

TEST DRIVE

CEN MG10-MT3

■ RTR ■ NITRO ■ OFF-ROAD

A GREAT BASHER AT A SWEET PRICE

WORDS MARK RUDGE
PHOTOS JOSEPH ARTHUR

CEN HAS BEEN OFFERING high-quality RTR packages for some time now that appeal to bashers and racers alike. The MG10 series of off-road trucks has gone through numerous upgrades and changes, leading to the most current version of the monster truck version three. What sets apart this RTR from the competition are the components included. It is rare in a 1/10-scale vehicle to receive a computer radio capable of features such as 10-model memory, dual rates and all sorts of other features. Couple this with good servos and a strong engine, and you'll have the perfect basher suitable for those new to the hobby and experienced drivers alike. This model sports 4WD, is capable of challenging the roughest terrain and handles well. I have to say for bashing, nothing beats having 4WD compared with a 2WD counterpart. Everything is truly set up to allow the user to run the monster truck straight out of the box. The endpoints were programmed correctly, and it looked like the truck was trimmed from the factory. On paper, everything looks great. Will they hold up? Read further to find out!

SPECIFICATIONS

Type 1/10-scale RTR 4WD nitro monster truck

Price \$200

Top speed 36mph

Wheelbase 11.1 in. (282mm)

Width 12.7 in. (322mm)

Weight, as tested TK lb.

Spur/pinion 55/13

Final drive ratio 12.4:1

Chassis High-impact composite plastic

Differential(s) Front bevel-gear differential; rear 3-gear transmission

Shocks 4 plastic-bodies oil-filled

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“IT REALLY GIVES ME THE FEELING OF DRIVING A SCALED-DOWN VERSION OF A FULL-SCALE MONSTER TRUCK, JUST THE WAY IT SHOULD BE.”



CEN DESIGNED THIS TRUCK TO BE EASILY BROKEN DOWN AND MAINTAINED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.



The included DSX digital radio is a standard AM unit but has high-quality features such as digital dual rate and 10-model memory.



FEATURES

POWERPLANT. One big change from the earlier MG10 line of trucks is the new engine. A big 3.0cc motor moves the truck along with ease. It provides a very linear power band, making the truck even easier and more fun to drive. The power is very controllable with the shaft-driven 4WD system and is transmitted through a very beefy drivetrain.

There are no outdrive cups to wear down, instead the dog-bones are inserted into a hex-shaped output shaft from the differential. With the power of the 3.0cc engine, a well-designed slipper clutch takes even more stress off the drivetrain. With the instant transfer of power between the front and rear (thanks to the shaft-driven system), I never had any problems with gears, clutches, or spurs stripping or failing.

The drivetrain runs on full bearings throughout. The engine is mated to a 75cc tank, which can provide up to 10 minutes of driving time based on throttle control. The engine includes a durable pull-starter, and exhaust flows through a composite pipe. The air filter is already oiled and tucks neatly to the side, out of harm's way.

ELECTRONICS. The radio included in the RTR package is

fantastic. Although it's still an AM 27MHz system, the Skyion DSX Digital Radio (digital spec Xtreme) can switch modules to accommodate different frequencies. Also, you can program up to 10 different models with the transmitter, making it a great radio for someone new to the hobby. Later down the line, you can keep a lot of your models on this transmitter. The truck was trimmed from the factory and hardly needed any

