

# THIS GOES TO ELEVEN OR ACTUALLY 37

by Joe Sage

As rock legend wannabe Nigel Tufnel taught us all in *This is Spinal Tap*, when we want that extra push, what do we do? We go to eleven.

The Ford F-150 Raptor has been a solid ten since its inception in 2010 as a street legal desert-running and off-road racing trophy truck. It's no surprise that it's phenomenally popular in these parts.

F-150 was all new for 2021—generation fourteen of this pickup truck that has been the top-selling vehicle of any type in the US for over 40 years. The new model is immediately recognizable, as the basic aluminum structure of cab and bed were carried over, but the other 92 percent of its parts

are all new. The 2022 lineup is a carryover.

The 2021-22 Raptor has all-new five-link rear suspension with more wheel travel, next-gen FOX shocks, more low-end torque, higher payload and tow capacities, and active valve dual exhaust for enriched powertrain acoustics, as well as upgraded connectivity features. With its 36-gallon tank, the truck's powerful and economical EcoBoost V6 turbo has a projected range of over 500 miles.

Beyond all that's new overall, there is one special Raptor build atop all the rest. While the first two generations of Raptor rode on 35-inch tires—which remain standard—they've added a 37 Performance Package option, key to the truck we're driving here. You've seen trucks with big 37-inch tires before, but this is the first light-duty pickup that's a full stock factory build. Straightforward as this change may seem, it required taking a new look at everything else from that point up. For example, Ford had to modify the rear frame rails to

mount a full-size 37-inch spare under the bed, a major reengineering feat among several that put the 37-package Raptor on its own assembly line.

Our time with this truck included multiple comprehensive freeway sessions between the northeast Valley and Phoenix Raceway, Beeline Highway time with notable climbs and curves at speed, and a long day on spectacular unpaved roads well into the wilds—many-miles-long gravel and dirt roads, also at speed, in line with the Raptor's essential mission as a high-powered, high-speed dune-runner. We tackled several side routes combining steep, narrow, rutted and rocky conditions, some fairly extreme, bringing into play this build's most distinctive feature—that 37-inch tire package—with some extra-tight maneuvers and turnarounds aided by a great camera system, as well as the occasional get-out-and-look-first method.

The obvious question a lot of Raptor owners might hear, likely all the moreso with the 37-inch-

er, is do you really need this if you're not going to the Glamis Dunes or Baja every day? The quick answer is: why not? This truck is as friendly to drive all day and every day as any other. The only difference around town is that Raptor (with either tires) is a full 6.7 inches wider than a regular F-150. You may also feel slight differences in the suspension and brakes, all welcome as being inherent to the truck. Basically, everything is as good or better.

The Raptor is about two and a half inches taller than a standard F-150 4x4, adding about another inch with the 37-inchers. The 35-inch Raptor adds 6.7 and 2.7 inches to approach and breakover angles; departure is a fraction of an inch less (with that big spare). With 37-inchers, all are increased roughly another inch or two (see specs in sidebar).

The front shock is upgraded with a larger rod, and there's a different spring perch location for the front suspension. The rear—an all-new five-link setup with Panhard bar—gets unique shocks and bump stops as part of the package. Suspension travel is reduced by about an inch, but when you're taking these 37s over boulders, gullies, rocks and

such, you're not going to be thinking about the one inch of travel you don't have. You're going to be thinking about the two inches of tire you do. And you're going to be one satisfied customer.

We've got to hand it to Ford for coming up with this build. Raptor has certainly been king of its hill and top of its heap for its full lifetime. But while there's a lot of camaraderie among this enthusiast group, there are always going to be streaks of competitiveness and pride within the tribe. As great as the original Raptor is, there are times and places it might be just not quite enough to show up and say, well it's a Raptor, for cryin' out loud—because everybody else may be modified with 37-inchers. Well, egos restored and problem solved.

We're pretty solid fans of the extreme factory-build approach, with your Ford dealer able to handle all service, parts and any warranty work.

Oh, and there's one more well-known surprise yet to come this year—a significant addition people have inquired about for years—a V8 Raptor. This will not replace the V6, but rather expand the lineup, as with the 37-inchers. Bring it on! ■



## SPECIFICATIONS

ASSEMBLY	Dearborn Truck Plant, Michigan
CONSTRUCTION	high strength steel bed, aluminum cab and bed
ENGINE BUILD	Cleveland, Ohio
ENGINE	3.5L EcoBoost twin-turbo and intercooled V6, alum/alum, OHC, coil on plug ignition, port fuel inj w dir inj
HP/TORQUE	450 hp / 510 lb-ft
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.5:1
ALTERNATOR	single 240A
TRANSMISSION	10-spd SelectShift auto
DRIVETRAIN	4x4
TRANSFER CASE	4HI 1:1, 4LO 2.64:1
FINAL DRIVE (F/R)	4.10:1 / 4.10:1
SUSPENSION	F: indep dbl wishbone w coil-over shocks & cast alum lower control arm; high-output gas-pressurized, electronically controlled, continuously variable compression damping FOX Racing Shox, 3.1 damper, 1.0-in rod diameter w opt 37" tires (0.875 standard); R: 5-link coil w Panhard rod; high-output, gas-pressurized, electronically controlled, continuously variable compression damping FOX Racing Shox, 3.1" damper, 0.875-in rod diameter.
SUSP TRAVEL (F/R)	w 37" tires 13.0 / 14.1 in (standard) 14.0 / 15.0 in
STEERING	electric pwr-assist, 17.2:1
BRAKES	F: 340x34mm vented Nitro Tough iron, 2 x51mm sliding caliper; R: 336x20mm vented Nitro Tough iron, 1 x54mm sliding eiPB; electronically controlled brake boost
WHEELS (OPT 37")	17x8.5 forged alum beadlock capable, magnetic painted
TIRES (OPT 37")	37x12.50 R17LT BFGoodrich All-Terrain T/A K02, load range C-116S
LENGTH / WHEELBASE	232.6 / 145.4 in
WIDTH	96.0 (86.6 w/o mirrors)
HEIGHT	w 37" tires 80.7 in (std 79.8)
GROUND CLEARANCE	w 37" 13.1 in (std 12.0)
APPRCH / DEPART / BRKOV	33.1 / 24.9 / 24.4° (w std tires 31.0 / 23.9 / 22.7°)
TURNING CIRCLE	na
HEADROOM (F/R)	40.8 / 40.4 in
LEGROOM (F/R)	43.9 / 43.6 in
BED LENGTH	5.5-ft bed: at floor 67.1 in width at wheelhouse 51.1 in
WEIGHT	na
MAX PAYLOAD	1400 lb
TOW CAPACITY	8200 lb
FUEL / CAPACITY	premium unl / 36 gal
MPG	15/16/15 (city/hwy/comb)
BASE PRICE (2021)	\$64,145
EQUIPMENT GROUP 801A: Raptor Series: B&O	Unleashed 18-sprkr audio, Torsen pkg, front axle w Torsen diff, convenience pkg, interior work surface, partitioned lockable storage, connected built-in nav (3 yrs incl), tow tech pkg, integrated trailer brake control, 360-degree camera pkg
POWER TECH PKG: Pro Power Onboard 2kW	power tailgate, tailgate step
RAPTOR 37 PERFORMANCE PKG: modified build	w 37x12.5 R17 BSW All-Terrain tires, interior blue accent pkg, unique 17-in forged aluminum wheels
BEDLINER: ToughBed spray-in	
DESTINATION CHARGE	
TOTAL (2021)	\$82,080