

There's no denying that the Traxxas T-Maxx—the granddaddy of all of today's bashers—has been thrashed on more than all other RC trucks combined; and with good reason: few things in RC bring more joy than beating on a truck (if you don't agree, you haven't tried it!). My goal with "Project Maximum Destruction" was not to build the most blinged-out shelf queen you've ever seen or a straightline, land-speed missile. Instead, my mission was to get the T-Maxx back to its roots—back to what the T-Maxx is all about: serious bashing and fun! The stock T-Maxx is pretty durable to begin with, but for high-flying, mud-blasting, rock-crushing, tumble-and-roll abuse, stock simply wouldn't do. Pretty and brightly anodized took a back seat to purpose and durability as I called on the best that RC Solutions, Imex, MIP, Parma, RPM and a few others had to offer. Simply stated, if a part would keep the Maximum Destruction running and rolling while it was being tortured, I wanted it. So, did I grab all the right gear? Did Maximum Destruction put a hurtin' on the dirt, or did it self-destruct? Ahh ... read on, my friends, read on



MAXX DES



BRING ON THE
BEATING!

immum TRUCTION

WORDS ELVIS MACHADO PHOTOS PETE HALL AND DERON NEBLETT

PARTS

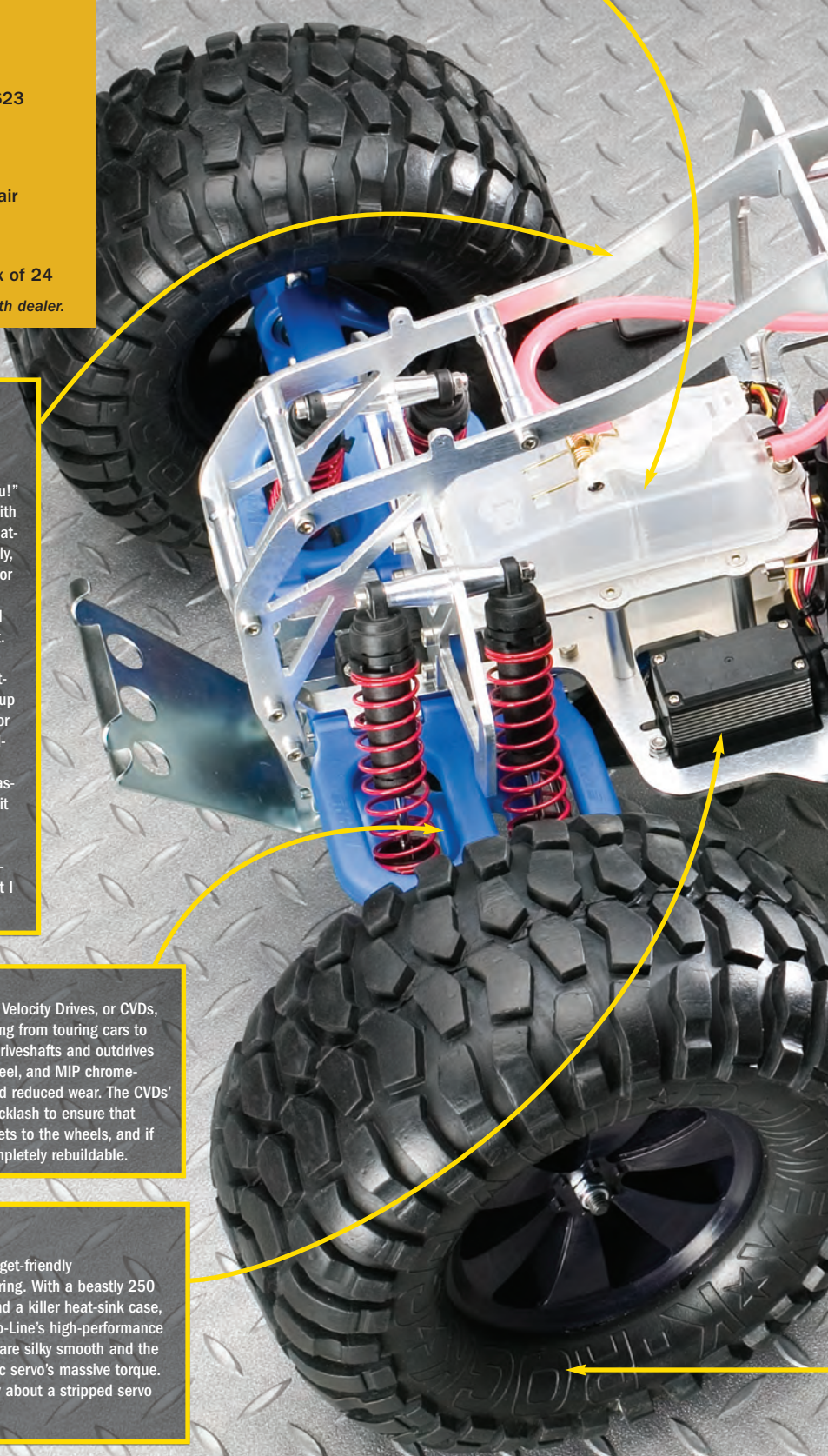
- Hitec HSC-5998TG servo—item no. 35958J; \$135
 - Imex K-Rock tires—7425; \$33/pair
 - Imex Nevada White rims—7062; \$30/set of 4
 - MIP Shiny CVD kit—1525; \$55/pair
 - OFNA 125cc tank—19076; \$12
 - Parma Toyota Tundra painted body—10156P; \$43
 - Pro-Line Maxx Performance steering kit—6019-00; \$36
 - RC Solutions
 - Nitro Cyber-Maxx kit (silver)—001; \$100
 - Silver bulkheads (F/R)—027/028; \$62/pair
 - Silver frame rails—024; \$40/pair
 - Cyber-Maxx 125cc buggy tank mount—067; \$23
 - TRX 2.5 engine mount—010; \$25
 - Bulkhead spacers—005; \$14
 - RPM
 - Blue T-Maxx 2.5-wide A-arms—80075; \$12/pair
 - Blue T-Maxx axle carriers—80035; \$27/pair
 - Traxxas T-Maxx RTR truck—4910; \$390
 - Venom HV-1200mAh cells—VEN-1520; \$50/box of 24
- Total \$1,316** *Prices vary with dealer.*

