

DRIVEN REVIEW

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Photos by Walter Sidas

FAST FACTS

MANUFACTURER: Himoto USA

VEHICLE: Mini Corba RZ1

CLASS: 1/16 Scale Nitro Off-Road

DRIVER: Anyone interested in RC

AVERAGE PRICE: \$174.99

SPEED: 23.03 mph

SNAKE CHARMER

HIMOTO Mini Cobra RZ1

Himoto is a relative newcomer into the RC world but has managed to make a big splash in

a very short amount of time. If the past few issues, we reviewed a couple of its 1/8-scale products, both of which received very good ratings. We soon got our hands on one of the first 1/16-scale Mini Cobras to hit the States, and all of us at *RC Driver* took an immediate liking to its features. Micro trucks are very cool, but when you cram a nitro engine into one, it gets even cooler. Take a look at the Mini Cobra RZ1; we think it's got the goods to be a hit.

HIMOTO COBRA RZ1



DID YOU KNOW?

The first Cobra, CSX2000, was shipped to the U.S. from England in early 1962. Within a few hours of its arrival in California, it received a 260 V-8 and 4-speed transmission in Dean Moon's Los Angeles shop, and the Cobra legend had begun.

PERFORMANCE

SURFACE—Small dirt quad track

ON AND OFF-POWER STEERING—One great thing about the Mini Cobra is that Himoto includes a good metal gear steering servo with the truck. This little servo provides enough power to turn the large tires while the truck is standing still so steering response while driving the truck is great. The large pin tires that come standard on the truck worked out great for the loose, dry dirt that made up the test course. Cornering while on power was a little tricky since the truck wanted to push on the loose surface. Adding a little throttle would get the truck to go into a slight drift, and I was able to finesse my way through the twisty stuff. Off power, the truck turned on a dime. In my case, the track was so big that I didn't find myself lifting much. Like most monster trucks, the Mini Cobra tended to roll if you hit a corner too hot. Once I was used to the track, I was able to get the truck around without incident.

ACCELERATION AND BRAKING—Acceleration is the one thing that really lacks in the Mini Cobra. The little .05cc engine has a hard time getting the heavy truck moving. I tried every trick in the book to tune the carb, set the slipper clutch and adjust the ball differentials to get the truck moving a little quicker. Unfortunately, nothing really worked. Once the truck is moving, it does a nice job getting around; it just takes a little extra time to get going.

Braking performance is just about right for the size and weight of the truck. The small brake rotor and dual pad system manage to get the truck to a halt quickly. While on the track, I didn't use the brake too much other than to adjust the attitude in the air going over the jumps.

HANDLING—With its eight oil-filled shocks and large wheels and tires, the Mini Cobra handles the bumps and jumps nicely. The truck has a lot of suspension travel, which helps it land some of the larger jumps without a hiccup. Side-to-side roll is about average for a truck with as much ground clearance as it has. Pushing the Cobra hard into a corner will lead to a rollover if you are not careful. I found that in my testing, the truck would start to bicycle before completely rolling over, and I was able to recover before sending it on its lid. This actually became more of a game with the friends I was with. We would see how long we could keep it on two wheels the longest; that was fun!

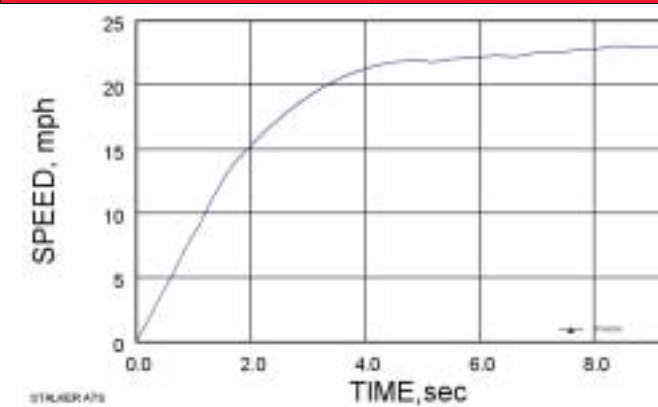
A LAP AROUND THE TRACK—The newfound gem of a track I discovered was great. It was set up in an oval with a small jump (about two feet high) on each straightaway and a very small whoop section in the short shoot section of each corner. Once the Mini Cobra got going, it would rip around the track like a champ. The eight shocks soaked up all of the whoops without getting the truck out of shape. The two small jumps were just the right size for the suspension on the truck. Each jump was enough to send the Mini Cobra about five to six feet out, and the angle was just about right. I had to input very little throttle or brake to keep the truck level. I am sure the owner, Dave, and I will get to be good friends!

