



PREVIEW

by Frank Masi

HIMOTO Rancho MONSTER TRUGGY!

The monster truck category has undergone a startling transformation over the last year, as new entries have by and large eschewed the traditional, center-transmission design of luminaries such as the Traxxas T-Maxx and HPI Savage in favor of the triple-differential, big-block engine theme common to 1/8-scale buggies. While most of these “truggies” (trucks based on 1/8-scale buggies) have been aimed at the racer, a small number cater to more casual truckers, those who prefer to climb, crawl and crush.

The ranks of the buggy-based monster truck have just swelled by one: the Rancho from Himoto. While it's likely you haven't heard of this brand before, it's certain that you'll be hearing a lot about Himoto in the coming months, as they plan to blitz the hobby-grade RC market with everything from the Rancho to nitro and electric touring cars.

In this article, I'll be showcasing the new Rancho—arguably the shining star of the new Himoto line—and in the months to come, we'll test the entire range of exciting new vehicles from Himoto.



Long travel suspension is damped by high-capacity aluminum shocks (with rubber dust boots). Cast aluminum spindles are attached to the beefy aluminum steering drag link. Adjustable turnbuckles are standard.



FEATURES:

Like nearly every truggy, the Rancho traces its roots to a 1/8-scale 4wd nitro buggy, in this case Himoto's Torpeda. What makes this one different is that, proportionally, it seems to be very close to the dimensions of the Savage and MGT, its wheelbase compact by race truggy standards.

- The chassis is a burly 3mm-thick plate of 6061 aluminum, hard-anodized for added durability and an all-business look. Recesses beneath the front and rear transmissions allow the diffs to sit lower in the chassis. Purple-anodized aluminum angle braces bolster the lower chassis against fore and aft flex, while a spacious molded radio box (with hinged lid) and blue-anodized aluminum servo plate hold the electronics with authority.
- The drivetrain is very similar to that of a 1/8-scale buggy; however, in an effort to improve climbing ability, the Rancho does away with

the Torpeda's center differential. In the diff's place is an aluminum slipper-clutch assembly that sandwiches the truck's large, hardened steel spur gear (itself driven by a competition-type three-shoe aluminum clutch). The rest of the drivetrain is pretty standard stuff: sealed six-gear diffs front and rear driven by thick steel dogbones. Standout features include dual-disc brakes at either end of the center slipper (although you don't need them unless you install the Torpeda's center diff) and steel universal shafts for the front wheels.

- The Rancho's suspension is lifted straight from the 1/8 Torpeda buggy. It has long-travel lower A-arms with multitudinous adjustments for its aluminum-bodied, oil-filled shocks. Adjustable upper arms provide instant camber adjustment thanks to handy turnbuckles, and a thick anti-roll bar keeps the rear end flat during cornering. The Rancho also has a clever anti-breakage

feature: a small spring is placed behind each lower front arm, so when you hit something, the arm can slide back and compress the spring rather than break.

- Like much of the Himoto line, the Rancho comes as a standard or a pro model. The truck shown here is the pro model, and it has the Team Infinity Japan .27 pull-start engine (the standard truck comes with a Taiwan Vertex .21). An SH aluminum-tuned pipe and large, shielded foam air-filter (to allow for wet-weather protection) control the incoming and outgoing gases.
- The Rancho comes as a full RTR, and includes an FM radio system with EPA adjustment for both the throttle and steering channels. A high-torque metal-gear steering servo and high-speed throttle servo come pre-installed to the chassis.

PHOTOS BY WALTER SIDAS

For total control, the Himoto RTRs come with this feature-laden FM transmitter. Ergos are good, and there's EPA adjustment for both channels.



The pro version of the Rancho comes with this powerful Team Infinity Japan pull-start engine and aluminum tuned exhaust. The sealed radio box provides excellent protection for the receiver and battery. ©

MEET THE FAMILY

As mentioned, Himoto is ramping up to blitz the U.S. market, and the Rancho is just the tip of the iceberg. Here are photos of a couple of other upcoming Himoto releases, the 1/8-scale Torpeda off-road buggy and the Eldorada 1/10-scale nitro monster truck. Like the Rancho, these vehicles are also available in standard and pro versions.



Links
Himoto, distributed by Myers Trading Co., (252) 946-1248, www.myerstrading.com

For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 193.