

Bronco fans have been waiting for this one, and they didn't have to wait long.

A dune-running craft may sound highly specialized, and at its core it is. But here in Arizona, we have plenty of dusty dirt and gravel roads state-wide, and—even more on target—the Glamis Dunes right at our border, running from just west of Yuma, north-northwest to not far outside Blythe and Quartzsite. This makes for plenty of opportunities for a day

trip or intense weekend in the dunes with such a vehicle. Not surprisingly, the Ford F-150 Raptor has been a huge success here—a truck that can not only handle all that expertly, but get you there and back, with no need to trailer a specialty vehicle.

These trucks have sold like hotcakes, even to people who may not get to the dunes often, if at all. And they have proven themselves as great, proud and ubiquitous daily drivers. They have also spawned factory variants, from the F-250 Tremor to the F-150 Raptor With 37-inch Performance Package. All have been immediate successes.

Dreamed of and wishfully anticipated since the new Bronco's launch just over two years ago, we now witness the arrival of the Bronco Raptor.

The fundamentals that make an F-150 a Raptor remain the same for Bronco—stance, clearance, suspension, underside protection and power.

Creating a Bronco Raptor of course presented its own engineering challenges, as everything does—in this case, applying all that power and dune-leaping ability atop a vehicle about as tall as the pickup, but with a much smaller footprint.

The team at Ford Performance gave this new rig its own twin-turbo 3.0-liter EcoBoost, reportedly with 418 hp, along with the fundamentals you would expect—FOX-based HOSS 4.0 race-ready suspension, a fully-boxed, high-strength steel frame, heavy-duty driveline bash and skid plates from front bumper to the back of the transfer case, Ford Performance axles (from the Bronco DR race truck), and standard 37-inch all-terrain tires. Clutch and transfer case are both upgraded. And while

the Bronco Raptor has a high-riding ground clearance of 13.1 inches minimum—4.8 inches more than a base four-door—it's also 9.8 inches wider.

G.O.A.T. Modes are increased to seven, including a specially tuned Baja Mode calibrated for anti-turbo-lag on high-speed desert runs. And tow capacity is upped by 1,000 pounds, to 4,500.

The first impression approaching this Bronco is that it's big, simply a factor of the tires, wide fender lips and beefed-up suspension, all key to its stance and enhanced capabilities. In the cabin, it feels perfectly manageable—and it is. In motion, any effects of its big ride are minimal. (If this were a custom build, you could likely expect the modifications to dominate your experience.) All it takes

(cont'd)

You can spot the Bronco Raptor by the big "FORD" stamped into its grille—following suit to the F-150 Raptor—instead of "BRONCO" as on most, along with Raptor's three clearance lights (required for width over 80 inches, but a great detail).

Happy anywhere

by Joe Sage



BRONCO RAPTOR 4-DOOR SPECS

ASSEMBLY	.....Michigan Assembly, Wayne MI
ENGINE BUILD	.....Lima Engine Plant, Ohio
BODY	.....removable: four frameless doors, roof panels (carbonized gray molded-in-color top), front fenders, rear quarters, front bumper end caps, rock rail running boards; heavy-duty full-vehicle steel bash plates, HD Ford Performance modular bumper w Rigid fog lamp, two hooks 2 front 2 rear, washout vinyl flooring w plugs
ENGINE	.....3.0L twin-turbo EcoBoost V6, 24v, dir inj, DOHC, roller finger followover, hydraulic compensate lash adj, twin indep var cam timing, cast alum pistons, forged steel rods & crank, composite shell welded intake manifold w runner pack, exhaust manifold w integrated into alum head
HP/TORQUE	.....published goal: over 400 hp; reported as 418 hp / 440 lb-ft as stated by Ford CEO Jim Farley on Twitter
ALTERNATOR	.....single 240A
BATTERY GROUP	.....H7 AGM 80 AH 800 CCA
COMPRESSION RATIO	.....10.5:1
TRANSMISSION	.....10-spd SelectShift auto
DRIVETRAIN	.....4x4
TRANSFER CASE	.....2-spd torque-on-demand 4H-4L-4A on-demand w mechanical lock
DIFFERENTIALS	.....R: electronic locking rear diff w 4.70 rear axle
CRAWL RATIO	.....max 67.88:1
CHASSIS	.....Body-on-frame, fully boxed high strength steel frame w 7 cross members
SUSPENSION	.....Raptor HOSS 4.0 (High-performance Off-road Stability Susp) system w FOX Live Valve tech w position-sensing damping & FOX 3.1 internal bypass semi-active dampers specially tuned front/rear, integrated reservoirs front, remove reservoirs rear; F: low-mass indep front susp; R: five-link solid axle w Panhard rod & outboard coilover springs;
AXLES	.....F: Dana 44 AdvanTEK M210 indep susp w Spicer Performa-TraK electronic locker (4.70); R: solid five-link rear axle w coil-overs;
SUSPENSION TRAVEL (F/R)	.....13 / 14 in
STEERING	.....3-mode rack-and-pinion w comfort & sport modes, controlled via Terrain Mgmt System w G.O.A.T. Modes
BRAKES	.....four-wheel disc; F: 350x34mm vented, dual-piston, 2x51mm sliding caliper; R: 336x20mm vented, single-piston, 1x54mm sliding caliper
WHEELS	.....std 17-in black high-gloss painted alum alloy
TIRES	.....37x12.5R17 All-Terrain
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	.....191.0 / 116.5 in
HEIGHT / WIDTH (W MIRRORS)	.....77.8 / 86.9 in
TRACK (F/R)	.....73.2 / 73.6 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	.....13.1 in
OVERHANG (F/R)	.....32.0 / 42.4 in
APPR / BRKVR / DEPART	.....47.2 / 30.8 / 40.5°
MAX WATER FORDING	.....37.0 in
WEIGHT	.....5733 lb
CARGO CAPACITY	.....33.4 / 73.0 cu.ft
PAYLOAD / TOW CAPACITY	.....1100 / 4500 lb
GVWR / MAX GCWR	.....6850 / 10,650 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	.....87 reg unl / 21.2 gal
MPG	.....15/16/15 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE	.....\$68,500
KEYLESS ENTRY KEYPAD	.....110
INTERIOR CARBON FIBER PACK	.....1725
LEATHER-TRIM/SUEDE SEATS	.....2495
DESTINATION CHARGE	.....1595
TOTAL	.....\$74,425