INFO CENTER

CHASSIS—Thick aluminum is the material of choice for the foundation of the Mini Cobra. Up front, an aluminum chassis brace is used to add strength to the truck and also serves as the mounting point for the steering servo. In the rear, the electronics compartment helps to add strength by mounting to the chassis and rear differential housing. Uniquely designed spring-loaded bumpers are found both in the front and rear of the truck to help protect your investment. A small 45cc fuel tank is mounted to the chassis to handle all of the gas-guzzling needs of the .05 engine. **STEERING**—A dual bellcrank system is used to steer the truck. An inline servo saver is integrated into the bellcranks to protect the steering servo in case of an impact. Adjustable turnbuckles are used to adjust the front toe as well as the steering linkage from the servo to the bellcrank. A ball bearing steering servo is included in the RTR version and provides plenty of power to turn the big wheels and tires. **SUSPENSION**—Eight large oil-filled shocks come as standard equipment on the Mini Cobra. The shocks have plastic bodies and aluminum caps. Shock towers are made from molded plastic and allow up to three mounting positions, albeit on the top only. The front end on the Mini cobra is fully adjustable by way of pivot ball suspension and adjustable turnbuckles for toe. The rear end, however, is not adjustable at all. **DRIVETRAIN**—The heart of the beast is the .05 CXP nitro engine, which features a blue aluminum cooling head and composite plastic exhaust pipe. From the engine, the power is sent through a center spur gear, which has an adjustable slipper clutch to minimize drivetrain breakage. Steel driveshafts send the power out to the front and rear adjustable ball differentials cased in heavy duty plastic housings. From the diffs, the power makes its way out to the wheels by way of steel dog bones and steel outdrives. A vented steel brake rotor is mounted in-line with the rear driveshaft. The entire drivetrain on the Mini Cobra is supported by steel ball bearings. **BODY AND WHEELS**—A nicely painted and trimmed stadium truck style body sits neatly atop the Mini Cobra. Chrome wheels add some style to the truck and compliment the body nicely. Pinned chevron-style tires make their way on the truck and provide good grip for most surfaces that the truck will be driven on.



RADAR DATA



TECH SPECS

SCALE: 1/16
DRIVE: 4WD
LENGTH: 9.2 in. (251mm)
WIDTH: 7.2 in. (216mm)
WHEELBASE: 6.1 in. (174mm)
GEAR RATIO: 14.1:1

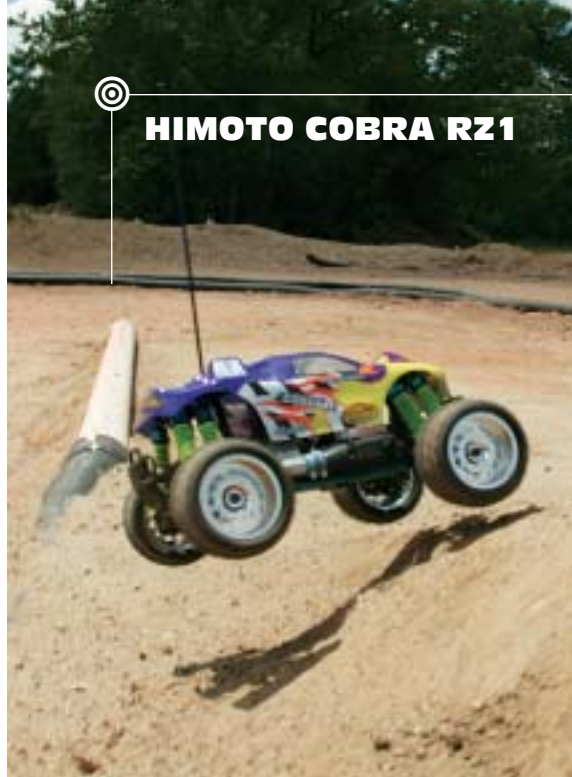
WIDTH OF WHEEL: 7 in. (40mm)
WHEEL DIAMETER: 6 in. (77mm)
ACCELERATION:
 0-10mph: 1.21 sec.,
 0-20mph: 3.34 sec.; 8.45sec @
 23.03 mph in 224.81ft.

