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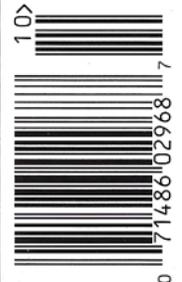


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PROJECT GETAWAY CAR

A RZR built for escaping civilization

By the staff of Dirt Wheels



❑ What's the biggest problem with owning the Polaris RZR 1000? Time. No one has enough to do it justice. The second biggest? Space—again, not enough in the whole world. Leaving a new RZR in the garage is cruel, like keeping a pet greyhound in your Manhattan apartment.

Allen and Roxanne Knowles understand that. They accept the responsibility that comes with RZR adoption and have set aside the time for proper care and feeding. Their previous 800 and 900 versions allowed them to change their lifestyle accordingly, gradually stepping up the length and frequency of their expeditions. Now, the typical ride is around a hundred miles, sometimes stretching from Lucerne Valley in the California high desert down to Yucca Valley, north of Palm Springs.

The key to such outings is the fact that they both enjoy it. It's marriage therapy on four wheels. Once they started looking at RZR time as an essential part of their relationship, it became all the more important to eliminate the pitfalls and comfort issues that can spoil the adventure. "Project Getaway Car" is a big piece of the puzzle. It's a RZR built to minimize the stress and hardship of long rides, leaving only the fun part.

THE ATV CONNECTION

The players that participated in this build are long-time ATV guys

The "getaway car" is the latest in their series of RZR's in the Knowles family.

Instead of using round tubing, Teixeira welds together box-section radius rods for additional strength. ►

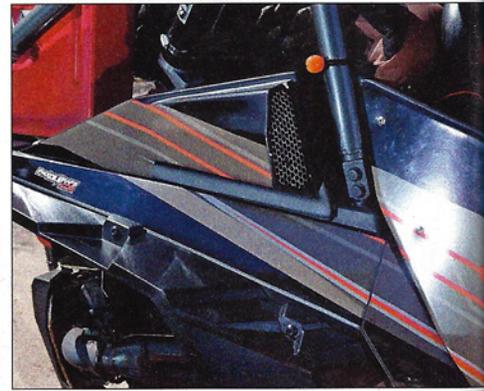
that Allen got to know through his own ATV business, CT Racing. Andrew Buck was the builder of the cage, doors, aluminum and so forth. He was a perennial fast guy on the SoCal ATV scene—a Mickey Thompson contender and winner of the Japanese Supercross championship way back in 1990. Andrew worked for Allen at CT for years as a machinist and FMF before that. Then he started Buckshot Performance in the mid-'90s, building some of the best sand cars on the market.

Ed Teixeira from Teixeira Tech was another fast guy in the desert through the early 2000s when he won a BiTD championship. Tim Orchard goes back in the ATV business so far that they had only three wheels when he started. Now he's owner of OMF, which produced the wheels on this rig. Tim spent a lot of seat time racing Rhinos when they hit the market. Wayne Mooridian, owner of PEP, has been doing championship-winning ATV shocks since ATVs had shocks. Wayne and his PEP suspension have probably won more championships worldwide than any other shock builder.

THE PARTS

Buckshot Performance purpose-built this cage for long-distance off-road adventure. It's as strong as a full-race cage but roomier, with less of an industrial look. The top matches the radius of the 40-inch light bar. Most cages won't hold a large bar, as they are normally only about 36 inches wide at top. Andrew kicked the bars out, giving the driver's compartment a couple of extra inches of shoulder room and leaving a little extra space for larger aftermarket seats. The 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 strength as

RZR BUILD



Buckshot made these scoops to allow more air into the CVT case for cooler belt operation.

Allen and Roxanne Knowles enjoying their particular brand of family therapy.



finished its part of the project with a couple of nice fiberglass trinkets for the car, a set of scoops to bring in extra-cool air to keep the belt cooler, a spare tire rack that doesn't use up the entire bed, and a nice-looking fiberglass hood.

If you own a RZR, you already know that the stock seats are oddly out of step with the rest of the machine. They need to be upgraded before embarking on a 20-mile adventure—forget about a 100-miler. Allen installed Pro Armor Sniper suspension seats as an essential part of the marriage therapy program. Pro Armor also makes some of the most comfortable safety harnesses on the market, with nice shoulder padding and small pockets built into the front that will hold things like small flashlights, cell phones or whatever. These are 3 inches wide and come as a five-point harness. For recreational use, they don't run the crotch sections, using them as four-point harnesses.

