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the start of

WAY TOO MUCH FUN

OUR NEW '08 RZR GETS A LONG-TRAVEL KIT (FOR GOOD REASON)

I admit it. When they first came out, I was a hater. I looked at Yamaha's Rhino and saw an overgrown golfcart. I refused to even acknowledge UTVs as part of the off-road culture. But then someone let me try one about six months ago, and I couldn't believe how fun they were. And when a coworker from a sister publication brought a Polaris RZR to the sand dunes for the weekend, I knew I had found what was going to be in our *OFF-ROAD* stable soon.

BY JERROD JONES

PHOTOGRAPHY: JEFF DAHLIN AND JERROD JONES

Weeks later, thanks to Donna Beadle, Polaris' external relations specialist, we had an '08 RZR on long-term loan for a year. And this wasn't just any loan. We are allowed to do whatever we want to it. And we are going to. In stock form, these things already rip: A 760cc fuel-injected engine, killer A-arm and coilover front and rear suspension, and a low center of gravity make it a formidable machine that does almost 60 mph in stock form. But the suspension can be improved,

the engine modified, tougher rollcages can be added, stereos can be installed, and tires and wheels can cost you just as much as a fullsize truck's. There is no limit to what you can do to these little stompers.

For us, a long-travel suspension with a wider wheelbase was the first necessity. Although these RZR's are nimble, they are high-powered and are definitely capable of tipping over if care is not taken. Unfortunately, we did not take care. Magazine guys are great at

pointing out the way you are supposed to do something, but we've probably broken every rule we remind you about.

And since we certainly weren't going to slow down, we called up CST to make sure we got a long-travel suspension with a wider track width on our RZR as soon as possible. The CST kit pushes out the wheelbase on the Polaris RZR 3 inches per side and allows 12 inches of suspension travel. That might not seem like very much next to many of the 6-inch-wider-per-side, 14-inch travel Yamaha Rhino kits out there, especially when considering the RZR is a narrower machine to begin with. But the CST kit only lifts the RZR about an inch (as we set it up), and the RZR has a lower center of gravity, keeping it more stable in the first place. Best of all, our RZR still fits into a fullsize truck bed with our long-travel kit on! **OR**

the start of WAY TOO MUCH FUN



▲ Right from the start we were ill-prepared. We had picked up our RZR from a shop, put it in the back of our Super Duty, and had to get it out of the truck bed that night. Since we were leaving it at our publisher's house (more on that later), we found a ramped part of pavement near his place, sort of dragged it out, and then scrambled to get it off public streets as quickly as we could. It was lovely.

► It was at our publisher Jeff Dahlin's house for two days before this happened. It says something very clearly in the owner's manual about driving the RZR on pavement. I should have made him read that part, and I should've remembered whose house I was leaving this thing at.

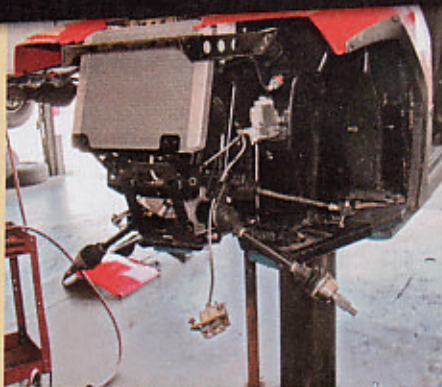
Again, our publisher is doing a great job of showing you what not to do. We try to always wear helmets to at least keep our brains safe.