HELPFUL HINTS

GOT TO GET: 8 AA batteries for transmitter, 4 AAA batteries for the truck, fuel

COMPETITORS INCLUDE: Xray N18NT

HIMOTO COBRA RZ1



The radio box takes up much of the left side of the chassis and houses everything but the servos. To power the truck, Himoto used a super small four-cell AAA receiver pack.



Two shocks per wheel is the name of the game for the Mini Cobra. These large, oil-filled shocks soak up all the bumps along the way.



The wheel/tire combo on the Mini Cobra is perfect for bashing; the chevron tread will work on anything from dirt to pavement.



Both front and rear differentials on the Mini Cobra are fully supported by ball bearings to ensure smooth operation.



Bushing-supported bellcranks handle the steering duties with a servo saver built into the main crank.



Here is a full view of the Cobra's power center: engine, pipe and fuel system. Just like the big stuff, just smaller!



Definitely one of the stand-out features of the truck is the pivot ball suspension. It's easy to tune and very rugged.



Static suspension components are found in the rear. Notice the standard hex pins on the axles. This allows the use of many different wheels down the road.



A two-shoe racing style clutch is used to get the truck moving; the aluminum flywheel is a nice touch.



AUTHOR'S OPINIONS AND RATINGS

■ **CHASSIS**—The thick aluminum chassis is strong and durable. It provides a solid foundation for the truck and keeps everything securely in place. The overall design and placement of the components is the best I have seen in the up-and-coming category if nitro micros.

RATING-10

■ **SUSPENSION**—The use of eight shocks initially scared me; this much suspension on such a small truck usually means it will be very stiff. Himoto designers did their homework and built the shocks just right to give the truck perfect dampening. The adjustability on the front end is great. I would have liked to see the same in the rear.

RATING-8

■ **DRIVETRAIN**—Aside from the lack of punch from the engine, the drivetrain on the Mini Cobra is awesome. The slipper clutch is great and definitely needed. The front and rear diffs work well, and the driveshafts are smooth. If only the engine could make a little more power.

RATING-7

■ **STEERING**—One of the best features of the truck is the steering. The dual bellcranks are solid, and the built-in servo saver adds a nice touch. Including a ball bearing servo is an added touch that most do not do.

RATING-10

■ **DURABILITY**—The truck held up like a champ. Run after abusive run, the Mini Cobra held up well. The only thing that broke, and kept breaking, is the on/off switch. It's located on the cover of the radio tray and tends to get crammed in the battery box. I repeatedly broke this so eventually rewired it with an on/off switch on the outside of the box.

RATING-8

■ **EASE OF USE**—For the beginner, this truck is one of the easiest. The pull-start engine fires right up and is fairly easy to tune. Making adjustments to the drivetrain is straightforward, and the manual does a nice job of illustrating this.

RATING-9



ITEM USED
Byron 30%
Race Fuel



What we liked—

- ⊙ Great design
- ⊙ Standard wheels hexes make wheel/tire options easy
- ⊙ Love the body design
- ⊙ Strong servos

What could be improved—

- ⊙ Nitro engine is lacks punch
- ⊙ Radio box is way too tight

CONCLUSION

If you are a nitro lover and you have been looking for a suitcase companion or just want something a little more portable to take out and bash, the Mini Cobra RZ1 from Himoto is just what the doctor ordered. Its small size is perfect to grab and go without much effort at all. The fun factor of this truck is right on and would be perfect for someone just getting into the hobby as well as the seasoned pro. A slight boost in performance might be in order for those of you who like to rip off the line, but all in all, the Mini Cobra is a great little truck. ⊙

Links

Himoto USA, distributed by Myers Trading Co., www.himotousa.com, (252) 946-0920

For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 193.