

BEHIND THE WHEEL

1/10 SCALE | ELECTRIC | RTR

Type » 2WD desert racing truck

Price » \$250 (varies with dealer)

Top speed » 22mph

Requires » 4 AA batteries » 6-cell NiMH or 2-cell LiPo pack » Charger

Losi.com

LOSI DESERT TRUCK

Full-scale racing looks and functional lights put a new face on Losi's RTR truck line

EXCLUSIVE!

DRIVE TIME

TEST SPOT

XTREME RC RACEWAY » NEW MILFORD, CT

LIGHTS! CHARGER! ACTION!

Getting the LDT ready for action is simple: charge a pack, put 4 AAs in the transmitter, put the pack in the truck and then switch on. The 2.4GHz radio is already tuned into the LDT's receiver, and the speed control is set up for you. The headlights and taillights turn on when the speed control is flipped on, adding instant wow even before you pull the trigger. Testing began with radar runs in the parking garage of *RC Car Action's* secret mountain-top publishing fortress. Losi's 3,200 rpm motor spools the LDT out to a top speed of

22.1mph, headlights blazing all the way. The dim light of the garage let the LDT's beam pattern show on the pavement, and the two LEDs actually make a realistic pool of light in front of the truck—pretty sweet.

CRUISING CONCRETE

I couldn't resist popping the LDT over the garage's speed bumps, which are flat-sided strips lag-bolted to the concrete floor rather than smoothly contoured humps like you'd find on a paved lot. With its track-inspired suspension, the LDT hopped over the speed

bumps and aired out nicely with a cushy landing about 5 feet down the line. I was afraid the LDT's rear-raked stance would make it donkey-kick, but it jumped level. Handling-wise, the LDT liked the concrete. Stay on the gas, and the AT tires are hooked up and give the truck a little understeer. Chop the throttle to shift weight up front, and the truck will oversteer tractably.

HIT THE DIRT

Cruising the parking garage was fun, but the LDT belongs in the dirt. Unsurprisingly, its realistic tires sacrifice traction compared with racing rubber, but the authentic-looking treads actually work much better than I expected.



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Talk about a rebirth. For years, the primary trajectory for Losi's XT truck platform was ever finer racing performance. A noble goal to be sure and one well met with the current Triple-XT CR race truck, but the XT's fun-truck potential has gone largely untapped. Until now, that is. The Speed-T (reviewed in the May issue) transformed the XT into a blacktop burner, and now the Losi Desert Truck (LDT) is ready to put a new face on the "stadium truck" scene with Baja 1000 looks that even include functional LED lights! But it's still an XT at heart, which means it's full of racing features that make it a high-value fun machine even if you never go near a racetrack. Time to bash, Baja-style.



Maybe the tire's relatively squared-off shape (as viewed head-on) lets the sidewalls dig in, but whatever the reason, the LDT drifts predictably and is easy to control unless you brake aggressively or let off the gas abruptly while cornering. Hard braking tends to lock the rear wheels, and letting off mid-corner unweights the rear tires and gives the truck a bunch of oversteer. No problem, though; just countersteer and get back on the gas.

ROUGH STUFF

I sent my LDT out to West Coast editor Jason Sams for cover photography in desert-like terrain, but I did my testing on Xtreme RC's weatherbeaten, not-yet-race-ready layout.

Melting snow and rain had carved ruts in the track, which was still blown out from the last races of the previous season. Needless to say, the LDT got a workout. The AT tires are firmer than the meatballs usually found on Losi trucks, and the laid-down shock positions that come with the Speed-T style shock towers give the suspension a stiffer ride, but the LDT still soaks up bumps well. There's way too much racetruck in the LDT for it not to work great in the rough stuff. Really gnarly terrain might get you stuck if you high-center the chassis, but if you're driving on any surface that looks like a desert racer should be on it, you can count on the LDT to give you a good ride.

DESERT DURABILITY

I was afraid the totally tubular front bumper and rear roll cage might be damage prone, but they took a few good shots without parting ways from the LDT. Losi was smart in leaving slack in the wires for the front LED lights; the bumper can flex without straining the wires. Body scuffs were common and expected, as were scratches on the chrome wheels. It's a bummer to see track rash on the good-looking six-spokers, but that's off-road RC for you.