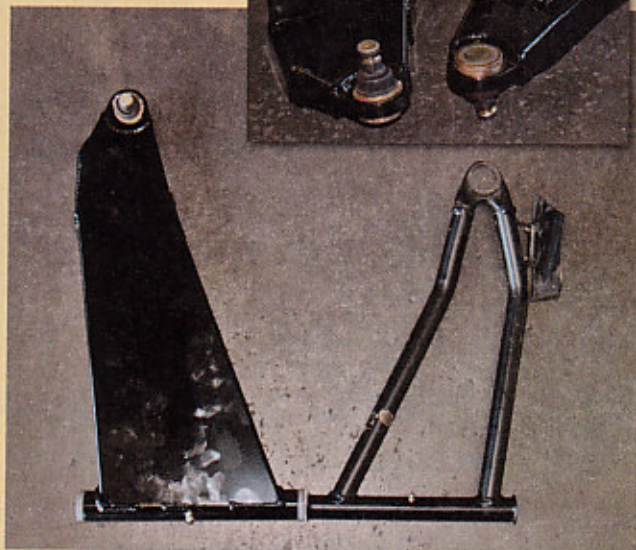
► The night we dragged the RZR out of the truck bed for the first time, I went home, got online, and ordered some Oxlite ramps, so we could correctly load our RZR in the back of our truck bed. A week later, the ramps showed up, and we went to load up our UTV. What I didn't do was remember to remind Dahlin to put the RZR in four-wheel drive before he drove it up. As soon as the rear tires neared the tailgate, the tailgate's cap spit off, sending both ramps down with it. Man, we hadn't even hit dirt yet and our RZR had already been rolled once and almost fallen out of a truck!



► We spent a couple weeks driving it around some dirt roads and rolling over more times than we'd like to admit before we ended up at SoCal Supertrucks in San Bernardino, California, for some help installing a CST long-travel kit. The front end was stripped down first and prepped for the new parts. The kit is fairly basic, but it'll probably take you about a day to install if you do it at home.



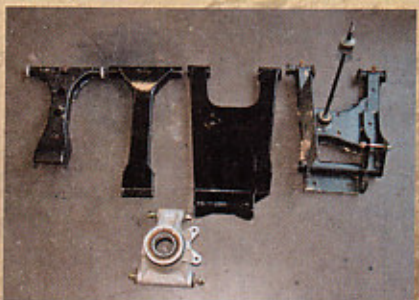
▼ The new CST arms are made from fully boxed 4130 chrome-moly powder-coated black to keep things subtle. When you have something that performs well, there's no need to make it flashy to draw attention to it. CST reuses the factory ball joints on its arms, so you'll have to press them out of your original arms.



► The new CST boxed arms reuse the factory bushing sets. Because the CST kit reuses the bushing sets and ball joints from the stock arms, it is easy to get replacement parts from any Polaris dealership if one should wear out.

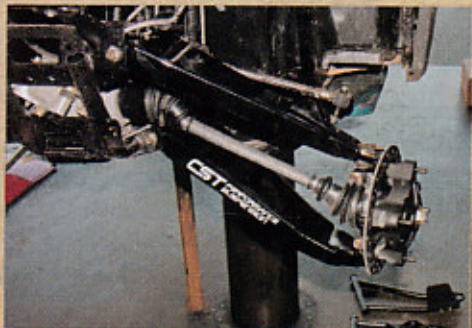


► Pictured here is the rear-arm set plus a factory rear spindle. The new CST arms widen the wheel-base 3 inches per side. It makes quite a difference in handling but is not enough to stop you from still loading it in the back of your truck bed.



the start of WAY TOO MUCH FUN

▶ Since the track width is widened 6 inches, CST provides new 4340 chrome-moly shafts to replace the stock shafts. The factory axles are a bit tricky to get out but should eventually pull (or be hammered) off after the clips have been released. The new axles will install directly in place to make a longer CV shaft.



