my level of experience I'd just have a faster crash if I had a faster motor!

Why not 'Rustle' One Up?

The Traxxas Rustler is a must for the great majority of people, who like me, just want to have some laughs, either from jumping off kerbs or just 'giving it some' over rough ground. Having said that, the Rustler would (so I'm told) make a good 'Club' racing Truck.

It was simple to build from quality parts, and the good instructions make the Rustler a suitable choice for even a complete beginner to r/c cars, and I should know!

The best news of all about the Rustler though, is its fantastic value for money. It's a real 'steal' at the price, and so well worth 'rustling' one away from the local model shop!

The Traxxas Rustler Truck is distributed by: Traxxas U.K., P.O.Box 1128, Winterbourne, Bristol. BS17 2SH. Tel/Fax (01454) 250441. Available from all good model shops.

