



AREA 51 Project: "From Wreck to Wonder"

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Life can sometimes be a gamble and the same is true ten fold when purchasing a used snowmobile. You can save a lot of money over buying new at the risk of buying someone else's troubles. The key is to do your research and know what to look for and what to test before you shop and if you don't know, bring someone along that does. About two years ago, one of the Sledsooley crew was in the market for a newer used sled and found a promising candidate at BennettATV. The sled was only a few years old but had seen many hard miles and little upkeep. In short it was a project sled but after a thorough look over an appropriate offer was made, accepted and the sled loaded into the truck.

The machine was a 2001 bombardier 700 Summit one the ZX chassis with a 144" track. It was the perfect match for the new owner both in style and that he had the time and access to parts to revive this tired beast. In short, the lower plastics had faded pink and was cracked in many places; both of the ADSA suspension arms and lower control arms were bent; the motor was showing low compression; the track was well worn out with a lot of missing lugs; the rear suspension was in serious need of a rebuild; and yellow enamel paint adorned many parts as an "accent" colour.

The first item on the list was to remove the motor for a rebuild, a straight forward affair of detaching everything that connected it to the sled. Once removed the actual rebuild was left to an experienced mechanic. The motor was refreshed with a honing of the cylinders, and treated to new rings, seals as well as a set of performance reeds. Other modifications are top secret information of the owner. (Yeah, we don't believe him either!)

While the motor was out being rebuilt we tackled the rear suspension. Despite some frozen bolts, the discovery of a missing bolt, and a small fire the suspension came out unscathed. (Note: don't use a cigarette lighter as a light source when parts are soaked in penetrating oil!) Once unbolted and removed from the sled we discovered that the Hyfax had worn clean through to the aluminum skid frame. Many of the wheels were worn or had worn bearings and there was some general

damage from abuse. The skid was cleaned, all worn parts replaced along with some creative fabrication of bushings to get everything back together properly. With the rear skid removed, the track was looking even worse than we first expected. Rather than take the chance of running that track for awhile a new 144'1.25x15" Camoplast Rip Saw track was ordered and installed. This also provided opportunity to inspect everything in the chain case and to replace the drive shaft bearing on the opposite side. Installation was the same but reversed and a lot less entertaining!

Before the engine was reinstalled, some worn out steering tie rod ends were replaced, the body tub cleaned of oil and debris, and many of the cracks plastic welded to seal the tub from water and snow. Although it's not a permanent fix, but will serve the purpose in the interim until a good used tub can be secured. At this time we replaced both ADSA arms and the lower control arms with new parts and realigned the skies. A new skid plate was installed to replace the damaged yellow one installed by the previous owner.

With the Rear suspension bolted up and the engine reinstalled, it was on to handle bars, controls and personalizing the sled for the new owner. Next on the list was a set of Pro Taper Bars, 4" Riser and a pivot adaptor. This extra height necessitated the installation of a longer brake line, a throttle cable extension and the lengthening of all wiring for the handle bar controls. The plastic surrounding the controls required minor trimming to fit and look right, and new hand warmers were installed along with a new Mountain Strap for a secure grip and control. Lessons learned were that Sledsooley (who is already blacklisted from Carburetor cleaning) should not be allowed near brake reservoirs and brake handles when there is no brake line attached. After cleaning up a mess of brake fluid and bench bleeding the Master Cylinder, the brakes were as good as new with the new braided line installed. Next, was figure what to do with the god awful pink plastic body tub. We researched a few ideas and read that a lot of people had good success painting plastic with Krylon Fusion paint. Since it was more economical to paint than replace we picked up two cans of gloss black and a can of brake cleaner to de-grease the plastic. Once de-greased the whole tub was sanded with 100 grit sand paper to promote paint adhesion, and cleaned with soapy water to remove all residue. Once dry the tub looked fantastic, especially compared to before. To finish the tub, two additional hood tie downs from a newer summit were installed in the middle of the hood to keep it in place during rough riding.

Finally the sled was nearing completion with only the exhaust waiting to be mounted up. The previous owner obviously did not appreciate good hearing and had installed a straight pipe in place of the stock muffler. To say it was loud and annoying is an understatement! Graciously the new owner installed a nice MBRP trail can which is louder than stock but still friendly to the rider and most people in the immediate area.

Luckily (read: Skilfully) the sled fired up with relative ease and after minor carburetor, clutch and track tension adjustments it was ready for its maiden voyage. All the repairs and modifications lead to a ride that pleased the owner immensely. Once a wreck, this sled is now a sensible, reliable trail tourer and boondocker that makes many people green with envy as it simply tractors through deep powder passing stuck sleds left and right, even stopping, reversing and turning around! I'm also pleased to say that the Krylon paint has held up well with very few scratches despite a lot of abuse from snow and alders. Like most Area 51 projects, this one proposed many challenges and took a lot of time. Again we prevailed and scared a breath of new life into this not so old but well used sled on time and under budget. More pictures of this project can be found at www.shed-headz.com on the Area51 page.

Cheers, MIKE