

THE GOOD TEST

ITP 12-inch Wheel & Tire Combo

Pimping rides is the thing to do these days. From cars and trucks to semis and Harleys, people love to add life to their stock machines. ITP tire and wheel knows this customizing craze also attracts ATV owners. ITP is banking on its latest tire-and-wheel combination to become the first big add-on to any pimped out ATV.

ITP's latest creation, the low-profile, 12-inch-diameter Sand Star dune tire and C-Series wheels combo kit, was built to please all those Kawasaki KFX700 fanatics out there. We saw a single prototype tire and wheel at the Indianapolis Dealer Expo in February and lined up a test immediately. ITP, with help from Kawasaki, provided a complete set for a loaner KFX700 for our annual Glamis trip in April. We knew the LP Sand Stars would look damn fine, but we also wanted to test their functionality. We wondered if their was go with the show.

As soon as we bolted on the 12-inch tire-and-wheel combo, the KFX700 looked like a custom rod. The low-profile tires and mag-like wheels gave the Lava Red Kawi its own look. Bolting on the tires and wheels were not an issue and we had no complaints. Everything cleared, including the fenders and front brakes. So far so good.

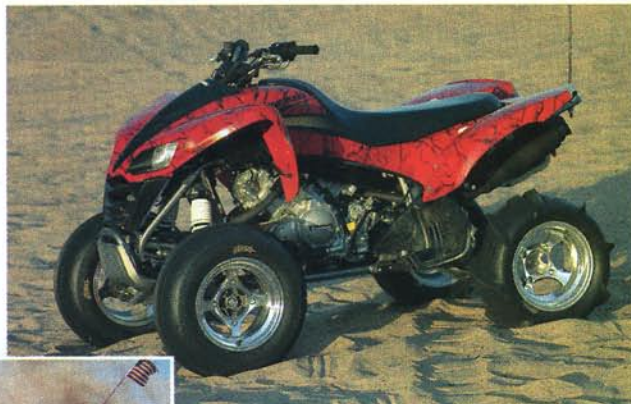
The 12-inch Sand Stars helped the KFX700 gain more flotation in the soft Glamis sand and because of it, the ride improved. Without the dune tires, the

KFX700 was fun, but seemed to lose most of its punch, especially when we climbed big bowls. The low-profile ITP treads roosted more sand and let the KFX glide across the top of the sand. The taller tire also provided more ground clearance, which helped for carving and dicing around the dune peaks. The size and aggressive nature of the tires, however, did make the KFX700 feel even more tippy, but with more saddle time our test riders found the ride quite enjoyable.

The Sand Stars on 12-inch C-Series wheels were much lighter than we expected. The lightweight design combined with the aggressive nature of the eight rear paddles produced one heck of a roost and initial yank, especially over the stock KFX tires. We also like the dual-ridge design on the front tire. The design gives the rider more feedback than some front dune tires, but that's sometimes good in the sand. They improved the Kawi's ride that's for sure. The unique KFX700 doesn't carve bowls as efficiently or as fun as some of the manual-shift sport quads, but the ITP tires made it more enjoyable.

The taller tires produce a smooth ride, even through the choppiest, wind-blown stretches at Glamis and that pleased our older test riders.

The real test came when we decided to mount a one-of-a-kind set of



12-inch Sand Stars on our loaner Honda 450R. Talk about dope looks, our red Honda looked wild and mean with the low-profile meats. Like the KFX700, however, we had to test the tire and wheel combo to see if the 450R's looks were for the back of the truck or the for playing in the Glamis bowls.

Already geared tall stock, the Honda 450R had even more trouble in first gear with the low-profile Sand Stars. Oh, the Honda could do it, but don't expect to beat your buddy off the line up Oldsmobile Hill. With this tire-and-wheel combo mounted, the 450R becomes less agile but looks cool. It's really a tradeoff: looks vs. optimal sand performance. A quick fix would be to change the gearing down low and lose some top-end speed. The dunes have never been about tapped-out runs anyway.

Some people only cruise the dunes, while others attack them like a national MX course. Thankfully, ITP has several sizes of Sand Stars to choose from and we're glad it has added this trick setup. If you are into stellar looks and cruising, these taller, low-profile meats may be the big pimpin' ticket your quad needs.

The 12-inch Sand Stars will be available soon. Planned sizes include 22 x 8-12 (front), 22 x 11-12 (rear). Pricing has not been set.

—Jerrold Kelley



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