Ready for the desert. LoSi sets the rear ride height a little low to emulate a full-size desert racer's stance.



The Desert Truck is based on the track-tested Triple-XT stadium truck platform. The new low-profile shock towers that debuted with the Speed-T let the Baja-style bodywork sit realistically low on the chassis.



The LDT is the first LoSi to get the new LM-32K motor. I'll go out on a limb and say it stands for "LoSi Motor 32,000," since LoSi claims 32,000rpm from the mill (but does not specify a particular wind). The closed-endbell design looks like a basic 540, but it's a mild modified and has a fan mounted on the armature to keep temps in check. The motor has pretty good scoot and cranks the LDT up to 22mph. If you want to try a hotter motor, go for it; the LDT's speed control is rated for motors down to 12 turns. I like the stocker; it has good off-road speed and stretches the run time of my stick packs.

RADAR TESTING

TOP SPEED 22.1 mph

Distance (in feet) traveled in:

1 sec. » 13.4

2 sec. » 10.0

3 sec. » 69.1

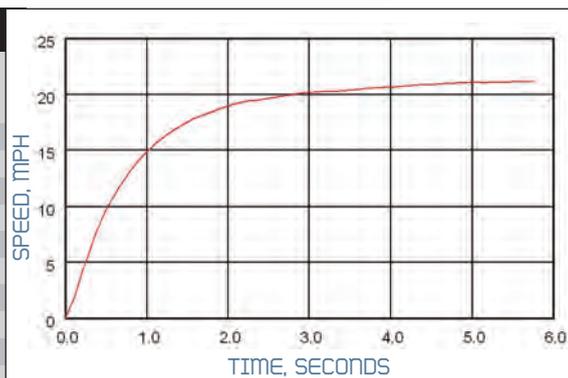
4 sec. » 99.9

5 sec. » 133.3

0-132 ft. time » 4.9 sec.

Time to top speed » 4.5 sec.

Speed at 132 ft. » 22.1mph



SPECIFICATIONS

LOSI DESERT TRUCK

Losi.com

Scale 1/10

Price \$250 (varies with dealer)

DIMENSIONS

Overall length 17.5 in. (445mm)

Wheelbase 11.8 in. (300mm)

Width 12.5 in. (318mm)

Weight, as tested 3 lb. 13 oz. (1,729g)

CHASSIS

Molded plastic semi-tub

SUSPENSION

Type Lower H-arm with turnbuckle upper link

Inboard camber-link positions F/R 3/8

Outboard camber-link positions F/R 3/2

Upper shock positions F/R 2/2

Lower shock positions F/R 3/3

SHOCKS

Aluminum body with clamping preload adjuster

STEERING

Type Dual bellcrank

Servo-saver Externally adjustable with nylon locknut

Tie rods Steel turnbuckle

Ackerman settings (inboard/outboard) 2/1

DRIVETRAIN

Type Enclosed gearbox

Transmission 3-gear

Slipper clutch Dual-pad with hard-anodized pressure plates; externally adjustable

Differential Bevel gear with 6 hardened steel gears

Spur gear 88-tooth, molded plastic, 48-pitch

Pinion Steel, 17T

Driveshafts Steel CV-type

Bearings Metal-shielded

Gear ratio 2.43:1

BODY, WHEELS & TIRES

Body Losi Desert Truck, printed Lexan

Wheels One-piece plastic, chrome-plated 6-spoke bead-lock design

Tires Losi AT

Inserts Open-cell foam

ELECTRONICS

Transmitter Losi 2.4GHz Spektrum DSM

Receiver Losi MRX-3000 2.4GHz Spektrum DSM

Speed control Losi 12RB reversing, 12-turn motor limit

Motor Losi LM-32K 32,000rpm brushed, closed endbell

Steering servo Losi MSX Digital

UNDER THE HOOD

DESERT-READY RUBBER

The LDT is the first truck to get Losi's new "AT" all-terrain tire and 6-spoke "bead-lock" wheel combo. The wheels aren't functional bead-locks, but the molded-in bolt detail really sells the look. The AT tires have an authentic tread design that wraps onto the sidewalls, and they really dig in well on pavement. Off-road, the realistic rubber doesn't offer the grip of a racing tire (no surprise there), but the tires do slide predictably and are a good match for LDT's scale-like dirt-slinging, desert-racing mission. If you just gotta have more off-road grip, there's a huge variety of 2.2 tires and wheels to fit the LDT from Losi, GRP, Pro-Line, Panther and others. As with all Losi RTRs, the LDT's tires are supported by foam inserts and well glued to the wheels at the factory.



