

## STI HD BEADLOCK WHEELS AND STI BLACK DIAMOND TIRES



**CONTACT:** STI, [www.stitireandwheel.com](http://www.stitireandwheel.com)

**RATING:** STI HD Beadlock wheels: ★★★★★, STI Black Diamond XTR tires: ★★★★★

**PRICE:** STI HD Beadlock wheels, \$97.95-\$118.95; STI Black Diamond XTR tires, \$119.95-\$148.95 each.

The six-ply strength and 1 1/8-inch-deep, aggressive tread of STI's Black Diamond tires helped our Honda 4x4's handling and grip, and the Black Diamond/HD Beadlock combination did good things for the machine's look too.

### WHAT IT IS:

Beadlock wheels use bolt-on rings to clamp the tire bead to the wheel so the bead stays in place during high-cornering side loads—even when low tire pressures are used or the tire goes flat. They've become a standard part of serious ATV and UTV racers' setups, but their high cost has put them out of many recreational riders' reach.

STI's HD Beadlock wheels bring the secure tire retention of beadlocks to ATV and UTV enthusiasts at a lower price than some conventional cast-aluminum aftermarket wheels. Twelve-inch HD Beadlocks are just \$97.95 each, while 14-inch HD Beadlocks are \$118.95.

STI's Black Diamond XTR tires, the extra-deep tread version of the popular Black Diamond, have all the features of premium ATV/UTV rubber—like six-ply radial construction and deep, aggressive tread—but are priced like basic tires. Twelve-inch sizes start at \$119.95. Fourteen-inch XTRs are \$148.95.

### PERFORMANCE:

We tested the HD Beadlock/Black

Diamond XTR tire and wheelset against the stock tires and wheels on a Honda Rincon, Honda's biggest, most powerful 4x4 ATV. Our cross-country loop included hard-packed trails, rocky hills and deep, soft sand. We tested both tire and wheelsets in the same conditions on the same day to keep the results as comparable as possible.

Setting out after testing with the stock tires, we immediately noticed the Black Diamonds' slightly firmer ride. It's a natural characteristic of the tires' sturdier six-ply construction. Stronger sidewalls also create crisper, more accurate turning. Like many four-ply original-equipment tires, the Honda's four-ply Dunlop radials flex noticeably in aggressive cornering.

The Rincon's stock rubber provided generally good traction on the test loop with impressive hard-terrain grip. The STI tires hooked up nearly as well on hardpack, but had an edge anywhere there was soft, loose terrain due to their extra-deep tread.

Sand dunes, snow and deep mud are where you'll want to run lower tire pressures, and that's where the HD Beadlock will keep the tire beaded.

Beadlocks can also save the day or a race finish by keeping the tire on the wheel any time you get a flat. Sixteen bolts clamp the outer tire bead between the wheel and the beadlock ring, so the tire can't go anywhere until you want it to. Only a dual beadlock, with beadlock rings for the inner and outer beads, could be more secure. Conventional wheels rely on the tire's pressure to keep the tire on the wheel.

### THE VERDICT:

Racers have relied on the security of beadlocks for decades, and beadlock styling has inspired countless aftermarket wheel designs. STI's HD Beadlock wheels offer the tire retention and rugged good looks of true beadlocks for the price of conventional wheels. This is a major step forward for aftermarket wheels and great news for ATV and UTV enthusiasts.

STI's Black Diamond XTR is reasonably priced and has all the key features riders look for in premium aftermarket tires. Compared to many original-equipment ATV and UTV tires, it offers improved cornering and improved traction, especially in soft conditions. □