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PITBULL ROCKER

Asymmetrical bite with attitude to spare

By Robin Stover *Photography: Robin Stover*

In the world of specialty light truck tires, a noticeable void exists between the big super-aggressive mud-terrain treads and the road-worthy all-terrain variants. Simply put, you can't buy a "plus-size" all-terrain designed for light trucks. By "plus-size," we mean a tire larger than 42-inch diameter. Despite growing demand, this

virtually forgotten category encompasses tread characteristics commonly found on smaller all-terrains, yet offers sizes more appropriately fitted to full-size machines with ample fender clearance and the stoutest of underpinnings. The would-be buyer in this particular segment desires a tread that returns long wear characteristics, low road noise and

respectable on- and off-highway performance. While most tire manufacturers rarely attempt to capture this corner of the plus-size market, consumers are left with an ample supply of aggressive mud-terrain designs to pick from instead, many of which are better suited for competition buggies and big-block-powered monster mudders. Pitbull, however, is out to change all that with a whole plethora of big-dog sizes in their less aggressive Rocker tire design. We recently got a set of 44x19.50/20 Rockers to test out on our beloved Teal Brute project Jeep. It took a little suspension adjustment and slight fender trimming to clear them, but at the end of a Saturday afternoon at DC Customs of Ukiah, California, the Teal Brute was wearing 44-inch Rockers and begging us to go out and play.

Why a Behemoth All-Terrain?

Without a doubt, the availability of an all-terrain tire of this proportion is big news to the ever-increasing populace who



The Teal Brute looked so mean on 44s, it was almost a sin to return it to the 40s she was designed to run.

build 4x4s. In fact, we'd dare to say that the new 44-inch Pitbull Rockers may even start a new all-terrain big-meet showdown between a select few tire manufacturers. Time will tell, but one thing's for sure, the 44-inch Rocker ushers in a supply chain to meet the demands of those light truck owners who want massive rubber with street-friendly characteristics.

The Low Void Ratio Advantage

Granted, the Rocker has less lug separation than a traditional mud tire, yet the physical width of the contact patch (14.5 inches) more than makes up for any lack of bite, even in the gooiest of slop. As long as you have the horsepower to spin them, the Rockers shred through mud with ample effect. The large asymmetrical lugs are staggered to create a pattern that provides biting edges at every degree of rotation. The benefits of this design help propel a vehicle forward on virtually any terrain. The large offset shoulder blocks play an active part in the traction game by angling through and gnawing away at whatever the center lugs left behind. Serious forward momentum is the result, even when we pointed the Teal Brute into a brutally deep hole with fine sedimentary mud; the Rockers pulled through with confidence to spare. At first we ran the tires at 10 psi. We didn't notice a whole lot of sidewall deflection until we hit the rocks. Without true beadlock wheels, we were hesitant to drop the Rockers much below 7 psi, though with their wide and flexible contact patch along with the weight of our 5,600-pound Brute, we had no problem in the traction department.

Pavement Prowess

Once aired up, we hit the pavement to evaluate the Rocker's street manners. Considering that Pitbull touts the Rockers as an "Extreme Terrain" tire, we were surprised with the tread's mild-mannered on-road feel. On the highway, they felt less bothersome than other smaller mud-terrains we've tested, which is a good thing in our opinion. We credit the Rocker's varied lug pattern and reduced void ratio for this, much as you would with an all-terrain design. The sidewalls state a maximum load rating of 4,410 pounds at 45 psi cold, which means even a portly full-size rig should have no problem running down the highway at 65 mph on these meats. Thanks to a very functional 10.5-inch tall sidewall, torsional flex and steering wander is minimal, even on twisty backloop roads. Road noise does exist, but we found it a lot quieter than other 44-inch



◀ In the mud, the Pitbull Rockers impressed us by supplying seemingly endless traction.

▽ The Rocker's sidewall includes ribbing that helps prevent punctures while adding extra bite for extreme rock crawling.



△ For this particular test session, we used a set of 20-inch Mamba M4 aluminum wheels. These simulated beadlocks come with robust 5/8-inch stainless steel hardware that provides an unmistakable hardcore look.

▷ Here is a good look at the Rocker's semi-aggressive tread design.

tires we've tested, especially those of which are intended for mud bogging. On the highway, the Rockers felt right at home, returning acceptable braking, excellent steering and better-than-expected wet pavement performance. The wide contact patch took a little getting used to at first as it transmitted road imperfections to the steering wheel, but after a while it didn't seem so bad or difficult to control.

The Bottom Line

If you're looking for a tire that works well in mud and need something in the 44-inch range, but don't want the drawbacks associated with super-aggressive mud tires, the Pitbull Rockers may be just what you're looking for. **FW**



SPECIFICATIONS

Tire: Pitbull Rocker
Size: 44x19.50-20LT
Type: Bias-ply
Load range: D
Max load (lb @ psi): 4,410 @ 45
Sidewall: 4-ply nylon
Tread: 4-ply nylon
Approved rim width (in): 12-14
Tread depth (in): 15/32
Tread width (in): 14.80
Section width (in): 18.40
Overall diameter (in): 44.4
Static loaded radius (in): 20.2
Revolutions per mile: 334
Weight (lb): 131

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Pitbull Tires
www.pitbulltires.com