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**PROJECT BUILD**

# OFF ROAD ADVENTURE

# RZR

**BUCKSHOT RACING  
BUILDS A DESERT CAR  
LIKE NO OTHER**





There are plenty of aftermarket parts you can bolt on to improve your machine. The key is picking the right ones and getting them to work together. Allen Knowles was our man in the field for this build and he put together a desert car like no other.

By Staff

Every machine on the dealer's floor is a compromise. When the manufacturers build a new model, it must meet the needs of riders from all areas of the country, and what works on the twisty, tree lined trails of Hatfield-McCoy isn't exactly perfect for the wide open deserts of Arizona. The entire aftermarket industry is built on this principal and one of the greatest things about the sport is the ability to create a vehicle that is entirely your own and unlike anything else. It's also a lot of fun!



## OFF ROAD ADVENTURE RZR

The deserts of the Southwest present riding like no place else. Riding for hours on end at high speed is common, and it's not often you see others. We wanted a car (as they tend to call any Side x Side in the West – a throwback to desert racing cars) set up for destination trips over rough terrain, at as high of a rate of speed as we could generate. It also had to be comfortable, safe, ultra reliable, and it may as well look cool while doing it. Building an adventure car means going places deep in the back country where you most likely won't have help to bail you out, so it also had to be self contained. The Polaris RZR XP 1000 is quick on the trail, but we needed to push it beyond its normal limit. CT Racing's Allen Knowles has plenty of seat time on everything that rolls on wheels, and he's won just about every type of off-road event. He would be the perfect person to help set up our desert RZR project. Allen's seat time would definitely provide us good info and feedback, making our RZR the ultimate adventure machine.

## SAFETY FIRST – A NEW ROLL CAGE

Long time racer Andrew Buck knows what works on the track and his company Buckshot Products is great with providing setups for comfort and safety in adventure machines as well. That was exactly what we needed. Our new Buckshot Products roll cage is strong, well made, and we like the design which features long, smooth bends that give striking lines. Andrew kicked the top bars of our cage out slightly also, giving a couple extra inches of shoulder room, and room for larger seats. We can now fit a larger, Outlaw LED 40" top light bar also! Most cages won't hold a 40" bar, but running a Radius LED Light Bar throws a significantly wider beam.

The Buckshot Products cage wraps all

the way down the rear of the car, tying in with the radius rod plates in the back. That adds a lot of welcome strength if we ended up in a high speed roll over. At the front, Buck built a bumper with two LED lights, and Knowles recommends pointing those out and down. This helps when the throttle is romped off the line, and when approaching a blind downhill. With only roof

mounted LEDs pointed forward, it would be pitch black below without bumper lights.

Buckshot products also built a couple of nice fiberglass trinkets for the car. A set of scoops bring in extra air to help keep the belt cooler, and a nice looking fiberglass hood helps with air flow through the radiator. Buckshot built the spare tire carrier as well, but where to mount the spare is always a compromise. Mounting it in back creates extra weight for the suspension. Mount it in the bed and you lose valuable space. Stand it up in the front of the bed, and you can toss



Left: We really like the new body lines from our Buckshot Products roll cage and doors. They keep us well protected and look great too. Check out the super durable OMF beadlock wheels. They'll get you back to the trailer every time. Below: Our project build RZR is a car you can drive all day at high speed and never feel beat up. It can also creep through rough, rocky sections with ease.







Above: Changing out the stock seat for the Pro-Armor seats was a huge improvement in comfort and safety. The Pro-Armor harness is also an essential piece of safety gear on a build like this. Right: We like how Buckshot Products wrapped the new roll cage tubes all the way down to the frame base. Notice the high-clearance, much stronger Teixeira Tech radius arms as well.



the rear view mirror. Our best bet was flat over the bed and we ended up with 13 inches under the tire. That's plenty of room for our tools, spare parts pack, a cooler, and even our fishing tackle! A bungee net over our gear keeps stuff in place, and a tire hold down strap locks our tire safely on top - not just a cheap Harbor Freight strap though. The tire hold down straps by Dirt Bags are used by most Trophy Truck desert racing teams because once strapped down, your stuff isn't leaving until you want it to. Losing your gear in the desert is a huge problem, and the Dirt

Bags straps and incredibly tough gear bags prevent that.

