

Phat Cat

PHOTOS BY WAYNE DAVIS

Blackjack

By Chris Vogtman

21

Ways To Make Your Arctic Cat DVX Purr



It didn't take us long to figure out how to keep our cat happy: Just feed it aftermarket accessories like it was catnip and the little fur ball purrs its face off. Our cat, the Arctic Cat DVX 400, has had a steady diet divided into 21 stay-fit portions.

Why 21? It's a carefully calculated number our quad scientists have uncovered after hours spent in the lab playing phat cat blackjack. All 21 parts add up to a winning hand. For you to play phat cat blackjack, it will take an initial investment in aftermarket parts, but the money spent is well worth the rewards.

We fed our DVX 400 a steady diet of upgrades to increase its power, performance, toughness and looks. It is a feeding regimen one can easily follow in the comfort of their own garage. Time to let this Arctic Cat's secrets out of the bag.

The Cat's Meow

Once we brought our quad home from the Arctic Cat pet store, we needed to name it. After a lengthy debate, we settled on Saber Cat for its curious ferocity. With the name decided, we were off to Blown Concepts — 1 — in search of a truly custom graphics package. And Blown Concepts didn't disappoint.

The stock red DVX plastic is plenty aggressive, so we decided to stick with it because the graphics would add the custom flair we were after. Blown Concepts designs one-off durable vinyl graphics, and it hooked us up with a truly custom Saber Cat design on the side panels, proving to us there's more than one way to skin a cat! Along with the side panels, the front and rear graphics don an *ATV Sport* insignia and shout outs to other sponsors. An area for number stickers was left open on the front hood shield and on both rear panels. While at Blown Concepts, we learned it creates all of its designs in-house, and has the ability to design graphics for snowmobiles, watercraft or even commercial vehicles. We can only imagine what Blown Concepts would dream up for our company truck!

In addition to the graphics, another easy upgrade to the DVX only took four bolts and a few minutes, as we swapped out the plastic stock bumper in favor of Cobra's Alloy Bumper — 2 — that has a fresh look and tough tubular aluminum design. The wider bumper will protect the front end, where a lot of expensive add-ons are located, much better should we have an unfortunate encounter with any obstacles on the trail.

Our Cat's metal battle armor also includes Cobra's Chassis Skid Plate — 3 — that has a seamless design from the front of the chassis

to the rear. The skid plate has a clear finish and recessed mounting holes that keep exposed bolts protected from undercarriage hits.

For a uniform look, we stuck with Cobra's Alloy Nerf Bars — 4 — made from aluminum tubing. The nerf bars come with a model-specific front mount that's powder coated gun metal gray. The bars were a quick install and attached to the frame for added durability. We also used a dab of Loctite on all four allen bolts for a secure fit. Cobra's nylon webbing adds foot and ankle protection, and we found it easy to adjust.

The Arctic Cat's stock footpegs aren't as aggressive as we'd like for hard riding conditions, so we decided to upgrade to Rath Racing's — 5 — steel footpegs. Rath's pegs bolt on to the existing stock pegs while adding length, durability, sharp teeth that keep feet planted in the muddiest conditions and an aggressive upturn at the end of each peg to aid in cornering.





Increasing the DVX 400's agility was done by adding new tires and wheels. For the tires, Greenball sent us a set of its R/As — **10** — that are ideal for tackling trails. We choose a 10-inch low-profile rear tire because it reduces sidewall flex and helps the machine track better when in hard or fast riding conditions. The front 21 x 7-10 tires and rear 20 x 11-9s were mounted on Douglas Wheel rims — **11** — with OMF beadlocks — **12** — that results in a durable and more controllable package. The wheels are made from a high-grade aluminum that's designed specifically for racing and improved trackability. The OMF beadlock fastens the tire's bead onto the wheel. The clamped tire will now hold a bead when under intense cornering or harsh landings, resisting de-beading.

In case the tire suffers from a puncture during a harescramble, we installed Tire Balls — **13** — inside all four tires as a last line of defense. The Tire Ball system uses individual inflation cells that keep the tire intact and on the rim even after a puncture occurs.

To keep the tires and wheels from spinning us out of control, though, we replaced the stock brakes with DP Brakes' pads — **14** — that are made from a longer lasting compound, helping the machine slow down easier when decelerating from top speeds.

Look What The Cat Dragged In

Agility is a key attribute to any cat, and for that, we turned to handlebar and tire-and-wheel modifications for our DVX. We swapped out the stock packages for a distinct look that also performs on the trails.

After taking the Arctic Cat's stock handlebars off, we wanted to make sure the replacement bars would fit our riding ergonomics better. Since we are taller riders and planned on adding a handlebar setup suited to our height, we sought out Rath Racing for its Chromoly Anti-vibration Stem — **6** — that is +1-inch. Rath's stem helps reduce vibration thanks in part to rubber mounts. Clamps were included with the steering stem.