Of course, suspension itself is important too. Most people assume that the 1000's Walker Evans shocks are already the best stuff available. But, Polaris doesn't have any way of knowing how much you load down your RZR, how hard you drive or what kind of terrain you have. Customizing the suspension always pays dividends. PEP does that and has some tricks to upgrade the internals of the Walker Evans shocks beyond the factory Polaris specs. Teixeira Tech built tough, strong, chromoly, high-clearance A-arms. The front arms are a gusseted gull-wing design, very similar to products that Teixeira builds for ATVs. The rear radius rods are another issue. Many companies build the radius rods out of bent, thick-wall chromoly tubing, then add gusseting. Ed tested these back on the XP

COMPANY	PRODUCT	PRICE
www.buckshotusa.com	Roll cage	\$2490
www.buckshotusa.com	Front bumper	\$475
www.buckshotusa.com	Tire rack	\$375
www.proarmor.com	Sniper seats	\$399.95
www.proarmor.com	Safety harness	124.95
www.proarmor.com	Force steering wheel	\$69.95
www.proarmor.com	Steering wheel hub (adapter)	\$49.95
www.peputv.com	Complete set up for all four shocks	\$3100
www.ctracing.com	Radius light bar	\$499.95
www.dirtbagz.com	Tire tie-down strap	\$85
www.omfperformance.com	NXG-1 series beadlock	\$379.96/ea
www.teixeira.com	Front A-arms	\$395
www.teixeira.com	Radius arms	\$570

well as a sleek look. Buck built the front bumper as well. It has two small LED lights on it, which are pointed out and down. This front bumper will also hold a 20-inch radius LED if you have the need to spend a few extra dollars.

The doors are among the best we've seen for the 1000. Buckshot designed them to open car-style, with the hinges in front. This way, if the door isn't latched properly, it can't swing open and get torn off, as it happens with suicide doors. Buck

RZR BUILD



PEP knows how to get the most out of the Walker Evans shocks.

Buckshot Performance fabricated the roll cage and bumpers with the idea of making a compartment that you could spend a day—or several days—inside. ▶

900 and learned that even gusseted thick-wall tubes want to straighten out eventually, so Teixeira builds them 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. Lots of testing has proven this to be a superior design. The added ground clearance is essential in getting through rocky, tough trails. The upper radius rod was also changed out for a large-

er-diameter, stronger upper rod.

GBC Kanati Mongrel tires are excellent UTV tires, with excellent traction in a lot of conditions, even working extremely well in the sand dunes. The GBC 30x10x14 tires are taller than the stockers, offering more ground clearance and more top speed as well. They were mounted on OMF Performance beadlock wheels, which are American-made and tough. They will hold up to sub-

stantial abuse and get you back to camp. They also look cool and can be ordered in cosmetically correct colors.

PARTS, PARTS AND MORE PARTS

As long as you understand that the company you keep is the most important part of any ride, you'll do well. The problem is that when everyone is buckled up and muffled down, communication is difficult. Allen leaves the motor and exhaust stock because a loud RZR stops being



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RZR BUILD

cool after about an hour. Beyond that, it's just a headache. Even so, driver passenger communication needs a little help. The "getaway car" has a Rugged Radio intercom as well as a car-to-car radio. This allows you to communicate with the co-driver and to your other cronies on the trail. The intercom is voice-activated, so you can just speak and carry a conversation as you go. The car-to-car radio has a push-to-talk button to broadcast on the chosen channel. The intercom also allows you to listen to your MP3 music. The music will automatically mute when your driver/co-driver conversation begins and softly comes back when the conversation ends. With the optional music-record cable, it can also be plugged into your GoPro to record a conversation as you're filming.

The list goes on. Dirt Bagz makes a great spare-tire strap that's easy to use and fast to dismount, and Rotopax makes a number of bolt-on auxiliary fuel tanks in various sizes. There's nothing therapeutic about having car trouble, running out of gas or being otherwise stranded on the side of the trail. The filter is a K&N, and the whole car is carefully maintained.

KNOWLES IT ALL

When we went on a short excursion with Allen and Roxanne, we were just as impressed by their family harmony as by the RZR. We've known Al for a long time. He can't be any fun to live with. Yet, Roxanne was a happy co-pilot. It's not like Allen takes it easy on her, either. He drives like he's racing Paris Dakar, even when it's just to reach a lunch break. When we took a turn behind the wheel of the getaway car, we understood at least part of Roxanne's outward peace. It was one of the most comfortable 1000s we've ever driven. Between the seats and the suspension, the ride is incredibly plush.

Still, it's a RZR 1000, which means it begs you to go fast. We drove it hard in whoops that looked a lot worse than they felt. We're usually really bad passengers, and we weren't looking forward to spending time in the right seat. But it wasn't that bad. It turns out that having enough room is important. When Al hit whoops at full speed, there's was no head-bumping or elbow-smashing.

The total sum for a project like this is high, but we understand how it could be money well-spent. And, it's much easier to get your significant other on board for this kind of project when it starts off as her idea. □



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