#### ALL CLEAR – new HIGH CLEARANCE A-ARMS

Teixeira Tech builds some extremely strong chromoly high-clearance Arms; which is important when traveling through rocky terrain. The front arms are gusseted gullwing style arms, very similar to products that Teixeira builds for ATV's. The rear radius rods are another issue. Many companies build the Radius rods out of bent chromoly tubing, then add gusseting.

Teixeira tested these and learned even gusseted thick wall tubes want to straighten out (not good), so they designed their radius arms out of triple chromoly plate. There's a front and back plate with another layer stitch welded in the center along with top and bottom plates. Exhaustive testing has proven this to be a superior design. The upper radius arm was also changed out for a larger diameter, stronger upper rod.

#### HEARING AID – RUGGED RADIOS

We've used the Rugged Radios communication sets before and they've always performed perfectly. On this project it was a no-brainer to go with another Rugged Radio kit, and they've got many options. It they're tough enough for desert racing, they'll hold up for us.

Rugged Radios' car to car communication set lets you communicate with cronies while ripping down the trail. Should we ever decide to slap on a number and enter a race, this kit will work great with our pit crew. We've found it's not uncommon to get a ten mile range to this radio out in the desert, and you can select different channels to broadcast on. The driver / passen-

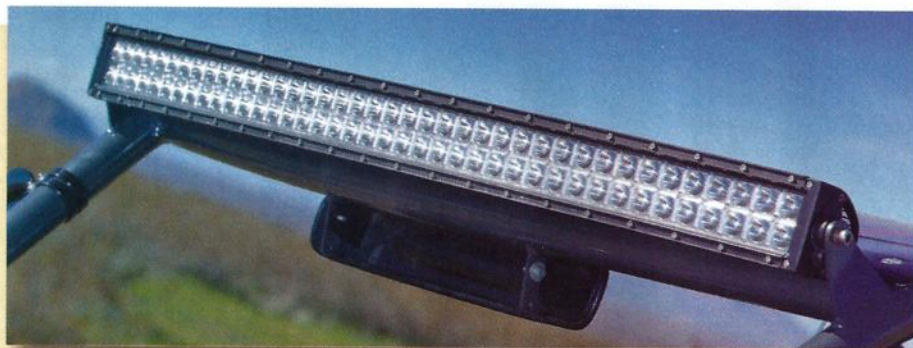
If you're looking for performance, you can do no better than our CT Racing Buckshot Products RZR. It's the total package.







The **RUGGED RADIOS** intercom and radio kit is great for having a conversation on the trail. We can even select different channels if needed.



A wider, **OUTLAW LED** light bar really lights up the night.

ger intercom is voice activated so you can carry a conversation as you go. The intercom also allows you to listen to music with the universal 3.5mm or rear Quick Lock music port which plugs into your phone or IPOD. The music will automatically mute when your driver/co-driver conversation begins and softly comes back when the conversation ends. You can even plug into your GoPro and record conversation for video editing later!

## SHOCK THERAPY – PEP SUSPENSION

“Floats like a butterfly, stings like a Bee” (Muhammed Ali). That’s the description of the PEP suspension upgrade. While the stock shocks are great for rock crawling, they’re significantly too soft for West Coast fast trail thrashing. Like most stock Side x Side shocks, they’re too soft in the front, harsh in the rear, offer up way too much body roll, and most of the time, the stock RZR wants to fly nose down. We’ve got a

guy who can fix all of that!

The Guru of ATV suspension, Wayne Mooradian from PEP Suspension has a fantastic upgrade for the Walker Evans shocks. The Walker Evans shocks are very capable and there’s no reason to change them out, but they just need to be upgraded and dialed in to give you much better handling. We wanted a smooth plush ride, and that’s achievable with the kind of wheel travel the RZR offers, but we also need it to stay flat in the corners when hucked into a turn like a trophy truck. We got both and have been very impressed.

