

Tangling with the TN'G BAJA

Review by Mike Zorn



Baja	
Engine Type:	150cc 4-stroke
Transmission:	Automatic
Cooling:	Air-cooled
Dry Weight:	250 lbs.
Seat Height:	32
Fuel Capacity:	1.5 gal.
Top Speed:	58 mph
Front Wheel:	130/60-13
Rear Wheel:	130/60-13
Brakes Front:	Disc
Brakes Rear:	Drum
Color:	Flat Black
MSRP:	\$2,695



The "dual purpose" or "off road" scooter has been with us almost since the beginning. Bikes like the 50's Cushman Highlander gave way to the Honda Trail 90 in the 60's and 70's and recently the Yamaha Zuma and Honda Ruckus have redefined the category. The TN'G Baja fits in with its modern competitors but features some quirky bits that look back to its more industrial ancestors. It reminds me of something I might build myself were I a more skilled metal worker.

That's right I said metal, there is very little plastic on this bike, TN'G has started with an existing model (DR150?) and stripped it to its bare frame and added a diamond plate floorboard/legshield, a sheet steel motor cover and a glove box, a tubular seat frame that holds two sprung saddle seats, motocross style handle bar, a tubular front rack and two big dune buggy headlights complete with brush guards, all covered in a tough flat black finish. The instruments are a curious contrast, a handle bar mounted digital speedometer and odometer, pleasingly lit indiglo blue at night and on the glovebox, an

analog fuel gauge and volt meter. It just adds to its oddball charm. Wheels and tires are fat 13 inchers and brakes are disk on front and drum in back. The motor is the ubiquitous GY6 overhead cam 150cc four-stroke with a CVT automatic transmission.

The Ride

I'm convinced that the seats can also be found on a Chinese bicycle somewhere, one thing for sure they're springy, good thing as the ride is quite stiff. The motorcycle style front suspension could use softer springs and better dampening to better absorb the bumps that the bike calls out for. The large tires give the bike a sure footed feel on rough pavement and in the wet but the street tires didn't hold well in a short jaunt down a dirt and gravel road. The Baja gave an overall sturdy impression though it managed to shake a couple of nuts loose on the rear fender and the speedo/odometer quit reading at 57.3 miles, probably a minor pickup problem. The motor was plenty peppy for hauling my large sized carcass along and had no trouble reaching 55 mph and

would probably do more with a lighter and more aerodynamic pilot. Mileage came in at a little over 50 mpg, not bad for a heavy on the throttle, hilly commute. If you ride a lot though, you'll need to top off often as the tank only holds a gallon and a half. Passenger foot pegs are included and the front rack looks sturdy but is sized only for smaller items. Perhaps TN'G will offer a rear rack. The glovebox is small and doesn't seal well against rain but it's built like a tool box.

"Rear Rack is now standard"

I like it

Overall the thing wound up growing on me, a good combo of the sturdy, utilitarian vehicle that I find handy. Plenty practical for urban commuting, putting around the ranch or hauling behind the RV. The styling is an acquired taste, kind of like a joint project between the Chinese military and John Deere but in a country where vehicles like the Hummer are best sellers I can see it working out. In fact I wouldn't mind seeing a few more folks taking care of that SUV jones with one of these!