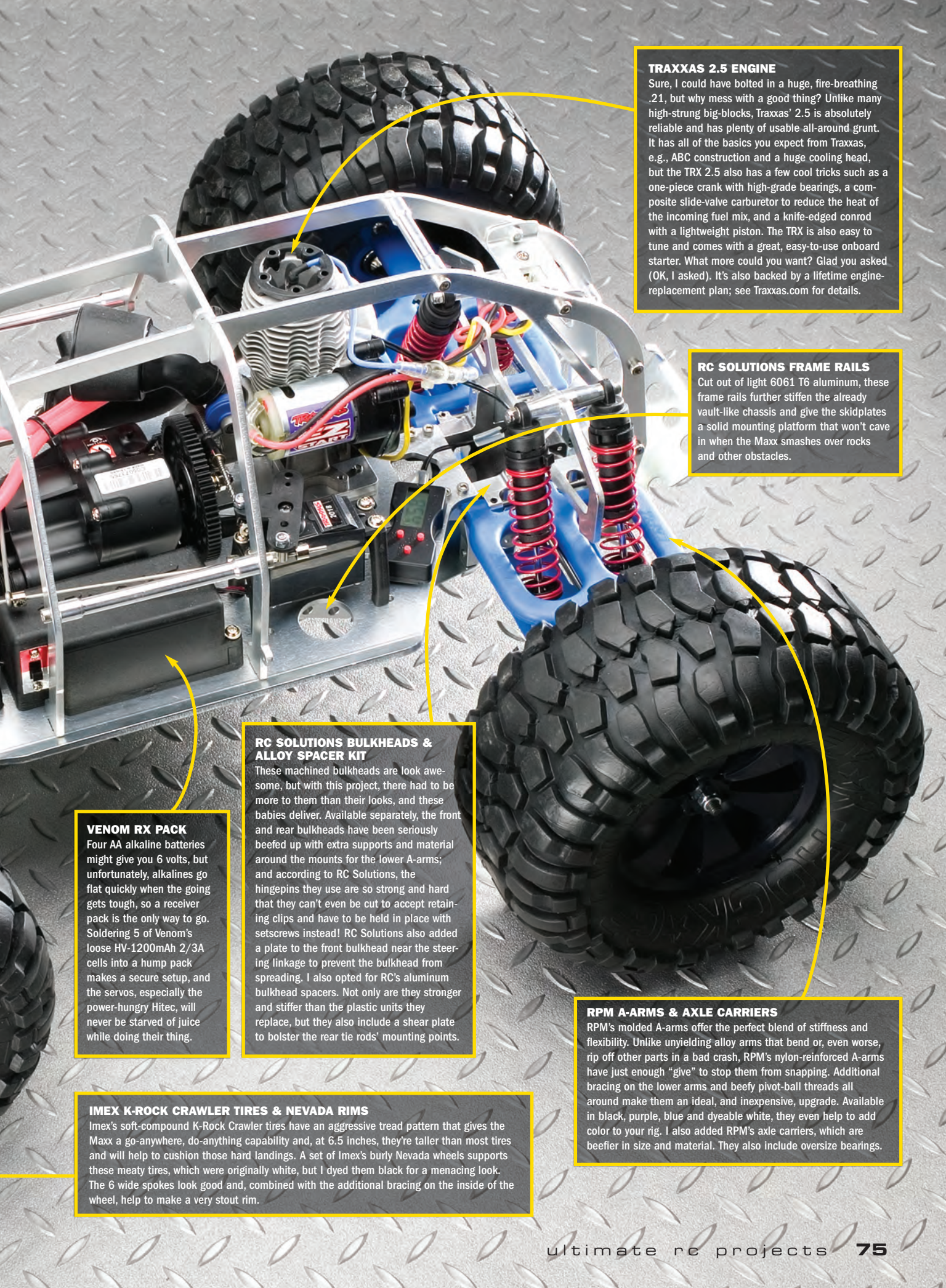
RC SOLUTIONS CYBER-MAXX BUGGY TANK MOUNT
 Although you could use the stock fuel tank, this tank mount allows you to install an OFNA 125cc buggy tank for improved fuel flow. It isn't included with the mount kit, but the well-baffled tank is also a little thicker than the stock unit, so it's unlikely to crack.

