The Boxster of Trucks

Ranger Raptor Is a Thrill Stuck in Big Brother's Shadow

By Derek Price
CARGAZING.COM

The Ford Ranger Raptor is the Porsche Boxster of pick-up trucks.

What do I mean by that? The Boxster is an amazing car, lovable and playful and just the right size. I actually like it more than the 911. If I bought one, though, I'd always wish it were the 911, the car that gets all the glory and serves as the status symbol.

The Ranger Raptor lives in that same kind of shadow. It's the smaller, cheaper sibling of the F-150 Raptor, a truck Ford built for blasting across the desert, and in many ways it's the easier one to live with.

It's nearly 2 feet shorter and almost 7 inches narrower than the full-size Raptor, which makes it easier to maneuver in parking lots and a whole lot more fun on curvy roads.

I took my tester to see the fall foliage on the Talimena Scenic Drive, a mountain road along the Oklahoma-Arkansas border that's one of my favorite places to drive sports cars. Despite being a pickup, and an off-road pickup at that, the Ranger Raptor really seemed to come alive on the mountain curves.

You can accelerate through switchbacks and enjoy it as a tossable, sporty truck in a way you just can't with the beefier F-150.



Flared fenders, a wide stance and 33-inch all-terrain tires give the 2026 Ford Ranger Raptor the look of a desert racer scaled down to fit a normal parking space.

A twin-turbocharged, 3.0-liter V6 makes 405 horsepower and 430 pound-feet of torque, wonderful power that makes you smile every time you mash the gas pedal. It's wild.

It obviously does the Raptor thing well, too. With Fox shocks that adjust on the fly, front and rear locking differentials and a Baja driving mode for running fast in the dirt, it can blast over rough trails or cow pastures at high speeds with aplomb.

The biggest surprise, though, is the impressively comfortable ride, not just for an off-road truck but for any truck. That same soft suspension soaks up rough pavement around town, which makes this Raptor easy to live with every day.

There are downsides, starting with the price.

The Ranger Raptor starts at $57,070, and my tester rang up at $62,430 with extra-cost paint, graphics, upgraded wheels and a spray-in bedliner, which is a lot for a less-than-full-size pickup.

Unfortunately, the material quality inside doesn't match that sticker. There are too many hard plastics in the cabin, a common complaint in Fords that's harder to forgive on a truck that costs more than $60,000.

Fuel economy isn't great, either, at 16 mpg in the city and 18 on the highway. It also tows less than other Rangers, topping out at 5,510 pounds instead of 7,500.

For some perspective, the F-150 Raptor starts about $22,000 higher. Among mid-size rivals, a Chevrolet Colorado ZR2 costs thousands less and a Toyota Tacoma TRD Pro costs more, but neither comes close to the Ford's 405 horsepower.

I absolutely love this truck. It has drawbacks, and if I picked this one I'd still always wonder whether I should have gotten the big-boy Raptor.

But it's a remarkable performance machine that can stand on its own, and in some ways it's more appealing than the F-150 version, other than prestige.

AT A GLANCE

WHAT WAS TESTED?
2026 Ford Ranger Raptor SuperCrew 4x4 ($57,070). Options: Premium paint ($395), Raptor graphics ($750), satellite radio ($300), beadlock-capable wheels ($1,495), spray-in bedliner ($525). Price as tested (including $1,895 destination charge): $62,430

BY THE NUMBERS
Wheelbase: 128.7 in.
Length: 210.9 in.
Width: 79.8 in.
Height: 75.9 in.
Engine: 3.0-liter twin-turbocharged V6 (405 hp, 430 lb.-ft.)
Transmission: 10-speed automatic
MPG: 16 city, 18 highway

RATINGS
Style: 9
Performance: 10
Price: 6
Handling: 8
Ride: 9
Comfort: 8
Quality: 6
Overall: 9

WHY BUY IT?
The Ranger Raptor packs desert-racing hardware, a comfortable ride and 405 horsepower into a truck that's easier to live with than its bigger, more famous brother.



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Inside, the Ranger Raptor pairs leather-trimmed seats with a 12-inch touchscreen, digital gauges and overhead switches for wiring up accessories.

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A CLOSER LOOK






AT A GLANCE FACTS, FIGURES AND RATINGS

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