

Is the Ford Ranger Raptor the boss of 4x4's?

 By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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I recently spent some quality time with the Ford Ranger Raptor and here are my thoughts.

At the outset, I was impressed with the all-round capabilities of this 'go-anywhere' vehicle. There are plenty of 4x4's on the market, but then you get the Ford Ranger Raptor. I call the Raptor 'The Beast', in a good way of course. This is because you will find everything you ever need in a 4x4 and then some. So, let me tell you...

Aesthetically, the Raptor looks 'mean' and ready for action. The stance of the vehicle literally screams 'take me for a ride'. And that's exactly what I did. Vehicles of this calibre must excel on all terrain.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

I jumped inside the cockpit and immediately my heart started racing with excitement. I assumed a comfortable position in the specially designed racing seats. Everything in the cockpit has been placed in arm's length of the driver. I decided to head out inland on the N2 and before I knew it, I was already in tenth gear, cruising at 120km/h, thanks to the rapidly changing gearbox that is mated superbly with the diesel engine.

The Ford Ranger Raptor comes fully-loaded with the following:

- true Ford Performance DNA
- Exceptional off-road capabilities
- Muscular exterior styling with a high 283mm ground clearance
- High-strength steel chassis with bespoke suspension and race-developed FOX shock absorbers with Position Sensitive Damping (PSD)
- Specially developed BF Goodrich 17-inch tyres all-terrain tyres
- Enhanced interior with sports seats
- High-performance 2.0-litre Bi-Turbo engine with 157kW and 500Nm, mated to Ford's advanced new 10-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters
- Innovative Terrain Management System includes exciting, ultra-responsive Baja mode

Manual and Automatic

You can choose between driving the Raptor in Automatic mode. But should you choose to go manual, there are two paddle shifters that are neatly concealed behind the steering wheel but within easy reach. Having 10 gears means a wider ratio-span, resulting in better acceleration and responsiveness in all driving conditions, matched to improved fuel efficiency. With more room to optimise gear spacing, gear progression can be customised for more accurate and quicker shifts. It also features real-time adaptive shift-scheduling algorithms engineered to optimise gear selection.

Touch the brake pedal and the gearbox changes down very quickly, thus slowing down the vehicle considerably. We averaged 9.5l of diesel per 100km on tarred roads. That is fairly efficient consumption.

Let's talk business

Of course, it's not enough to merely look aggressive – a vehicle that looks this good needs to deliver great performance and responsiveness too. To that end, the Ranger Raptor is equipped with the new 2.0-litre Bi-Turbo diesel engine that delivers a maximum of 157kW of power and 500Nm of torque. This innovative power plant offers both high performance and efficiency, thanks to its combination of a small high-pressure turbo and a large low-pressure turbo that work to provide optimal performance throughout the engine speed range.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

Take one look at the Ranger Raptor, and you know this off-road high-performance pickup means business. Its imposing stance, with 51mm taller ride height, 283mm ground clearance, 150mm wider front and rear track and 850mm wading depth lets you know that this is a serious off-road performance machine. A 32.5-degree approach angle, and ramp-over and departure angles of 24 degrees, provide an impressive go-anywhere capability. Its aggressive grille with the big bold FORD block lettering screams Raptor DNA – the real thing, with genuine Ford Performance design and engineering excellence.

Off Road Pursuits

To tackle unforgiving terrain, Ranger Raptor's specially developed BF Goodrich 285/70 R17 all-terrain tyres offer a tough sidewall to take on the most formidable environments with confidence, and an aggressive off-road tread pattern that provides outstanding grip in wet, mud, sand and snow conditions. I drove the Raptor at the Killarney 4x4 track just outside Shongweni (KwaZulu-Natal) and put this vehicle through its paces.

I drove up very very steep craggy and boulder laden inclines that I never imagined were surmountable, down the steepest of declines, again not knowing if I could make it to the other side, over large boulders, across a mud pool that was about 800mm in-depth and the Raptor delivered time and again.



Image by Naresh Maharaj

I selected the 'Baja' mode and 'fishtailed' the 4x4 across loose sand. It was one of my best experiences in a 4x4 on a 4x4 track in all my years as a motoring journalist. The BF Goodrich 285/70 all-terrain tyres were made to work overtime but at the end of any of the 4x4 obstacle course, the tyres looked fresh and ready for another challenge.

To better handle the crunching jumps and wild rides of your off-road pursuits, the Ranger Raptor boasts Position Sensitive Damping (PSD) shock absorbers exclusively manufactured by FOX for this model. They provide higher damping forces at extremes for unparalleled off-road capability and lower damping forces in more moderate conditions for a smoother ride on-road. Front-wheel travel is increased by 32%, and rear travel by 22% compared to the standard Ranger.

A bespoke new coil-over rear suspension arrangement features an integrated Watt's linkage that allows the axle to move up and down with very little lateral movement. This enables it to tackle tough terrain at high speed while providing exceptional levels of control and comfort - thus delivering the best of both worlds.

Verdict

Everything about the Ranger Raptor builds on the already outstanding sophisticated feel and functional capability of the Ranger and then goes further. From a driving dynamic fun standpoint, it is really an exceptionally special vehicle that is designed to flatter the novice and genuinely reward the expert. And YES!. It is the boss of the 4x4's.

Pricing

Recommended Retail Price:

- Ranger Raptor 2.0 BiT 10AT 4x4: R849,900 (Vat Inclusive)

All Ford Rangers come standard with Ford Protect, comprising a four-year/120,000km comprehensive warranty, three-year/unlimited distance roadside assistance and five-year/unlimited km corrosion warranty. A six-year/90,000km service plan is included, with 15,000km service intervals.

ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

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