

Power and precision

Top of the F-150 food chain

BY JOE SAGE

In 2009, the already famously capable and endlessly variable Ford F-150 gained a new crown, with the 2010 F-150 SVT Raptor, from the Ford Special Vehicle Team—custom build territory, straight from the factory. Hailed as a dune-runner, it sounded highly specialized, but that could be taken more as a spotlight on its new combination of extreme off-road prowess and high-speed performance. As top dogs will do, the Raptor quickly became numerous on our streets and freeways—where it turns out to perform normal daily duty just fine.

The first Raptor was powered by a 320-hp 5.4L

V8 or an optional 411-hp 6.2L V8 (from Super Duty), followed by just the 6.2L V8 from 2011.

The truck took two years off before returning for its second generation, dropping its SVT name as well as its V8—now powered by a 3.5L EcoBoost High Output twin-turbo V6 upped to 450 hp. But, predictably, enthusiasts clamored for a V8.

The only place to go was up. To keep the customer satisfied, while not backtracking from the EcoBoost V6, gen three added a supercharged, intercooled 5.2L V8 generating 700 hp (now 720). Production started in late 2022 for model year 2023

(see our May-June 2023 issue). The twist was that the V6 Raptor would also continue, with the V8 becoming the first Raptor R. Derived from the Mustang Shelby GT500, the Raptor R V8 is recalibrated and optimized for off-road performance, with increased low-end and mid-range torque; exhaust manifolds upgraded to cast stainless steel; model-specific oil cooler, filter and deeper oil pan; and air intake volume increased 66 percent via a wider intake and higher-flow filter.

There's more to it than the engine. Raptor R has advanced off-road performance suspension with variable-damp FOX Racing Shox, 5-link coils and more, everything tuned for the truck's power, and 37-inch tires are standard. Style points include a

power dome hood, clearance lights, R-specific graphics and a luxurious, purpose-built interior.

At 6.7 inches wider than a base F-150, the Raptor R fills a lane in town or on the freeway, yet always tracks true. Its 10-speed automatic shifts rapidly and transparently, optimizing fuel mileage. Its burly suspension is very pavement-friendly, gliding smoothly over any rough patches. Surprisingly maneuverable, the truck's stated 50-foot turning circle easily handles tight spots in town.

Off-highway, we switched into 4H for a wide range of trails. (There are also a variety of specialty modes, as well as 4L0.) Dune-running implies wide open spaces, but the Raptor R is very precise. On hard, heavily-swaled surfaces, you will be soon reminded to run slower than on the dunes, while its accuracy and control remain impressive.

As a great many target customers are the same

as they have been with the non-R Raptor—adventurous off-roaders aiming for desert and dune adventures, but who spend plenty of drive time in town—the bottom line is the same. You expect any of the Raptors to be on the wild side, because, well, they are. But their engineering, though extreme, is also precisely tamed.

When you occupy the throne—as Ford F-Series has for decades—you're bound to keep upping your game. One thing for certain—Ford has been responsive to its buyers' hopes and dreams.

For some, the V8 Raptor R will be the ultimate Raptor. For others, it may bring new appreciation for the more fuel-efficient V6 Raptor. We are confident the Raptor R will sell well, also being used for normal duties as well as extreme. That's why Ford has given us choices. Rejoice. ■

2024 F-150 GASOLINE LINEUP

	RWD	4X4
XL	\$36,965	\$41,980
STX	44,000	49,800
XLT	47,730	51,530
Lariat		65,395
King Ranch		73,845
Platinum		73,845
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Tremor		\$ 64,350
Raptor		78,440
Raptor R		▼ 110,365



SPECIFICATIONS RAPTOR R

ASSEMBLY...Dearborn Truck Plant, Michigan
ENGINE BUILD.....Dearborn, Michigan
CAB/BED/WB.....SuperCrew / nominal 5.5/145
BUILD.....high-strength steel frame, aluminum cab and bed
ENGINE.....high-output 5.2L (315 cu.in.) supercharged, intercooled 90° OHC V8, cast alum block & head w plasma transfer wire arc cyl liners, DOHC 32v, twin indep var camshaft timing, forged alum pistons
BORE X STROKE.....3.70 in x 3.66 in
ALTERNATOR.....standard single 240A
IGNITION SYS.....distributorless coil-on-plug
OIL CAPACITY.....11.5 qt
COOLANT.....12.0L engine + 1.3L supercharger
HP/TORQUE.....720 hp / 640 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO.....9.5:1
TRANSMISSION.....10-spd SelectShift automatic, auto transmission cooler and warm-up unit w thermostatic fin cooler
DRIVETRAIN.....4x4
TRANSFER CASE.....hi-lock, two-spd auto 4WD w neutral tow capability, 4.10 axles
SUSPENSION.....F: Indep dbl-wishbone w coil-over shock & cast alum lower control arm, high-output gas-press, electr contr contin variable compression damping FOX Racing Shox, 3.1-in damper, 1.0-in rod dia on Raptor R; R: five-link coil w Panhard rod, high-output gas-press, electr contr contin var compression damping FOX Racing Shox, 3.1-in damper, 0.875-in rod dia;
SUSP TRAV...w 37-in tires: F: 13.0-in; R: 14.1-in
STEERING.....elec pwr-asst
BRAKES.....power antilock vented disc, elect control brake boost, Nitro Tough iron: F: 350x34mm, 2x 51mm sliding caliper; R: 336x20mm, 1x 54mm sliding eiPB
WHEELS.....17x8.5-in forged alum beadlock-capable
TIRES...37x12.5R17LT BFGoodrich All-Terrain T/A K02 (full-size matching spare)
LENGTH / WHEELBASE.....232.6 / 145.4 in
WIDTH.....(w / w/o mirrors) 96.0 / 87.0 in
GROUND CLEARANCE.....13.1 in
OPEN TAILGATE TO GROUND.....37.8 in
APPRCH / DEPART / BRKVER.....33.1 / 24.9 / 24.4°
TURNING CIRCLE.....w 37-in tires: 50.0 ft
HEADROOM (F/R).....40.8 / 40.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R).....43.9 / 43.6 in
BED LENGTH AT FLOOR.....67.1 in
PAYLOAD.....1400 lb
TOW CAPACITY.....8700 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY.....91 prem unl / 36 gal
MPG.....10/15/12 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE (Raptor V6).....\$77,980
EQUIPMENT GROUP 803A RAPTOR SERIES:
 5.2L Supercharged V8, 17-in forged aluminum beadlock-capable wheels, Raptor R grille, hood vent, exterior and interior badging, exterior graphics, black accents, tow hooks, black alcantara suede and leather Recaro seats, carbon fiber interior appliques, interior stitching.....\$31,575
TIRES: 37 X 12.5R17 BSW All-Terrain.....incl
REAR AXLE: 4.10 electronic lock.....incl
7500-LB GVWR PKG.....incl
TWIN PANEL MOONROOF.....1495
BEDLINER: ToughBed spray-in accy.....595
DESTINATION CHARGE.....1995

TOTAL.....\$113,640

Prices have increased; see chart at upper left.