is a couple of blocks, a couple of turns, and a pull into a parking space or two—all impressively tight and accurate—to appreciate the engineering. It may look like its going to be a handful, but it turns out to be extremely manageable.

Its horses and gears are aimed toward power and performance, not so much acceleration and raw speed. You can capably grab another lane on the freeway, but roaring forth from the light is not the same as in a sports car or even some big V8 pickups. That's not what this is for, or then again is it? When you talk dune running, you do talk speed, and it has what it needs for this. You've seen the sand-leaping, air-catching videos to back that up.

On the boulevards in town, it pretty well fills a lane—fun to sneak a glance at both mirrors and see how close the dotted lines are—but it tracks as true as can be, smooth, straight and accurate, easy to point and very easy to hold. The Bronco Raptor also handles boulevard U-turns easily. We marveled at the extreme duty this rig is really made for, as it is a champ in town.

Both tough and handsome, it could easily be your only ride and daily driver—far beyond what

we might have expected around town, which is part of what they've worked so hard to develop. And with its bold looks, you could show up in this at the fanciest of affairs and be belle of the ball.

We took it out for an extended romp on gravel roads, reducing to dirt tracks, reducing to minimal trails, and could do that all day every day, as well.

Our next delight was when we got back to pavement—extremely narrow and twisty for quite a few miles. Granted, after rock crawling, any pavement may feel sporty, but we'd been on this particular road many times, and the Bronco Raptor once again showed off its amazing handling skills.

Interestingly, we never used manumatic or drive modes for anything—paved, urban, sand-gravel-rock, wilds—but they are all there and then some. It's just that the core engineering is so perfect.

If you want more speed, you know what you're wishing for next, and you're not alone. Ford went through this, of course, with the F-150 Raptor, and after several years of successive explanations, denials, rumors and promises, this summer they introduced the F-150 Raptor R, the V8 version many were clamoring for. Will there be a V8 option in

2023 FORD BRONCO LINEUP

(Note: 2022 model year is no longer available to order. Limited inventory may be available at dealers. The 2022 base 2-door was \$29,300 at launch, \$31,300 now; 2023 prices are as of fall 2022 and all up approximately \$2200 to \$5000 or more.)

	2-DOOR	4-DOOR
Base	\$32,295	\$36,445
Big Bend	36,285	38,275
Black Diamond	38,950	40,940
Outer Banks	41,855	44,445
Heritage Edition	44,305	46,295
Badlands	45,095	47,385
Everglades	---	53,895
Wildtrak	52,780	54,320
Heritage Limited Edition	66,895	69,185
Raptor	---	73,780

(Note: our 2022 Raptor had a base price of \$68,500.)

SASQUATCH PACKAGE AVAILABLE IN 2022 ON:
2-door: base, Big Bend, Black Diamond, Badlands
4-door: Big Bend, Black Diamond, Badlands

the future, a Bronco Raptor R? Irresistible to many customers, the very idea surely appeals as well to the Ford Performance engineers. It does, of course, have a shorter wheelbase and different stance, but that's what engineers are for—if they move forward with this at some point, those are all the things they'll happily tackle and conquer. ■

