

VANTAGE CARBON FIBER PIPE

By Derek Duono



Tuned pipes can last for two years or for ten minutes. That's a fact that can only be proven by how hard you drive or by how hard your car gets hit in the side. The normal aluminum construction on most tuned pipes makes them very light, but also very vulnerable to being crushed. Other expensive materials like titanium and steel are either costly to manufacture or are too heavy for competitive racing. Now, Vantage has a new twist on the pipe market with a woven carbon fiber pipe. They were so excited about the pipe that when we saw them at a trade show they wanted us to smash a traditional aluminum pipe with theirs to demonstrate its durability. We did, and then took one back with us to use as a hammer...and to see if the power was there.

Features

- Woven carbon fiber design
- Lightweight; weighs only 36g compared to an 096 weighing 53g
- Aluminum coupler
- Includes silicone coupler and mounting hardware

Scorecard

Scale Key: 1 = poor 10 = excellent

Avril Lavigne **8.5**

The Specifics

Manufacturer: Vantage Racing
 Web: www.vantageracing.com
 Address: 17 West Main St.,
 Alhambra, CA 91801

Part Number: Various by style
 Street Price: \$65-\$85

+ Hits

- Super strong and light weight
- Our test pipe improved bottom-to-mid range performance
- Awesome carbon fiber look

- Misses

- Some blockage of stinger needed hand modification
- Not currently offered for an in-line pipe design

Testing

Before testing, we literally beat on an aluminum pipe with the Vantage, and we can definitively say that the aluminum pipe crumbled like a little girlie-man. Although that's not a true test of its integrity, it was still pretty impressive. On the track, it's not commonplace for two vehicles to hit pipe-to-pipe, but in theory it could still happen. One thing we found with both our samples was that when we looked down the stinger, we saw it partially blocked by epoxy. We actually had to drill out the stinger to get it cleared. We reported this to Vantage, and hopefully that will be addressed in future production runs, although a little drilling or file action will take care of that the problem.

For actual testing, the pipe's first stop was the X-Dyno, where we compared it to a standard RB 096 pipe. Looking at the graph you can see that the pipe was very comparable to the 096, and only fell just short on the top end. Most users won't notice the difference and will take the durability over the absolute performance, and many will enjoy

the increased bottom end produced by the Vantage pipe. The next part of testing was at the track, where Brian Kinsey put the pipe on his Kyosho buggy and raced it. He reported that the pipe had great rip and is probably better suited for use in an 1/8-scale buggy than in on-road—just what our dyno told us he should feel!

Conclusion

Like I said at the beginning, a traditional pipe can last from seconds to years, but the Vantage pipe is going to outlast all of them. It provided better performance than we really expected, and since we beat another pipe to death with it, the durability should never be an issue, and most people will benefit from the design. Despite the stinger being partially clogged and requiring us to make some modifications to free it up, we were very pleased with the performance. With a suggested retail price of \$85, you should be able to pick one up for less than that and have a pipe that's going to last you a long, long time. **O**

