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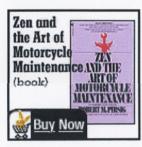
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# 11.09.00 :: WHEELS :: YAMAHA ATV











When it comes to four-wheeler performance, Yamaha equals power and Honda equals handling. But you need both if you're going to get your thrills off-roading at 75 mph while sitting on top of -- rather than inside -- a vehicle. Now, with its all-new 660R Raptor high-performance ATV, Yamaha is throwing dirt in Honda's face by demonstrating that it can design a four-wheeled missile with not only frightening thrust, but also an excellent cockpit.

The Raptor gets its muscle from a liquid-cooled, five-valve, single-cylinder four-stroke. A sport-bike enthusiast would laugh at 35 horses, but give him the same power in an off-road environment and his eyes widen. The beast revs fast and hard all the way to nine grand, even in power-robbing sand. The controls, including thumb throttle and five-speed foot shifter, couldn't be smoother. Though the spacing between first and second gear is a bit wide, you can just roll on some more throttle and boogie.

A high-performance ATV must do many things well and the Raptor gracefully meets the challenge. See that rapidly approaching tight turn with a scary 20-foot cliff? No problem: The Raptor curves nicely. How about soaring off the top of a steep sand dune? Feel free to fly this nimble bird high and far -- commensurate, of course, with the size of your huevos.

While the word "slide" typically doesn't go over too well with on-road enthusiasts, it's a big part of off-roading. The Raptor's radial tires provide ample traction, but make it hard to initiate power-slides. Aftermarket tires and stiffer front suspension settings will probably provide a relatively simple fix.

No, this new performance ATV doesn't get a perfect score. But Yamaha's finally built a vicious predator with comfortable ergonomics, nimble handling and a strong power delivery. It's a Raptor that earned our rapture.

--Bill Lanphier



Previously in Wheels:

# YAMAHA MOTOR CORPORATION **2001 660R RAPTOR**

\$6499 800-88-YAMAHA www.yamahausa.com

### TYPE OF VEHICLE:

High-performance 2WD ATV

## SPECIFICATIONS:

Engine: Liquid-cooled, single-cylinder,

five-valve, SOHC, counterbalanced 660cc four-stroke with electric start and US Forest Service-approved

muffler

Transmission: Manual-clutch (left

hand). manual-shift (right

foot) five-speed with reverse

Wheelbase: 49"

Length/Width/Height: 72.0"/43.3"/45.3"

Seat Height: 33.9" Dry Weight: 398 lb.

Colors: Blue or black/gray

# **TARGET AUDIENCE:**

**Experienced ATV enthusiasts** in search of a major off-road adrenaline rush.

# PROS:

Good handling, strong but tractable power and smooth controls, but way too much fun for the price.

# CONS:

Gear ratios too wide between first and second: initiating power-slides could be easier.

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