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PERFORMANCE

The CEN MG10 MT3 is an all-out basher meant for rough surfaces, backyard bashing and BMX tracks. The large monster-truck wheels on the MT3 can be quite fun. It makes the suspension seem extra plush and bouncy, when in reality, the tires contribute to this fact a lot. At full speed, the truck can get unsettled in bumps, and it does have a tendency to flip if a big enough bump is hit. I could not keep the truck at full throttle off-road for long times. The truck's handling characteristics are very predictable, however; you can save many tip-overs by countersteering or applying throttle or brake at the correct moment. After a tank or two, I was able to drive on two wheels for extended periods of time. It really gives me the feeling of driving a scaled-down version of a full-scale monster truck, just the way it should be. The included radio gear worked great. The truck came trimmed from the factory, and I only applied a very small amount of steering trim. The servo-saver is a bit weak and causes the servo to struggle when turning the tires when the truck idles. This will save parts in the long run, however, and I see no need to change to a different setup if you're just having fun. The brakes surprised me with their effectiveness. I could stop instantly at almost any speed, and could only grab a certain amount of braking power before I was afraid I might flip the truck. It is always good to know that your truck will brake properly when you tell it. Landing jumps was also easy. With the strong brakes, you can bring the nose down in a hurry, or a blip of the throttle will bring the nose up. The extra large tires provide plenty of rotational mass for in-air corrections, and the suspension seems to be set up perfectly for small to medium jumps. I am amazed at how realistic the suspension works when landing a jump; I'd swear I was at a monster truck show driving this thing. I had great luck with the 3.0cc engine included with the MT3. It fired up instantly and continued to do so within one or two short pulls each time. The engine was set very rich from the factory; I could not proceed to break it in without leaning the high-speed needle considerably. After a few tanks for break-in, I was very surprised by how the engine behaved. It had such a smooth power band, that full throttle pulls were very easy, and it got up to 36mph in a hurry. Because the power was delivered in such a predictable manner, the power was easily managed without any tendency to spin out under hard acceleration. At the end of the day, I only broke a body post after flipping over a few times while trying to get up to speed on rough terrain. Everything else held up perfectly after countless tanks of fuel.



Monster trucks aren't your style? Don't worry. CEN offers this truck in a stadium truck version with a sleek body and smaller stadium truck tires. It's called the MG10 TR and is a blast to drive. Check out CEN's website for more details.

PLUS/MINUS

- Runs great out of the box
- Excellent radio
- Scale-like monster truck performance
- Flimsy shock tower/body post
- Phillips hardware prone to stripping

VERDICT

The CEN MG10 MT3 is the perfect basher vehicle that can be run with success right out of the box. It's a great first vehicle for newcomers to nitro or to the hobby. The scale looks and strong performance make the car a blast to drive. I had so much fun two-wheeling and making scale-like saves after a few jumps. This seems to have been lost lately in most of the high-performance trucks nowadays; with this truck, it's back to the basics. And it couldn't be more fun to drive. A high-quality radio and engine and quality assembly from the factory make the MT3 a winner.

SOURCES

CEN Racing cencracing.com
MaxAmps.com maxamps.com
Traxxas traxxas.com

tweaking to get running. Digital trims, dual rates and endpoints are just a few of the radio's features. All are very easy to see on the large LCD screen. Protecting the receiver from harmful splashes of water or mud is a sealed radio box.

LOW STANCE. The MG10 has a very low CG. Once you add the large monster truck tires, the MT3 really gets jacked up. It also sits nice and wide, giv-

ing it stability over the rough stuff. I would say this helps in turning, however, because of the large MT tires, the MT3 behaves like an 1/8-scale monster in the turns; come into a turn hot, and you will be two-wheeling; too fast, and you may roll over.

MAINTENANCE. Maintenance is a breeze. CEN designed this truck to be easily broken down and maintained as quickly as

possible. For example, the differentials can be taken out by removing only eight screws. When I was working on the truck, everything came apart very easily, without the need to take off multiple pieces to get at critical areas in the truck. My only complaint is that the Phillips screws can strip if you aren't careful. However, using these types of screws allows the newbie to get going quickly without having to buy an

expensive set of hex drivers. **STEERING.** The steering setup is simple and works effectively. I found the servo-saver to be a bit soft; the included steering servo had difficulty turning the tires unless the truck was in motion. A stiffer servo-saver may help improve response; however, I would leave it with the stock setup to help preserve the servo gears and take as much



stress as possible off the steering. The servo for the throttle/brakes is fantastic and will stop the truck on a dime—much better than some RTRs in the same category.

SUSPENSION. The shock absorbers are nice and long and allow plenty of articulation. Limiters are placed on the shafts to help prevent unnecessary bottoming out. I suspect if you raised the ride height on the truck, you can play with the limiter to get even more suspension travel. The shocks seemed to squeak after a few runs, and upon further inspection, it was the shock ends ball joints making the noise. A little WD-40 fixed this “problem,” and they performed flawlessly for many runs. The shocks are placed at a somewhat aggressive angle to allow for clearance of the body.