RC SOLUTIONS NITRO CYBER-MAXX CHASSIS KIT
 At the heart of Maxx Destruction is RC Solutions' Nitro Cyber-Maxx chassis kit. One look and you're immediately drawn to the roll cage that screams, "Go ahead! I dare you!" Then you notice features such as the thick shock towers with machined spacers that give the shocks a firm mounting platform to ensure consistent handling. Dig a little more deeply, and you'll see that the nicely machined chassis is longer for stability (the extra length is divided equally between the front and the rear), and it's also designed to allow the fuel tank to be installed on the chassis' centerline to protect it. Moving the tank to the front and center of the chassis means that the reverse servo has to be removed (the throttle servo is moved to the rear of the chassis), so you give up reverse, but in the interests of durability; I see it as a minor compromise. Underneath the chassis, you'll find steel skidplates—not easily gouged aluminum; this shows RC Solutions' commitment to durability. In addition to the chassis, cage, shock towers and skidplates, the RC Solutions kit includes a big-block engine mount (I used the TRX 2.5 mount), a reverse-lock-off post and high-quality stainless-steel hardware. Available in red, blue and silver, the Cyber-Maxx chassis kit is compatible with all the stock parts, but I went the extra mile with a few more of RC's options.

MIP CVD DRIVESHAFTS
 For many years now, MIP Constant Velocity Drives, or CVDs, have proven their worth in everything from touring cars to stadium and monster trucks. The driveshafts and outdrives are made of reliable, heavy-duty steel, and MIP chrome-plates the axles for added style and reduced wear. The CVDs' unique design gives nearly zero backlash to ensure that every bit of precious horsepower gets to the wheels, and if things go too far, they are also completely rebuildable.

HITEC HSC-5998TG DIGITAL SERVO & PRO-LINE PERFORMANCE STEERING KIT
 Designed specifically for heavy monster trucks, Hitec's budget-friendly HSC-5998TG digital servo was an easy choice for the steering. With a beastly 250 oz.-in. of torque (at 6 volts), robust titanium-alloy gears and a killer heat-sink case, the 5998TG is almost ridiculously rugged. I also added Pro-Line's high-performance steering kit because its ball-bearing-supported bellcranks are silky smooth and the built-in, adjustable servo-saver is well matched to the Hitec servo's massive torque. With a combination like this, I doubt that I'll need to worry about a stripped servo anytime soon!





TRAXXAS 2.5 ENGINE

Sure, I could have bolted in a huge, fire-breathing .21, but why mess with a good thing? Unlike many high-strung big-blocks, Traxxas' 2.5 is absolutely reliable and has plenty of usable all-around grunt. It has all of the basics you expect from Traxxas, e.g., ABC construction and a huge cooling head, but the TRX 2.5 also has a few cool tricks such as a one-piece crank with high-grade bearings, a composite slide-valve carburetor to reduce the heat of the incoming fuel mix, and a knife-edged conrod with a lightweight piston. The TRX is also easy to tune and comes with a great, easy-to-use onboard starter. What more could you want? Glad you asked (OK, I asked). It's also backed by a lifetime engine-replacement plan; see Traxxas.com for details.

