

# Ford Ranger Raptor - birth of a new breed



By [Naresh Maharaj](#)

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As a motoring journalist of many years, you know that when you receive an invitation to test drive a machine like the Ford Raptor, this is no ordinary run of the mill event. Just by thinking of the town in South Africa where the launch was held, sends all kinds of pictures into your mind of dunes, mountainous ups and downs and plenty, plenty of loose white sand. So I packed my bags and headed off to a town called Upington, just about 100kms away from the Namibian border.

Upon our arrival, you are greeted by a convoy of the all-new Ford Ranger Raptor, certainly a new breed of 'pick-up' trucks. You are immediately greeted by the sheer size of this 'bakkie'.

Let's make no mistake here...the Raptor is big and eats up the parking bay so much that you have to be very careful when opening the door to climb in.



With Ford Performance DNA at its core, the Ranger Raptor creates an entirely new breed of exceptionally capable off-road vehicles that pushes the limits in technology, innovation and driving excitement.

"We are excited and proud to unleash the Ford Performance version of the highly successful Ford Ranger, which is also produced at our Silverton Assembly Plant in Pretoria," says Doreen Mashinini, general manager of marketing at Ford Motor

Company of Southern Africa.

And I have to agree wholeheartedly. The Ranger Raptor that totally rewrites the rules for the 4x4 pickup segment and Ford Ranger aficionados are going to love this 'beast'.

Some of the telling points about the Ranger Raptor screams at you from the aggressive stance of the vehicle to starting up the engine and driving away in full 4 x 4 mode. Other factors include:

- Exceptional off-road capabilities that set a completely new benchmark for the pickup segment
- Muscular exterior styling with 283mm ground clearance and 150mm wider track
- Unique high-strength steel chassis with bespoke suspension and race-developed FOX shock absorbers with Position Sensitive Damping (PSD)
- Specially developed BF Goodrich 285/70 R17 all-terrain tyres
- Enhanced Ford Performance interior with sports seats in Technical Suede, leather with blue stitching and race-inspired "on-centre" red marker on steering wheel
- 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

### **Dare to drive me exterior**



Source: <https://motorpress.co.za>

It's daunting and imposing. The Raptor sends out a challenge to you: *Drive me if you dare*. 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 let 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 the impressive go-anywhere capability. Its aggressive grille with the big bold FORD block lettering screams Raptor DNA – the real thing!

### **Performance-bred interior**

Step inside Ranger Raptor, and you will enter a world where it is unmistakably Ford. The sports seats are uniquely designed and trimmed in Technical Suede for maximum grip, providing optimum support during high-performance off-road driving, while also providing exceptional comfort when cruising in town.

The steering wheel features perforated leather hand grip sections, paired with Raptor DNA lightweight magnesium paddle shifters for crisp gear changes. The Raptor logo is debossed into the spoke bezel of the steering wheel and a motorsport-inspired “on-centre” marker – a red stripe at the top-middle of the steering wheel – gives you the confidence to know where the wheels are pointing.

## Powerful Bi-Turbo Engine

A vehicle that looks this aggressive also 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.



Source: <https://motorpress.co.za>

And you will never have to worry about whether it will be up to the task of handling the stresses of high performance, as the powertrain has been designed from day one for the most powerful and highest stress application.

## Unrivalled efficiency

The Ranger Raptor is equipped with Ford's all-new 10-speed automatic transmission, which is created with high-strength steel, aluminium alloys and composites to optimise durability and weight. 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.

Unique to the Ranger Raptor are steering wheel-mounted magnesium paddle shifters that give the driver ultimate control over the gear change points and driving dynamics.

## Tuned for all terrains

To further underline its impressive off-road credentials, the Ranger Raptor's Terrain Management System (TMS) includes an exciting Baja mode, inspired by Mexico's famous Baja Desert Rally, which enables ultra-responsive, high-speed off-road performance.



In this mode, vehicle systems like Traction Control are pared back to allow spirited off-road driving without intervention from the vehicle's onboard systems. Gear selection is optimised for maximum performance, and the mapping will hold gears longer and downshift more aggressively.



Source: <https://motorpress.co.za>

I drove the Raptor on very loose soil and thanks to my prior off-road driving experiences, I was able to tame the beast over steep inclines and declines and on very loose sand, which can very easily get one bogged down. The Raptor passed this test with flying colours and not once did the vehicle flinch over such loose terrain. Then it was over to test the double-cab on sand track conditions, reaching speeds of up to 180kmph. The Raptor stayed its course and was just as impressive as in loose sand.

Lastly, we headed for a chosen loopy track to test the road holding capabilities without Dynamic Stability Control. This was, for me, the most fun part of the driving experience as I danced with the Raptor in all directions but never once going off the proverbial beaten track. It was very responsive and the Ford DNA gave the driver all the confidence you needed to tramp on the accelerator and brake hard when you needed to.

When you need to come to a halt, the braking system on the Ranger Raptor offers extreme stopping power through new and bespoke components. All of this from a 4x4??? I had to pinch myself to make sure I was not dreaming.

### **Grip it and Rip it**

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. Isn't that amazing?!

### **Recommended retail price**

Ranger Raptor 2.0 BiT 10AT 4x4: R786,400.

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. Available in Ford Performance Blue, Colorado Red, Absolute Black,

Frozen White and Conquer Grey colours with contrasting Dyno Grey accents, the new Ranger Raptor's aggressive design is driven by performance and functionality.

## Verdict

Ready to set a new benchmark in high-speed, off-road capability, Ranger Raptor packs a hefty punch in the pickup segment. The commanding presence delivered by the ultimate Ranger's imposing dimensions and extreme styling is supported by a unique Ford Performance chassis optimised for high-speed off-road driving and go-anywhere capability. As one of the most highly anticipated new models for 2019, the all-new Ford Ranger Raptor is now officially available in South Africa. Early indications are that it will be a top seller.

## ABOUT NARESH MAHARAJ

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