The PEP shocks are our new baseline for how well other shocks work. To make the improvements PEP changed out all the springs, and crossover spacers were also installed. The crossovers are suspiciously missing on the stock front shocks, leaving the soft ride height spring doing more than it should and letting it go way too far into the travel before the main spring goes to work. Mooradian is the King of Zero Pre-

Load suspension and has the new setup dialed. Now the spring for ride height can be set correctly, and during the suspension stroke it crosses into the main spring at the correct time, and with the correct spring rate. We knew Wayne could dial it in perfectly!

## TIRE & WHEEL TIME

We really like running OMF beadlock wheels on the RZR, and in the desert they’re practically a necessity. After all, it’s often a LONG way back to the truck! OMF beadlocks have never let us down, and once we had an un-reparable tire slice and still ran over 50 hard miles on it. OMF’s are also made in the USA out of American made aluminum. Frankly, we’ve tried some imported wheels, and while some are good, with others the aluminum alloy was much softer and they bent easily. Did we mention it can be a long way back to the truck? It’s true you can get a cheaper wheel than the OMF beadlocks, but you



A spare tire is crucial for any long distance desert adventure. The problem is where to store it. By installing it above the bed, we were able to utilize valuable bed space underneath, and the **DIRT BAGZ** tire strap makes sure it stays where you put it.



**TEIXEIRA TECH** also built us a set of super strong, high-clearance A-arms for the front. Notice the Walker Evans shocks with new springs and valving by PEP.





**Buckshot built these cool side inlets to get more airflow into the engine and belt for improved longevity.**

can't get a tougher wheel.

Tire selection is also critical, and we've been running GBC Kanati Mongrels in 30x9x14. The Mongrels hook up amazingly well on hard surfaces and they are even better in sand than the stock tires. Running the same size all the way around is the way to go and one spare covers everything,

### HEAVY ARMOR – PRO ARMOR PROTECTION

Pro Armor products were used to complete this project and they've got a long product line and a very complete web site to help accessorize your car. One of the most important features of this build is the seats, and we installed a set of Sniper suspension seats. The stock XP seats get uncomfortable fast. With the Sniper seat, we look forward to getting back in the car on the second and third day of an excursion, instead of looking for an excuse to

not go. Pro Armor makes some of the nicest, most comfortable, and safest harnesses on the market, with excellent shoulder padding and small pockets built into the front that will hold things like a small flashlight, cell phone, or handy essentials. The harness straps are three inches wide, and come as a 5 point system. For recreational rides, we skip the crotch section and use them as a 4 point instead. Finally, a Pro Armor Steering wheel was clamped in and it comes with a horn button and is easy to install.

### THE COMPLETE PACKAGE

We put over 1500 miles of testing on the Buckshot build and the car did everything it was supposed to. We even became spoiled by some of the features of this car when testing other builds. It is the car to judge others by. The interior is comfortable, the roof lines are lower than stock but still offer excellent vision, and

the doors are arguably the best on the market. We love the added elbow and seat room and the Pro Armor seats are awesome. Try their suede steering wheel; it's a nice unit! You also can't go wrong using beadlocks with the Mongrel tires as they will always get you back. Although Polaris offers a spare tire mount, the Buckshot one is superior. In fact, it seems the Polaris Desert Edition is a production version of this car. But we've got the real McCoy, and you can't go wrong by emulating this car.

### BUCKSHOT PRODUCTS

Ph: (714) 904-2704  
www.buckshotracing.com

### PRO ARMOR

Ph: (888) 312-7667  
www.proarmor.com  
Sniper Seats .....\$ 399.95  
Safety Harness .....\$ 124.95  
Force Steering Wheel .....\$ 69.95  
Steering Wheel Hub (adaptor) .....\$ 49.95

### OUTLAW LED

www.outlawled.com  
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Radius Light Bar .....\$ 499.95

### DIRT BAGZ

www.dirtbagz.com  
Ph: 949.548.8533  
Tire Tie Down Strap .....\$ 85.00

### OMF PERFORMANCE

www.omfperformance.com  
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NXG-1 series Beadlock .....\$379.96 ea

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