RC SOLUTIONS FRAME RAILS

Cut out of light 6061 T6 aluminum, these frame rails further stiffen the already vault-like chassis and give the skidplates a solid mounting platform that won't cave in when the Maxx smashes over rocks and other obstacles.

RC SOLUTIONS BULKHEADS & ALLOY SPACER KIT

These machined bulkheads look awesome, but with this project, there had to be more to them than their looks, and these babies deliver. Available separately, the front and rear bulkheads have been seriously beefed up with extra supports and material around the mounts for the lower A-arms; and according to RC Solutions, the hinge pins they use are so strong and hard that they can't even be cut to accept retaining clips and have to be held in place with setscrews instead! RC Solutions also added a plate to the front bulkhead near the steering linkage to prevent the bulkhead from spreading. I also opted for RC's aluminum bulkhead spacers. Not only are they stronger and stiffer than the plastic units they replace, but they also include a shear plate to bolster the rear tie rods' mounting points.

VENOM RX PACK

Four AA alkaline batteries might give you 6 volts, but unfortunately, alkalines go flat quickly when the going gets tough, so a receiver pack is the only way to go. Soldering 5 of Venom's loose HV-1200mAh 2/3A cells into a hump pack makes a secure setup, and the servos, especially the power-hungry Hitec, will never be starved of juice while doing their thing.

IMEX K-ROCK CRAWLER TIRES & NEVADA RIMS

Imex's soft-compound K-Rock Crawler tires have an aggressive tread pattern that gives the Maxx a go-anywhere, do-anything capability and, at 6.5 inches, they're taller than most tires and will help to cushion those hard landings. A set of Imex's burly Nevada wheels supports these meaty tires, which were originally white, but I dyed them black for a menacing look. The 6 wide spokes look good and, combined with the additional bracing on the inside of the wheel, help to make a very stout rim.

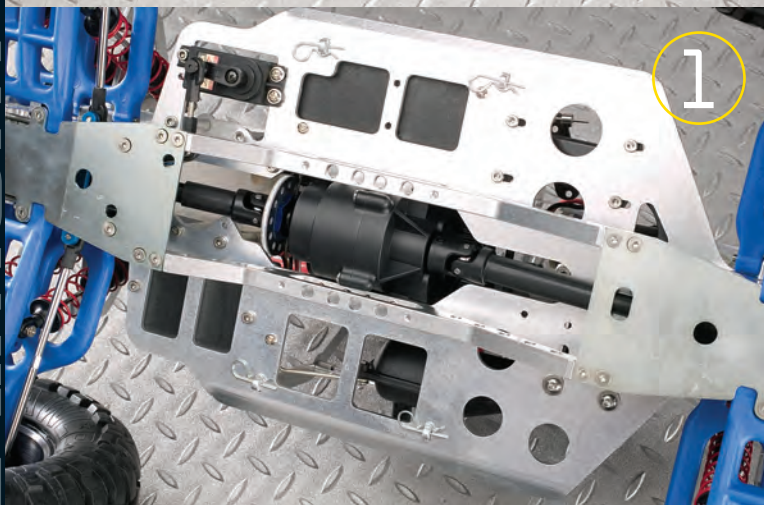
RPM A-ARMS & AXLE CARRIERS

RPM's molded A-arms offer the perfect blend of stiffness and flexibility. Unlike unyielding alloy arms that bend or, even worse, rip off other parts in a bad crash, RPM's nylon-reinforced A-arms have just enough "give" to stop them from snapping. Additional bracing on the lower arms and beefy pivot-ball threads all around make them an ideal, and inexpensive, upgrade. Available in black, purple, blue and dyeable white, they even help to add color to your rig. I also added RPM's axle carriers, which are beefier in size and material. They also include oversize bearings.

