

ITP BajaCross X/D Tires And SS 312 Wheels

After miles and miles of testing and play riding in our Polaris RZR-S, it was very apparent the stock wheels and tires had taken quite a beating and were ready for an early retirement. They've definitely taken their fair share of a good beating. My testing areas have a wide variety of terrain which can put every tire to the test with everything from jagged rocks, soft sand and blue-grooved fire roads that practically look like the 110 Freeway in downtown Los Angeles.

While passing by the ITP Tire booth at this year's Dealer Expo in Indianapolis, Indiana, I couldn't help but notice the sick-looking new BajaCross X/D tires and remembered them as I went over my choices in new shoes for my RZR-S. I made the call to ITP and was told my new meats were going to be mounted on a set of the company's SS 312 alloy wheels. I asked if these were beadlock wheels and was told they were not. With plenty of seat time in side-by-side machines, I'm somewhat uneasy about driving aggressively without beadlocks because I have an uncanny knack for rolling the bead off of wheels.

Before I mounted the new wheels and tires up to my RZR-S, I did a quick weight comparison of the new ITPs and the used Maxxis Bighorns that were mounted on the OEM alloy wheels. The new tires were an inch shorter in height but still weighed in six pounds heavier in the front and four in the

rear compared to the old setup. This was a slight turnoff for me, but a heavy-duty tire isn't going to be the lightest

thing in the world. With the wheels mounted and set at 12 psi, I stood back and admired the stylish looks the shiny new SS 312 wheels gave our machine and was ready to hit the trails.

I took the RZR to my local testing area where I knew I could run the tires through the gamut. From technical rock crawling to sandy creek beds, I was going to see how well the tires would perform and hold up. I

rolled out of the staging area and headed along a trail that was littered with small boulders and rocks with noticeably sharp edges, which could easily end the day for those with a lesser tire. As for myself, I stayed in the throttle and purposely aimed for them to see how these tires might be affected. By the time I reached the peak of the climb, I expected to hear the hissing of a leaking tire, but heard only the hum of my exhaust. That was pretty impressive, and it was now time to move on to the next challenge.

At the peak of the climb, multiple trails became visible for me to explore, and I chose to take the ones that had the most rain ruts. To see how well the lugs bit into the dirt, I steered right into a rut and slowly proceeded forward. As the rut narrowed, the aggressive side lugs of the tire dug right into the dirt and lifted the RZR out of the rut and right up the hill. The tire carcass had just enough flex to keep a good amount of tread patch on the ground providing great traction. So far, my testing was going well.

Finally, I tested the high-speed stability of these tires on bumpy rock-strewn fire roads and sand washes. In the loose sand the handling seemed a little bit squirrely, which is to be expected with most tires, but on the hard-pack stuff they were phenomenal. They had great traction going through the corners at speed, and I could break the rear end loose when I wanted to and drift at will. All in all, these tires were performing well beyond my expectations.

While I haven't had them on for a long period of time, I don't doubt these tires have a good lifespan on any terrain as my set were showing very little wear after a long, rough day on rugged trails. If you're in the market for an excellent hard-pack set of shoes for your SxS, you can't go wrong by giving the BajaCross X/Ds a chance. The same goes for the SS 312 wheels as they look good and even held up to my aggressive driving without any tires dismounting or chipping and dinging of the wheel. Prices on the tires are \$134.95 each for the fronts and \$145.95 each on the rears; the wheels are \$92.95 each. While these prices may seem steep, you're likely to find great package deals well below that cost. **-Eli Madero**

UTE TIRES

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Forward Traction	18/20
Cornering	19/20
Ride Comfort	17/20
Durability	19/20
Price	17/20

BOTTOM LINE: It's not the smoothest riding tire, but it is well worth the performance and durability you will get in the long run on your heavy side-by-side.

ITP Tires: See your local dealer;
www.ITPTires.com