This looks like the tire display at Sears! Losi really got the look right with the Desert Truck's rollers.



Now that's cool. The roll cage is flexible so it can take a hit, and it even has LED lights built in.

REALISTIC ROLL CAGE

The LDT is all about capturing the look of a desert racer, and a big part of that look is an exposed roll cage. Losi makes the structure out of flexible plastic to handle crash abuse, and the cutaway rear bed complements the totally tubular style perfectly. The multi-piece design appears to make transmission access difficult, but pulling the trans only requires the removal of four additional screws, all accessed from above—no biggie. Two extra body clips hold the body's rear fenders to the cage, but you don't have to remove them for chassis access; instead, the body pivots on the cage mounts, funny-car style.

Light show

The LDT's rear roll cage and front brush bumper/skidplate look rad on their own, but functional LED lights put the LDT over the top. A pair of bright whites in the bumper and red rear LEDs bring the truck to life in the night, and the beam pattern is very realistic—you really can drive the LDT at night (in a safe driveway, of course—never in the street or in a parking lot where a full-size driver might not see your truck, or more importantly, see you.). The lights glow as long as the truck is turned on, and since they're LEDs, they draw very little voltage. If you prefer to leave them off for daytime running, just unplug the LED module's connector from the receiver.



The bright white LED headlights throw a strong beam that looks totally trick when running at dusk.

Desert diff

For as long as Losi has had 1/10-scale electric trucks, they've all been equipped with ball differentials. Great for the track but not as good for play-running where the precise adjustment and proper maintenance a ball diff requires will probably be overlooked by Joe Basher. And so, the LDT is the first Losi 2WD truck to get a gear differential, and it's a very nice unit. It's compact and lightweight and has four spider gears instead of the usual two. Losi greases the gears, but the diff's construction should permit it to be sealed for use with silicone fluid; I won't be surprised if this diff finds a home in Losi's Triple-XNT nitro stadium truck. If you're thinking about dropping the gear diff into your XT-series truck, you'll also have to buy an LDT gearbox, which has extra clearance for the gear diff.



The LDT's compact diff requires no adjustment or maintenance, and four steel spider gears make it extra tough.



INCLUDED ELECTRONICS & ACCESSORIES



Losi transmitter with Spektrum DSM

The LDT's radio system is basic as far as adjustments go (trims and steering rate are standard), but Losi stepped up with Spektrum 2.4GHz technology for turn-on-and-drive convenience with no frequency conflict issues to worry about. Bonus: it only needs four AA batteries, not the usual eight. Performance-wise, it's all any play driver will ever need. Nitro guys might want throttle endpoint adjustments, but electric trucks don't need 'em.

Losi MSX digital steering servo

This servo debuted with the Speed-T and is a perfect fit for the Desert-T with good torque and digital holding power and precision. No upgrade needed.

Losi 12RB speed control

This reversing speed control can spin mod motors down to 12 turns and has no trouble dumping high-capacity packs without overheating. The reverse circuit senses motor speed and won't engage reverse until the motor stops (and vice versa when going forward after backing up). This spares the transmission gears and gives you full braking control while also allowing stunt-driving moves.

