

The Woodstock van rides again

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Ferrari's most potent V-6 yet

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A more powerful four-cylinder Mustang

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TEST DRIVE

F-150, Beast Mode

2019 Ford F-150 Raptor 4x4 SuperCrew

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Special to the Times Union

Raptor is a specialty piece — a high-performance pickup, with an appetite for off-roading.

That's not a combination that you see every day, and the ingredients required to make it work are pretty interesting. Providing the power is a 3.5L EcoBoost V6. The twin turbo, direct injection motor generates 450 horsepower @ 5,000 rpm and 510 lb.-ft. of torque @ 3,500 rpm. Raptor tips the scales at just under three tons (5,984 lb.), yet it can reach 60 mph from a standstill in a little over five seconds.

That's impressive, given the amount of mass being moved. Unsurprisingly, fuel economy is not a strong point. I recorded 15 mpg's overall, which compares with EPA estimates of 15/18/16. The motor is matched to a 10-speed automatic transmission, which has a manual shift mode and a tow/haul mode. Owing to its job description, vital areas of the undercarriage are protected by skid plates.

2019 Ford F-150 Raptor 4x4 SuperCrew
MSRP: \$ 55,840 (Raptor SuperCrew 4x4)
As Tested: \$71,885

And speaking of skidding, a shout-out to Ford for Raptor's running boards. The cast aluminum boards are big enough that a large, booted foot has room to fit on it (this is rarer than you'd think), and it's finished with a gritty textured surface, so it's non-slip.

Raptor's suspension (controls arms in front, live axle in back) is innovative. The chassis is fitted with a set of Fox Internal Bypass shock absorbers. Boasting substantial travel (13"F/13.9"R), these twin tube dampers incorporate "Live Valve" technology. Based on feedback from sensors in the suspension and body, the electronically-controlled shocks continuously adjust to conditions in real time.

The controller for the system was borrowed from Lincoln, and modified to suit the decidedly different demands of Raptor. The suspension requirements for a luxury vehicle are one thing; those of a truck that needs to handle high speed trail running and still be civilized on road are something else. The Baja 1000 is likely the best known distance desert race. Google a few Baja videos, and you'll see the some of the high flying extremes on one end of that suspension spectrum. The



RAPTOR is the Ford F-150's high-performance pickup geared toward off-roading. Its 3.5L twin turbo, direct injection EcoBoost V6 generates 450 horses and 510 lb.-ft. of torque. Raptor is available in SuperCab and SuperCrew variants.

other might be picking your way through a midtown Manhattan traffic jam, or perhaps an early morning, late-for-work slalom down 787.

For all the chassis work devoted to going fast off road, the latest upgrades for Raptor have more to do with going slow. A new Trail Control system allows you to dial in a set, slow speed (1-20 mph), which the truck will maintain. Freed from the gas/brake two-step that's required for rock crawling, drivers can concentrate solely on their steering, as they thread their way through trails. Raptor has 9.8 inches of ground clearance, and its numbers for approach, break-over and departure angles are 30.2, 23 and 21.8 degrees,

respectively. Good numbers, and large though it is, Raptor is undoubtedly capable to handle slow, tight trails.

While it's theoretically possible to get this truck stuck in snow, you'd have to work awfully hard to do so.

But its strength lies in faster paced dirt travel. Then again, look out the window. We're a long way from Baja. It's far more likely that a Raptor owner living here will get a chance to go off road on a slow technical trail than they would a high-speed desert blast.

Or neither. Most SUV drivers never dip their tires in the dirt — at least intentionally. As with Wrangler — the long time standard bearer for off-roading — the vast majority of these vehicles are bought for their image and their capability. Like a 500-horsepower muscle car, you've

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