



Extreme Outback ExtremeAire Magnum Portable

(Kit, \$675, compressor only, \$550)

The moment you open the steel tool box encasing the ExtremeAire Magnum Portable, it's obvious you're looking at a product with a lot of thought behind it. The hose connections are protected with spring coils, the leads to the stout, 4-gauge battery cables are sealed and shrink-wrapped, and a fat, washable, oiled UNI-filter protects the intake of the compressor, which is powered by a massive, fan-cooled, 1 1/2-horsepower motor. Magnets at each end of the box hold a tire gauge and LED penlight.

The "ordinary" ExtremeAire compressor is already very well-known among serious expeditioners as a fast and durable air source. The Magnum effectively doubles the power of that model in a package only two inches longer—albeit at something over twice the amp draw: 78 amps average, 80.1 maximum. The power was immediately apparent, as the Magnum edged out the Warn SPI for fastest time in the single tire 0-to-35 psi task, at just 2 minutes, 20 seconds, and the four-tire, 15-to-35 psi test, which the Magnum whizzed through in 6 minutes, 39 seconds—35 seconds ahead of the Warn and nearly three times faster than the slowest compressor here (it did get pretty hot during the latter test: 303°F). Reseating the tire beads took just 24 seconds. When I hooked up the Magnum to a five-gallon air tank with a 100 PSI regulator, it effortlessly ran a 1/2-inch Snap-on impact gun while I removed 24 lug nuts from a Land Cruiser.

If your electrical system can keep up, the 100-percent-duty-cycle Magnum will run for as long as you need it to. However, there is no automatic pressure cutoff; the portable kit comes with an open chuck that simply bleeds off excess pressure. If you attach the Magnum to a closed air line it will eventually stop from back pressure at about 180 PSI (if the line doesn't burst first), but that's not something to do regularly. (Extreme Outback does offer an optional cutoff switch in several ranges.) There is also no on/off switch, just a heavy-duty quick-disconnect on the battery cables which, while foolproof, is not as convenient. But, those small annoyances aside, no compressor here will get you back on the road faster.

Pros:

- Extremely fast
- High-quality fittings
- 100-percent duty cycle
- Fan-cooled motor

Cons:

- High amp draw
- Heavy
- No on/off switch
- No pressure cut-off
- Noisy



Extreme Outback ExpeditionAire

(Kit, \$299, single AtomAire compressor, \$80)

What's one way to ensure you have a working compressor for the duration of an extended third-world expedition? Take *two* compressors. Inside the ExpeditionAire's homely but bomb-proof .50-caliber ammunition-can case are twin AtomAire compressors plumbed into a single outlet hose. In the unlikely event one should fail, the other will almost certainly see you through.

The ExpeditionAire kit includes 10-foot, 10-gauge jumper cables with full-size terminal clamps, two inline 15-amp fuses with spares, and a 20-foot coil air hose with quick release. A tire gauge and an LED penlight ride on magnets in the corners of the box. All the air fittings are brass, and the electrical connections are protected by heat-shrink tubing. The ExpeditionAire has no on/off switch—you attach the jumper cables to your battery, then plug them into a pigtail on the unit to start it. This is done for simplicity and reliability, but I have to admit I would have preferred a switch. An open-cell foam gasket on the end of each motor housing filters intake air. Extreme Outback claims you can bury a running AtomAire in sand and it will still function.

Working in tandem, the tiny but sturdy AtomAires delivered enough volume to inflate the test tire from 0 to 35 psi in 5 minutes, 17 seconds. Extreme Outback recommends a 50-percent duty cycle for the AtomAires—15 minutes on; 15 off. Airing up four tires from 15 psi to 35 took a leisurely 18 minutes, 35 seconds, but the unit ran non-stop with no problem (both times were the slowest in the review). Average amp draw was a very modest 14, with a peak of 16.5. Maximum head temperature during the second test was a mild 182° F. The two units never varied by more than 10 degrees from each other.

I had some doubts that the ExpeditionAire would be able to reseal tire beads, but in fact it did so in 2 minutes, 19 seconds. I had to be careful with the tire alignment on the rim to minimize leakage, and I sprayed some extra detergent lube in one spot that was bubbling, but they finally popped on. This means the ExpeditionAire should be capable of any tire repair you might need to accomplish in the bush, as long as you don't have bandits hot on your trail.

Pros:

- Extremely compact and lightweight
- Rugged, weatherproof case
- Redundant backup ensures reliability
- Completely self-contained

Cons:

- Slow
- No on/off switch
- 50-percent duty cycle and slow speed restrict multi-vehicle use
- Cables and hoses barely fit inside case



Editor's Choice



In the end the Editor's Choice had to go to the ExtremeAire Magnum—but not because it was the fastest unit. That performance was expectedly commensurate with its premium price. The Magnum rose to the top because no matter where I looked or which component I inspected, it was clear that Extreme Outback spared nothing to ensure that every last bit of the product is as good as it can be, from the oversize battery cables to the washable, oiled

intake filter, from the powdercoated motor housing to the brass fittings and stainless fasteners. If you don't need (or cannot afford) the performance offered by the Magnum, you can be assured that the standard ExtremeAire and the ExtremeAire Junior (as well as the ExpeditionAire) share the same quality. And quality is what you can count on to see you through any expedition.