

## The new king of the sport side by sides, the Wildcat has no equal...

Product Review by Richard Hackett



Well today was our Wildcat demo ride. I was expecting Arctic Cat to really control how we drove these \$250,000 pre-production units - which by the way are exactly like the units currently going into production. The course they made was a real true suspension test with 2 ft rockers, closely spaced 1ft bumps and a side by side "Belgium Road" rocker section. Attached was a large stubble field which was perfect for some top speed runs and flying g-outs over a gully. We also had the challenge of about 6 inches of snow to play in.

Well - first off they let us ride these units like they were stolen. Foot to the floor and no mercy, I tried to make this unit beg for forgiveness and it just came out asking for more! The harder I rode it - whether in the large bumps or the rocker sections - this thing ate it up and said do it faster.

The Walker Evans-designed suspension with its 17" travel in the front and 18" 5-link rear end sucked everything up and felt like I was driving on a highway. Even when I thought the front was airborne, one quick flick of the wheel told me it was still firmly planted to the ground and in these snowy conditions power slides in and out of 4WD were no problem. Powerwise, it hooked up quickly and pulled very hard.

The power steering works perfect and felt good and it gives you the right amount of feedback with no inconsistencies. Doing some Ultimate power slides the Wildcat never felt out of balance and in 4wd you could still kick the back end out. But wherever you pointed the wheels, it would go. Even in these snowy conditions in 2WD the unit went through everything I threw at it and honestly never really had to put it in 4wd to go where I wanted. The turning radius was much tighter than I expected. It turns very well and feedback was great with the power steering. It took no effort and never felt like you were not going where you wanted to.



Taking a conventional 4-wheeler through the obstacle course underscores the major difference a Baja-inspired racing suspension makes. At not even half the speed, a "standard" Side by Side bucks you around like you were riding a very irritated 10,000 lb bull. The Wildcat's Walker Evans shocks are a dream and the adjustability is endless. No matter the conditions, with the preload adjusters and dual adjustable compression the rear shocks worked perfectly. Not once did I bottom this thing out front or rear - and honestly I tried...



The cockpit is great and felt comfortable right from the get-go. When you jump in and adjust the tilt wheel, you feel like you are a part of it and not riding on it. The digital dash is easily readable and has a diagnostic mode that tells you what all related sensors are reading – temp, voltage etc. The shifter is perfectly placed and was easily moved from high to low, reverse and park (so no park brake is needed.) The seat belts attached to the high-back contoured racing seats were very comfortable and you couldn't even tell you were wearing them. The seat belts have a built-in shock system

and you can tell Arctic Cat thought this design through before building the ultimate sport ROV.

The engine and transmission are perfectly matched and boy does this high-output V-twin 1000 pull hard. With the ceramic headers there is no need for aluminum plates to cover them which makes for much easier cleaning and saves weight. The throttle was very controlled and easy to use where even half throttle, quarter throttle it was even and no jerkiness at all. The transmission worked great and is easily put into high or low with no issues. Slow or fast, it pulls smooth no hesitation at all.

This is the most impressive machine I have ever ridden and I think it will have no equal. Period. None...

Day two is tomorrow and I look forward to having our customers drive this unit. It will put the biggest smile on your face and will do things that you never would have thought a Side by Side could do. Way to go Arctic Cat!

I would like to thank the team from Arctic Cat and Echo Cycle for giving me the chance to test ride the Wildcat - now I just have to convince the wife its my turn to drive again ...

Richard