FACTORY OPTIONS

- » 4600mAh 6-cell NiMH battery pack—LOS9901
- » CV rebuild kit—LOSA2961
- » Titanium nitride shock shafts—LOSA5064
- » Steering bellcrank bearing kit—LOSALOSA6912

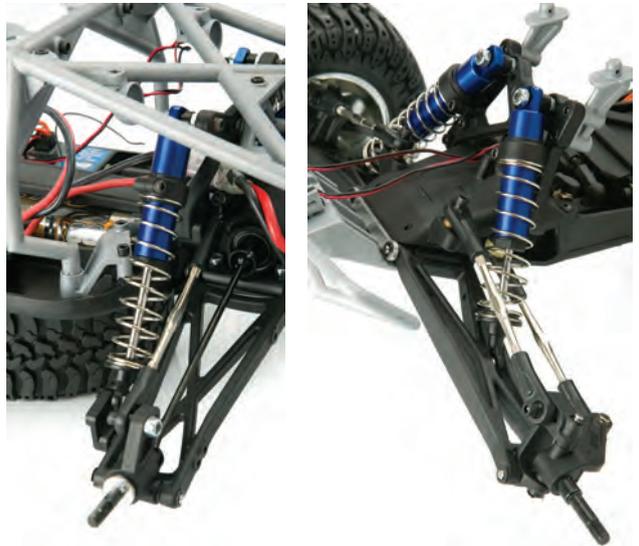
YOU'LL NEED | WE USED

4 AA batteries	Energizer
6-cell battery	Team Orion 2700mAh Rocket Pack teamorion.com
Charger	Dynamite Prophet Plus dynamiterc.com



Speed-T suspension

The LDT uses clamping preload collars instead of the Speed-T's threaded units, but otherwise you get the same setup. Low-profile shock towers let the desert body sit low on the chassis without the big clearance humps required by racing XTs, and the aluminum shocks with bottom-loaded seal cartridges are as smooth as the best racing shocks. New eyelet-style rod ends make maintenance easier and are virtually pop-off proof, and turnbuckles set camber and toe without disassembly. The LDT's main mission is leisure-mode driving, but it has all the specs you need to hang on the racetrack if you care to add track-specific tires.



Aluminum shocks, turnbuckles and proven XT parts make the Desert Truck a track-worthy machine.

ON THE BENCH

I remember the days when "ready to run" meant "ready to run after you fill the shocks and paint the body," but today's RTRs can truly go from the box to the backyard in minutes. Add a stick pack and 4 AA batteries (yep, the transmitter only needs four cells), and the LDT is ready for action. I

can't offer any tips for something that simple! But I can give some insight on how to keep your LDT running at its best.

DAILY MAINTENANCE

Use a toothbrush to clean the dirt off the bottoms of the shocks where the shafts exit. This will prolong the life of the seals and shafts. If you run your truck in the woods, take off the wheels and remove any twigs or grass that might have wrapped around the axles.

setscrew without disassembling anything. Check the screws after each driving session.

WIRING STRESS RELIEF

Use a zip-tie to secure the taillight wire to the roll cage, so you don't snag it when installing a battery or working on the truck.

(electronically linked), and chances are you won't have a reason to re-bind them for a long time—which makes it all the more likely that you will have lost the bind plug by the time you need it. Store the plug in the transmitter's battery compartment, or make a point of hanging the plug on your shop wall so you'll be able to find it later.

DRIVESHAFT CHECK

The truck's CV-style driveshafts are drilled so you can access the crosspin

BIND PLUG STORAGE

The LDT arrives with its Spektrum transmitter and receiver already "bound"

Rating the Losi Desert Truck

If you're jazzed by the LDT's Baja 1000 look, then you should definitely get one. Those looks are more than Lexan-deep; there's the soul of a racing truck underneath that shell, which makes the LDT a highly competent handler even with tires that favor realism over sheer traction. And since everything is fully adjustable, you can make the LDT handle just the way you like. And, yes, you could take it racing with a tire swap, which is a nice plus for any new RC drivers who are attracted to racing after buying this "play" truck. There are other play trucks with racing features out there, but the advantage of the Desert Truck (and any XT-series truck) is that parts are easy to get—any shop with an off-road track should have parts. But most important is how the truck succeeds as a fun-to-drive, easy-to-maintain ride, and that's where the Losi Desert Truck shines brightest. **Z**



- » Race-proven chassis and suspension in a play truck
- » Maintenance-free gear differential
- » Working lights and exposed roll cage really sell the desert look
- » Robust speed control is mod-motor ready



- » Wheels scratch easily

BEST FOR

Any RC enthusiast