Once the stem was installed, we turned to Fasst for its Flexx bar system — **7** — that helps reduce vibration and ultimately, arm pump. The handlebar system can be adjusted to compensate for your riding style with three different elastomers. The elastomers come with the bars and a rider can choose from soft, medium or hard, depending on how much flex one wants. We opted for medium.

To keep our paws planted on the Flexx handlebar, we added Spider grips — **8** —



that are a great replacement over stock. The flangeless grips use advanced polymers for added comfort that actually reduces vibration. Notice a theme? Less vibration in the handlebar system was what we were after, which equals less arm pump and fatigue. The stem, handlebar and grips all equal to a much more comfortable ride, especially over a long trail excursion or harescramble.

The handlebar system wasn't complete until we added PowerMadd's red Star Series Handguards — **9** — for increased hand protection and a race-like appeal.

With the handlebars now installed, we turned the attention to our Cat's four feet.

Stalking Its Prey

The handlebars, tires and wheels aren't the only agility feature we were after, as all the bone jarring hits need to be soaked up for an easier ride. For that, we turned to Herrmann Racing and Fox Racing Shox.



Stock A-arms on the Arctic Cat are fine and good but, for a more stable and reliable setup, we wanted a little wider and stronger front end. Herrmann Racing's +1 A-arms — **15** — do just that, as they are constructed of chromoly and gusseted in critical areas. We didn't want to go wider than +1, since we plan on mainly woods riding — navigating trees can get tricky if the front end is too wide. The A-arms come complete with 16mm ball joints and tough

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tierods. The entire Herrmann Racing setup is camber and caster adjustable.

Herrmann Racing's A-arm package works with the stock shocks, but we wanted shocks with easily adjustable spring rates. The Fox Float Shox — **16** — are constructed with a hard-anodized aluminum body and come with roost deflectors to protect the shock. The best part about the shocks is that they are lightweight and adjust by using air pressure. With the Fox HP pump, spring rates are adjusted by manipulating air pressure to compensate for the rider's weight and riding style. The shocks also have an internal floating piston that separates the nitrogen gas from the factory set oil dampening.

For our Arctic Cat to catch its prey — other racers in our case — we needed to add more horsepower and faster starts. To accomplish this a Rekluse clutch kit, Eddie Sanders pipe and Airbox Eliminator kit landed on the DVX.

The Rekluse z-start clutch — **17** — replaces the stock pressure plate. The z-start pressure plate turns the Arctic Cat into an automatic, with the override option of manual. With a pull of the stock clutch lever, the system overrides the automatic z-start clutching. The Rekluse system makes riding easier for a beginner, dramatically reducing frustrating stalls. But it also help the veterans among us, making starts easier due to the lack of feathering a clutch. There is no need to grab the clutch on our DVX 400 in corners either, and it is nearly stall free.

An external adjuster allows for fine tuning the z-start clutch for stall speed and engagement, allowing for snappier pull on the bottom end to mid-range. Also, the external adjuster can be used track or trail side without having to open up the engine. Tuning an automatic clutch has never been easier, and the auto clutch is appreciated in tight woods racing when clutching can become a bear.

With improved starts thanks to the new clutch, the Arctic Cat needed horsepower gains to help it stay out front. The stock pipe was stripped in favor of an Eddie Sanders Pro

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Series exhaust system — **18** — that improved power and performance. The Pro Series thumper system includes billet aluminum clamps and an end cap, full megaphone core with exhaust and fully stepped ceramic-coated header. To keep noise at acceptable levels an Eddie Sanders Spark Arrestor — **19** — that encompasses SuperTrapp technology is recommended. Not to mention, it adds to the overall looks.

The Eddie Sanders Pro Series exhaust upped horsepower, but we were still after more power gains. With the Cat exhaling better, we wanted to make sure it's breathing improved, too. To accomplish this, we tore out the stock air filter and airbox and installed Eddie Sanders' Airbox Eliminator Kit — **20**. The high-velocity tube intake increases air flow, resulting in better horsepower numbers. To protect the exposed air filter and increase its longevity, an Outerwears filter slip cover — **21** — was pulled on to the filter.



What, Cat Got Your Tongue?

All it took was 21 upgrades to make this once-stock Arctic Cat obtain a show-stopping look. But it's not just looks that matter: The DVX 400 has turned into a more powerful quad that handles like a Ferrari in the corners. For those of you who can't afford to play the full game of phat cat blackjack, you are in luck. Staying on two, 10 or soft 16 won't be frowned upon because you are still a winner in the end! But, if you can hit phat cat blackjack, other players (riders) at the table will be having kittens. **ATVS**



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