CAR REVIEW

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2023 Ford Raptor R Review

By Michael O'Connor | December 14, 2023

Vehicle Type: A four-door, five-seat full-size pickup truck.

Price Range: From $109,345 to $113,324, including destination charge.

Powertrain: A supercharged 5.2-liter V8 Predator with 700 horsepower and 640 lb-ft of torque, a 10-speed automatic transmission, and four-wheel drive.

What's New for 2023?

The Ford F-150 Raptor R is a new variant of the popular F-150 Raptor off-road pickup truck, and some serious performance specs have come with it.

The Raptor R comes with the same 700-hp supercharged 5.2-liter V8 as the Mustang Shelby GT500, and it comes with a new supercharger pulley that eliminates acceleration delay through the 9.75-inch rear axle with an electronically controlled locking rear differential with a 4:10:1 ratio.

The 37-inch tires run on a new suspension with dampers tuned specifically for the Raptor R. The interior comes with Recaro front seats and a mix of black leather and upholstery.

What's Good?

- Class-leading off-road performance and capability
- The supercharged V8 gives off the rumble and responsive expected more from an American muscle car
- The supercharger and the hefty torque specs make the acceleration closer to a sports car than an off-road capable pickup truck
- Many different options and add-ons that make it ideal for those with specific requirements for a pickup truck

What's Bad?

- The six-figure price tag
- The Ram 1500 TRX is slightly more powerful and less expensive
- The differential won't lock when the Raptor R is in two-wheel drive mode, which can cause some issues when off-roading or getting some drift in steering
- The V8 adds 100 pounds over the regular Raptor's turbocharged V6, affecting the handling, especially at higher speeds

Would we buy one? Yes. Even with the hefty price tag, there is no doubt that the Raptor R is an incredibly capable, not to mention slick-looking, vehicle.

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For years, the Ford F-150 has been the go-to pickup for people who need something capable, practical, and even stylish at times. However, in 2010 the Raptor completely rejuvenated the full-size pickup truck segment and brought a whole new level of brawn and off-road capability to the game.

For the 2023 model year, Ford again jumpstarted the Raptor line with the new Raptor R. Picking up where the regular Raptor and its turbo V6 leaves off, this latest iteration brings the V8 rumble back to the Raptor name after being missing for a generation, and takes square aim at the Ram TRX for truck supremacy.

The 2023 Raptor R comes with a host of driver assistance programs, including Trail Control and Trail 1-Pedal Drive, which act as low-speed cruise control for navigating off-road trails and challenging terrain.

Overall Score: 3.5/5 stars

Driving Experience: 5/5 stars

The Raptor R's engine is a supercharged 5.2-liter V8 with 700 horsepower and 640 lb-ft of torque and a reinforced intake specifically designed to handle this powertrain's input. It runs through a 10-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters and several different driving modes available through the transfer case for the full-time four-wheel drive system and low range.

You would be hard-pressed to find another truck in the same horsepower category that can outdo the Raptor R. The Chevy Silverado and related GMC Sierra's most powerful engine, its 420-horsepower V8, doesn't even come close to the output of the Raptor.

While the Ram 1500 TRX also has a supercharged V8 that puts out 702 horsepower, it is 740 pounds heavier, which brings down the responsiveness and the easily-driveable feel. Another competitor, the Toyota Tundra TRD Pro, only has a maximum power output of 437 horsepower through a 3.4-liter twin-turbo V6 and electric motor with its hybrid powertrain. When considering the choices for an off-road capable truck, the Raptor R comes out head and shoulders above other performance-oriented full-size trucks.

With different driving modes like Baja mode, Sport mode, and Quiet mode, which reduces the exhaust note, you have a lot of choices for how the Raptor R feels and sounds on the road.

There is enough ground clearance for almost any kind of driving, whether navigating rough and rocky terrain or traversing sand dunes. And the tight, responsive steering gives you excellent control, even in tricky off-road conditions.

The dampers and 37-inch tires make for a responsive driving feel that you would expect from a much smaller truck with much less power.

Safety Features: 3/5 stars

The Raptor R's standard features include forward-collision warning with automated emergency braking, blind spot monitoring, and a driver attention alert.

Most of the standard driver-assistance features are more geared toward off-road capability than they are to the actual safety of the truck.

You can add a sport bar to the Raptor R, which is highly recommended if you are taking it on extremely rough terrain that could result in a rollover.

Standard safety features include forward-collision warning and automated emergency braking. You can also add blind-spot monitoring and lane-keeping assistance.

Value: 3/5 stars

The base price of the Raptor R is well above six figures, which makes it relatively inaccessible to people without the disposable income for such a high-performance truck.

While the interior is undoubtedly comfortable, there are no high-end luxury features that you might get with something like the new Ford Bronco or a Range Rover.

Comparable trucks, such as the Ram 1500 TRX, have a base price of more than $20,000 less than the Raptor R, with slightly more horsepower.

For the most part, you are paying more for the allure that comes with Raptor R badging than you are paying for the performance specs, as impressive as they are.

Tech Features: 4/5 stars

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The touchscreen infotainment system in the Raptor R consists of a 12-inch screen running Ford's Sync 4 software. That allows you to have Apple CarPlay, Android Auto, and Amazon Alexa connectivity, and it can also receive over-the-air updates.

The sound system can also be upgraded to an 18-speaker B&O sound system, and you can add a 2.0-kW generator to the bed if you want to run power tools or other electronics when you are on the go.

The Raptor R includes everything expected of a modern vehicle regarding tech and extra features. The 12-inch touchscreen infotainment system features Ford's Sync 4 software, which is well-known for being responsive and intuitive.

While many vehicles' voice recognition leaves something to be desired, the Sync 4 voice commands are effective and perfect for making changes and selections on the system on the go.

The availability of a 2.0-kW generator for the bed is a perfect addition for anyone who wants to use their Raptor R for work applications or camping.

Practicality: 3/5 stars

The Raptor R is an exciting vehicle, but there might be better choices for a daily driver. The awful fuel economy makes it difficult to justify using the Raptor R for anything other than a performance-oriented task like off-roading or adventuring.

The massive 37-inch wheels could present problems in tight parking situations or city driving, where a smaller size is much more convenient.

With a zero-to-60 time of just 3.6 seconds, the power and acceleration may be too much for casual drivers looking for something to move them around town.

Styling & Design: 5/5 stars

The SuperCrew cab and short, 5.5-foot box make for a sharp look that many similar trucks don't have. However, that bed is considered by some to be on the small side, and it just barely fits things like motorcycles and ATVs, but the Raptor R's incredible towing and hauling capability regains some ground in the practicality category.

The Raptor R's wide and low profile gives it a sleekness that other trucks with similar capabilities lack.

The interior of the Raptor R doesn't have some of the plush amenities that other vehicles in this price range have, but it is stylish and modern enough to feel upscale.

The off-road accessories, such as the sport bar and fenders, give the Raptor R a near-vintage look and feel that a true connoisseur of this segment would appreciate.

The interior is certainly comfortable enough for long-travel situations if you aren't concerned about spending money at the pump. The SuperCrew cab is spacious enough for all passengers and comes with niceties such as a digital instrument panel and aluminum or carbon fiber trim.