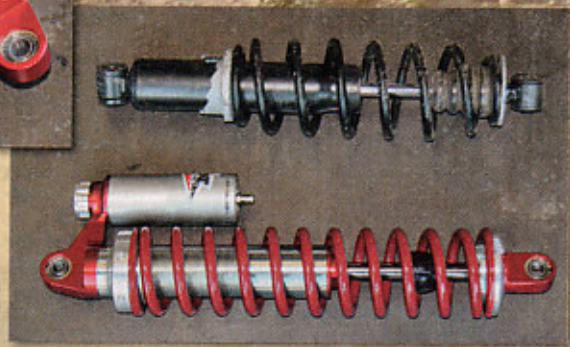
▲ Ryan Poe, our SoCal SuperTruck technician of the day, got the front driver side together first. The same suspension geometry is kept with the same mounting points and same shock locations. The travel is increased due to an improved shock and longer A-arms that cover a greater arc at the wheel.



▲ To compensate for the longer A-arms, the steering must also be lengthened in the front. CST provides machined tie-rod extensions to allow them to meet up with the front spindles.



▶▶ The CST kit can be purchased without the coilover shocks, but should you choose to go with what CST offers, Walker Evans Racing nitrogen-charged coilover shocks are included in the kit. They are 6-inch stroke piggyback external reservoir shocks with a 16-position adjustment knob on the top of the body's billet end.



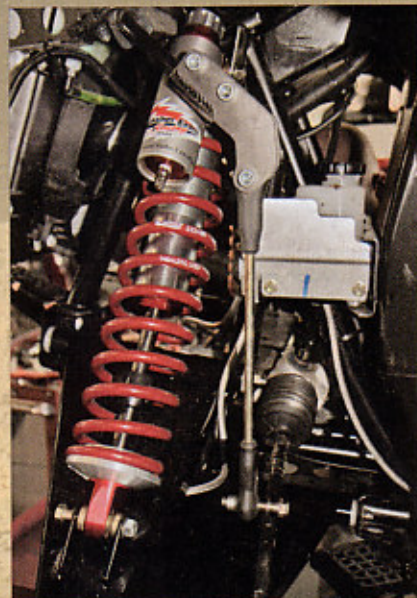
PERFORMANCE

With our increased track width, we were really able to rip around the corners without fear of rolling down the hillside. It was amazing how much better this thing handled. From previous long-travel kits we've tried on Rhinos, we were fearful of what the steering quality was going to turn into. We were glad to find out that the RZR does not seem to suffer from this when adorned with a long-travel kit.

In the whoops, the extra stability really helped keeping the RZR from bobbing side to side, and the extra suspension soaked up the whoops beautifully. We were amazed at how fast we could travel over the whoops with this new kit.



▲ It was about an hour past closing time when Poe finally finished our RZR kit. It's not that Poe works slowly; it's that we show up late to installs. He bolted our new OMF Billet Center wheels wrapped in Maxxis Bighorns onto our 4-lug hubs. Our new OMF wheels have a slightly larger offset than the factory wheels do, making our track width even wider.



▲ With the Walker Evans' coilovers installed and the antisway bar reinstalled, we checked to make sure everything will clear. Poe had to notch the brace just above the shock's reservoir to allow the piggyback reservoir to clear everything. This is listed as a detail in CST's instructions.

In the background, you can see one of the new braided stainless steel brake lines that come with the CST kit. Make sure that these lines are bled (for air) when you install them and that you refill the reservoir with brake fluid.



▲ We even got to try a little rockcrawling, although that's not really why we built this thing. The wider track width helped a lot when climbing up in an off-camber position. The front wheels still pick up quickly (this is the nature of a short wheelbase), but it was definitely improved.



▲ Airtime episodes in the RZR were definitely improved as well. The first time we tried this, the RZR came down super hard because the editor's fat ass was in the seat, and we completely forgot to turn the shocks up. We found we like them best with 14 turns up front and 10-12 turns in the rear.

Sources

CST PERFORMANCE SUSPENSION

(951) 571-0212
www.cstsuspension.com

SOCAL SUPERTRUCKS
(909) 383-5454
www.socalsupertrucks.com

WALKER EVANS RACING
(951) 784-7223
www.walkerevansracing.com



▲ The CST kit retains the factory antisway bars but needs these new pivots for the top of the front antisway bar.