



XFactor

BY MICHAEL SOMMER

You don't have to spend a whole day powering through the dunes in a long-travel buggy, riding shotgun with Andrew Buck behind the wheel, in order to learn that this guy knows what it takes to have a lot of fun. Granted, taking this approach would sure make your introduction more memorable and you'd have a great time in the process. But it's not required. Anyone who happens to walk into the Buckshot Racing camp, which is usually on Gecko Road when he's at the Glamis sand dunes, can plainly see that Andrew and his entire group of friends are there to live it up. His approach to sand duning is simple. Bring as many toys as you can possibly fit on the trailer, be sure that there's enough food and drinks to last the weekend, and always have a camera and video recorder ... to catch the action in the dunes when the buggies are rollin', as well as what happens in camp at night when the party starts rockin'.

The owner of Buckshot Racing, located in La Habra, California, Andrew Buck usually takes about 15 trips to the sand dunes each year. And, contrary to the motivation that some buggy manufacturers have for heading out to the dunes, Andrew is rarely there just to promote his business. He's usually having way too much fun for that. In fact, on each of the four separate occasions that I happened to see him in the dunes last year, Andrew was accompanied by his wife Vicki, and daughters Jackie (7) and Jessica (11), enjoying the weekend with a group of their close duning friends. It was on one of these occasions, just prior to the President's Day 2003 holiday, when I photographed Andrew's unique X-3 creation for this feature. I should say right off that driving in the X-3 with Andrew was unlike any other buggy ride I have ever taken ... but more on that later.

When I arrived at their camp that morning, it was about 8.00 a.m. and I was greeted by Andrew and his pal Jeff Bowles. The two of them were standing there having a cup of coffee, which

Andrew Buck's personal play car is this unique 3-seater that's designed specifically for running fast through the dunes and jumping huge distances

was perfect timing since I showed up with a dozen assorted donuts for them. Andrew and I came up with a game plan for the day, which included taking the photos and going for a long run through the dunes so I could learn more about the car. Some of my initial questions to Andrew were, how long did it take for him to design and build the X-3 from start to finish (keeping in mind that Buckshot has several X-5 models on order at any given time), and how much did he have invested in the project. Being that this was #001 of the X-3 line of buggies (he has since built two others, and currently has two off-road desert race versions on order), it took him about eight months to complete from the day that the first tubes were bent to when it rolled out of the trailer and hit the sand. And ... get ready for this, he told me the car is worth 98K. By the time you finish reading this you'll understand how it all adds up.

I asked Andrew to tell us more about the design of the X-3, and also describe some of the custom parts that he used to build it. Some of the features he told us about the car are as follow. The layout of the X-3 was inspired by McLaren's F1 race car. The driver's seat was placed in the middle of the cockpit and positioned as far forward as possible to allow for greater visibility. When driving the X-3, it feels as if you're alone in the car until you turn your head and notice that there's a passenger flanking you on each side about a foot back. The seats were custom made by Gary at Jet Trim (Lake Havasu City, AZ), and the driver controls the car with an Impys 14-inch steering wheel, along with CNC hanging pedal assemblies and remote reservoirs. The car is also equipped with CNC cutting brakes, in addition to 12-inch drilled rotors with Wilwood 4-piston brake calipers front and rear that are dialed-in proportionately using



X3 cockpit features three seats with center steering, CNC hanging pedals, Hurst shifter, and Stack dash. Car rides on Douglas bead lock wheels, with S.T.U. 14.50 Desert Traks front and 20.00 paddles out back.



Check out the X-3 in action, which clearly shows the car's agility and suspension travel. Slides and jumps such as these are smooth and effortless. The chassis was powdercoated by Our Powder Coating (Santa Fe Springs, CA), and Deamon Customs did the graphics. The polishing and chrome plating were done by Mirror Metal. BELOW, note bypass shocks and anti-sway bar, rear wing lifts up to reveal storage tray/trunk and electric fans, and 600hp LS-6 engine is fitted with an Eaton blower and intercooler.

a CNC bias adjust knob that is within the driver's reach.

The powerful 600hp supercharged LS-6 engine is located directly behind the driver's seat. Attached to the engine is a Jerico WC4 dog-shifted transmission which, in turn, transfers the power to the paddle tires via a Speedway Engineering quick change rear end that has been extensively modified for

this application (we'll dive deeper into the details of the engine and drive train later). The 27 gallon fuel cell is from Fuel Safe and is mounted directly above the transmission. The importance of all this is to tell you that the bulk of the weight on the X-3 is centrally located, giving the car a weight ratio of 55% rear and 45% front for superior handling characteristics. *Continued on page 60*

