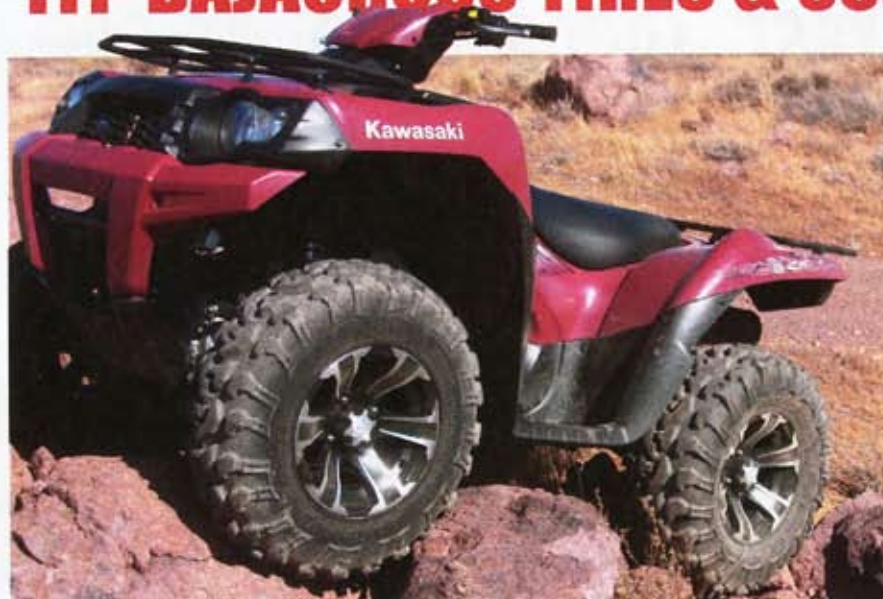


ITP BAJACROSS TIRES & SS312 WHEELS



ITP's BajaCross tires are incredibly tough and long-wearing, and gave our Brute Force 750 more much-needed traction. They also improved the Kawasaki's handling. The more aggressive-looking tires and ITP SS312 wheels suit the big Brute Force perfectly.



The tough, eight-ply rated BajaCross rides well for such a sturdy tire. Stepped tread exposes fresh, sharp knob edges as the tire wears. Sidewall tread and thick rim guards kept the SS312s ding- and nick-free.

WHAT IT IS: ITP's new eight-ply BajaCross tires are claimed to be the company's toughest, longest-wearing, most puncture-resistant ATV/UTV tires yet. ITP says the BajaCross carcass allows this ruggedly built tire to offer a comfortable ride, too. The rubber compound and overlapping tread design were specially developed to extend tread life even in harsh, hard terrain and rocks. Stepped lugs provide crisp tread edges for consistent traction as the tire wears. Wrap-around lugs help add traction in ruts and protect the sidewall. Deep rim guards protect wheels from damage.

As you might expect, the BajaCross is not an economy tire. Surprisingly, its price is right in line with other premium aftermarket tires, and actually a little lower than some. Each stock replacement 25x8-12 front tire for our Kawasaki Brute Force was \$108. Each 25x10-12 stock size rear was \$117. The tires are also available in big 26-inch sizes for 14-inch rims.

THE WHEELS: The new, cast aluminum SS312 wheels from ITP are among the lightest cast ATV wheels, yet they're rated to handle 700 pounds per wheel in 12-inch sizes and an incredible 800 pounds per wheel in 14-inch sizes. Considering most ATVs weigh less than 700 pounds ready to ride, the SS312s should be strong enough to handle anything. They're reasonably priced, too. The stock 12-inch wheels for the Brute Force were \$84 each, which is typical for cast aluminum wheels.

PERFORMANCE: We put the ITP BajaCross/SS312 tire/wheel combo on our Brute Force 750 because it's a machine that's begging for more traction because of its ridiculous power output. We had two ideal places to test the tires' toughness. We began at a sadly abused section of desert where illegal dumping by non-riders has turned a section of trail into every tire's worst nightmare. Glass and nails are just the tip of the iceberg for what attacks tires there. Everything from sharp steel, drywall corner edging to dashboard control levers from car interiors are lying in wait, ready to slash some rubber. From there, we rode winding trails and fire roads to the worst, rockiest section of trail we test on. Every time we ride there, we expect testing to be delayed because the rocks are so hard on tires. We included a mud-bottomed creek to gauge the tires' traction in sloppy conditions.

Dozens of runs through the littered dump trail left the tires unpunctured. We're sure there are things out there that could flat any tire, but we were impressed that the tires survived so many runs. They deflected a serious amount of junk.

Normally, we look for ways to spare tires' excessive abuse when riding our jagged rock trail. We did just the opposite with the BajaCross tires. We repeatedly slammed planted, jutting rocks and rode over the most menac-

ing, pointed boulders we could find. We failed to score a slow leak or even gouge a wheel. We rode back satisfied that the tires' claims for toughness are justified. The wheels proved super-tough and add a lot of style to the Kawasaki. It really takes on a whole new look with the SS312s.

Our testing involved plenty of normal riding, too, and we found the BajaCross tires gave the Brute Force more much-needed traction, which made its acceleration even more incredible. Cornering performance improved, too. The ITPs don't flex nearly as much as the stock tires, so turning is much more crisp and direct. The ITPs even have an edge in sloppy conditions, probably because their tread is more open and aggressive than the stock tires. Considering the time we logged on the tires on hardpack, sandstone and jagged rock, wear was minimal. ITP truly has an exceptionally long-lasting tire here.

THE VERDICT: We purposely abused ITP's BajaCross tires, and they exceeded our expectations in every test situation we put them through. It looks like this tire is everything ITP claims it is, which is great news for sport utility ATV riders and UTV drivers who ride in punishing conditions and want exceptionally long life from their tires.

RATING: ★★★★★

PRICE: Tires: 25x8-12, \$108 each; 25x10-12 \$117 each; wheels: \$84 each.

CONTACT: Your dealer or www.itptires.com