

Product Review - Lobo II/Elka Suspension for Duncan

Project TRX450R



I've been asked on many different occasions, what I think is the most important upgrade you can make on your quad to improve the overall handling and performance. Hands down, I tell them that if you are going to start making changes, start with the suspension and steering. That's where the power meets the ground, and if your suspension is not dialed in, it doesn't matter what you do to the rest of the bike. Suspension is the key, and Duncan Racing International and Roll Design were the people we went to, to make improvements to our project TRX450R. Duncan has been in the race industry for 25 plus years and Roll Design has been a pioneer in ATV suspension for over 15 years. Each has a lot invested in R&D on their products, and it shows!

There are so many different manufacturers out there today, that it may be difficult to decide who to go with, but if you have the money, the Roll Design Lobo II is one of the very best. The Lobo II kit includes A-Arms, tie rods, Crown Series Brake lines, Axis or Elka front shocks, inboard PTFE composite bearings (installed), pivot pins and sealing washers. The A-Arms are available in a variety of different widths depending on your application (Motocross, Desert, etc.) They recommend that you only use the Axis or Elka shocks, because both have the specially designed high end dampener required for the Lobo II kit to function properly (They warn that it will not work properly with stock shocks or aftermarket stock replacement shocks). All kits are available in powder-coated red, grey, blue or black and there are some "Candy" colors or chrome plating available at an additional cost. We went with the red/chrome option to go with the bike and the Elka long travel shocks, as well as a +3 width on the A-Arms. Wider is better in the sand! The Elka shocks are superb. They come with remote or piggyback reservoir options, and both function equally well.

They have a "No Preload Feature", which gives the suspension maximum traction and stability at the beginning of the stroke. While also ensuring excellent impact resistance at the end of the stroke, which results in lower ride height, lower center of gravity, easier turning and better weight transfer. These shocks are also easily rebuilt and revalved.

When you look at the quad from the front, you will notice a bend in the A-arm. Roll design has a patented lower Gull Wing, or bent, Arm design. Roll design was the first to do this way back in 1988. This not only allows for a shock with longer shaft travel, but also lowers the quad's ride height to make it more stable in corners, without sacrificing the luxurious ride. The lowered ride height and design specifications improve braking, weight transfer, corner stability and enhance steering by giving it a more precise feel. You'll find yourself using words like, "plush", "magnificent", or "ever so satisfyingly smooth" to describe the sensation of your new ride. The lower control arms are constructed of oversized 4130 chromoly tubing and all control arm inboard pivots use long wear PTFE composite lined bearings. The ball joints are a three-piece design that



uses 17-4 heat-treated stainless steel and long wearing replaceable spherical bearings. The lower ball joint housing is integrated in the control arm, eliminating any bending or shear points, while the upper ball joint is encapsulated in a 7075 high strength lightweight aluminum body. This adds huge strength to the front end of your beast, and the design is super clean and adds to the quality look of your machine. Functionality is great, but we all need a little "Bling, Bling" in our lives too, and the Lobo II delivers in this department as well.

Then it was time to get an anti-vibration steering stem and a steering stabilizer. When you widen the front end, it is a good idea to find a good steering stabilizer. We went with the GPR stabilizer, anodized red of course, and a steering stem, +1" over stock, from Herrmann Racing, powder-coated red as well. The GPR stabilizer is awesome, extremely easy to use, and looks great. The combination of it and the longer steering stem makes controlling the wider bike easy and reduces arm/hand fatigue and forearm pump. We used a set of Pro-Taper CR High-bend bars, filled with Bar Snake (which is an incredible product) to top it off as well as a pair of Ricky Stator Aluminators to provide vision enhancement so we can ride the new stuff all night long!

For the rear end of the bike, we used the stock swing-arm with a long travel Elka shock and Elka linkage to make it ride smooth in the rear and suck up the whoops, and boy, does it! We also utilized a set of sweet looking billet wheel spacers from American Billet Products to give the bike more width in the rear, with out having to spend lots of dinero on a new axle, carrier, etc. These rear wheel spacers work great and look even better.