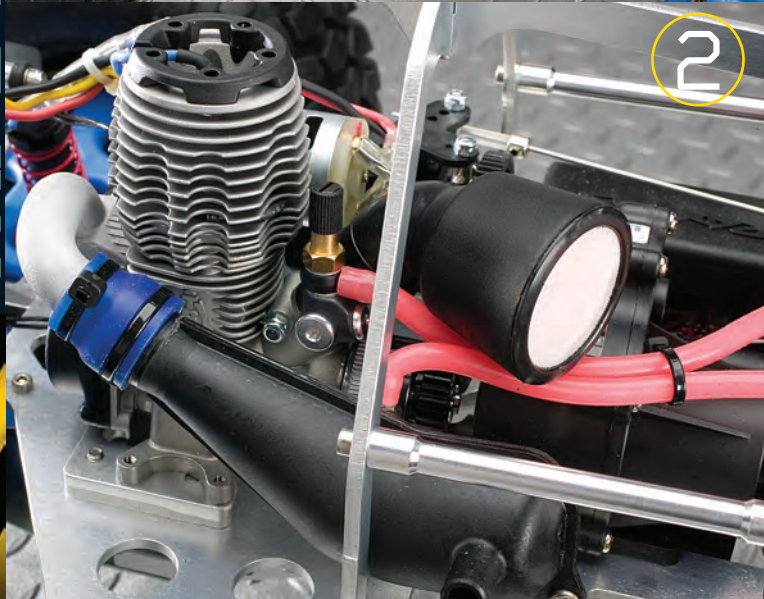


PARMA TOYOTA TUNDRA PAINTED TRUCK BODY

The full-size Toyota Tundra is one badass truck, and Parma's 1/10-scale body is faithful to the original's clean lines. There's more here than just looks, though. Beautifully molded in concrete-tough 0.060 Lexan, this bulletproof shell is ready to rumble. It's available in clear for artistic types, and Parma also offers painted Tundra shells like the one shown here for those of us who are airbrush-challenged; thanks, guys!



1. Maximum Destruction's underside. The body clips attach the roll cage to the main chassis plate. The cage is bolted to the truck's bulkheads for a sturdy fit. **2.** Why mess with success? For bashing, the stock Traxxas 2.5 engine is one of my favorites. It has plenty of power and is reliable. It might not be as glamorous as a big-block, but this truck isn't about show. **3.** RPM suspension arms and axle carriers make an awesome and very durable combination. **4.** No way will this tank get damaged. It's surrounded by serious metal.



TESTING

My first test was putting it all together. Building it was fairly easy, but this type of project is best for people with at least a little experience of wrenching on the T-Maxx. Installing the new fuel tank required minor hand-fitting, but on the whole, the truck fell together relatively easily. Thread-locking compound is an absolute necessity. Now on to the real deal

There's only one way to test a truck like the Maximum Destruction—bash it! I headed for my favorite site and set out to find what the Maxx could handle. I took a plastic skateboard ramp along to make any natural jumps even bigger. Maximum Destruction handles big air, and the bigger-than-stock tires make it easy to control its attitude while it's airborne. When it cased a jump, it had no effect, and on the ground, my mad Maxx rolled over even the biggest obstacles. It shrugged off big hits and cartwheeled without shedding parts. I think I'll install slightly stiffer springs in the near future; Maximum Destruction was a little too mushy for my taste. And who knows? After some experimentation, I might decide that the plush stock springs are better. The truck does handle rough terrain extremely well. I also plan to dial out some brake, as the truck whipped around a bit too quickly when I tapped the brakes in a turn. This is no race truck, so it really isn't a big deal. Overall, I gave this truck a serious trashing, and the cage held up to it. I was amazed by how well the Parma body held up, considering how many hard hits it took. With a truck this durable, I looked for trouble and always went *through* the rough spots instead of around them. No RC vehicle is indestructible, but this truck has so far proven to be impervious to beatings. It never faltered and was never fazed.





WRAP-UP

Project Maximum Destruction was a total success. I hammered it relentlessly, and it always came back for more without as much as a whimper. I can't count how many times I yelled "Oooohhh!" as my Maxx landed (or didn't!) off some kind of crazy jump. Although it isn't cheap, the project truck shows that with some well-chosen upgrades, you don't have to spend thousands to build a nearly invulnerable monster that you can have a ton of fun with.

SOURCES

Hitec RCD USA Inc. (858) 748-6948; hitecrd.com
Imex Model Co. (352) 754-8522; imexrc.com
Moore's Ideal Products (626) 339-9008; mionline.com
OFNA Racing (949) 586-2910; ofna.com
Parma Intl. Inc. (440) 237-8650; parmapse.com
Pro-Line Protoform (951) 849-9781; pro-lineracing.com
RC Solutions (480) 609-7233; rc-solutions.com
RPM R/C Products (909) 393-0366; rpmrcproducts.com
Traxxas Corp. (972) 265-8000; traxxas.com
Venom Group USA (800) 705-0620; venom-racing.com