Well, all that sounds just terrific, but how does it work? Did it function well in harsh conditions? Did it work that much better than stock? Did all that work and money make any difference? Oh, yeah, baby! The difference is huge and easily identifiable. The nose of the

TRX450R is very light on the stock version and comes up with very little effort, sometimes too easily. The wider front end kept the front on the ground more, but it was still easy to get the front end "light" when I needed to or just wanted to. After all, wheelies are fun and necessary sometimes! The Lobo II front end and the Elka shocks front and rear give the bike a plush ride, comfortable and in control, especially at high speeds or through whoop sections, or more importantly, at high speeds through the whoop sections! Jumping has never been so kind to body and bike. I could loft it 10+ feet into the air off a dune, and it felt like I was landing on clouds, smooth and no whiplash effect. WOW! The bike handles better, is more comfortable to ride at any speed, and just feels steadier and safer. The guys at Duncan Racing said that it was going to be awesome, and they have been true to their word. Next, Duncan is hooking us up with more power, doing some engine modifications. I can hardly wait to get my hands on it and try it out, but I've been told that patience is a virtue. Hmm, whoever said that obviously didn't have a clue or anything to wait for! I am looking forward to telling you all about it. Until then, be safe in the sand.



For more info visit:
www.rolldesign.com or www.duncanracing.com

VORTEX X10 CDI from Duncan Racing International

By Jeff Beckley



I tend to be somewhat skeptical about things, and when a product claims that it has "Instant Plug in Performance no mods to wire", all of my BS alarms begin to sound off. I've seen too many bolt-on performance pieces that were just plain piss-poor and disappointing. If they did manage to mount easily, as advertised, they soon came off. Many are poorly crafted, not very well thought out, or function the same or worse than the stock part that they replaced.

I am pleased to say that the VORTEX X10 CDI Ignition, available exclusively from Duncan Racing International (DRI), is not one of those afore mentioned products. This programmable CDI box delivers. Yes, that's right, I said programmable. The Vortex is a dual curve programmable CDI that is manufactured in Australia and offers race tested factory designed ignition curves for improved engine performance.

All wiring necessary for installation is in the kit, which also includes a handle bar switch for Dynamic Map selection. This allows you as the rider to switch between your two pre-selected ignition curves. Map 1, which is preset, is for your low-end grunt, coming out of corners in 1st and 2nd gears or hole shots. Map 2 is for top end ignition performance, giving you maximum spark energy at higher speeds in your taller gears. The Map 2 selection, offers 10 different power settings, which are extremely easy to adjust using a small screwdriver. This is so cool, because if you're like me, you hate to hit the rev limiter on the stock CDI, when you know that there is more power available. The Vortex X10 CDI allows you to create more top-end performance easily! There is a programmable rev limiter, but a technician with Vortex PC software must set this up. There is also PC Programming Software available for engine developers and you can contact DRI directly, for more information about this option.

The guys at Duncan mounted it under the hood of our TRX450R, next to the stock CDI, so we could do a side-by-side comparison, which is actually kind of funny, because there is no comparison. We tested it out in the big bowls of Glamis, where I used to find myself restricted at top speeds by the stock CDI, choking my power before I felt it should have peaked. Now as I revved up in third to hit fourth and pushed my Map 2 selection, you could actually hear, and more importantly, feel the change. This is bolt-on performance that actually works, and impressively at that. The quad was able to run higher into the RPM range and able to put out more efficient power at the top-end, and never burbled and sputtered at the top of any gear. I found that selecting #7 on the mapping dial worked really well for me in the dunes and found that it was extremely easy to use the button on the handlebars to switch back and forth as I needed.

Overall, I am very impressed with the VORTEX X10 CDI that is available exclusively from Duncan Racing International.

For more info visit: www.duncanracing.com