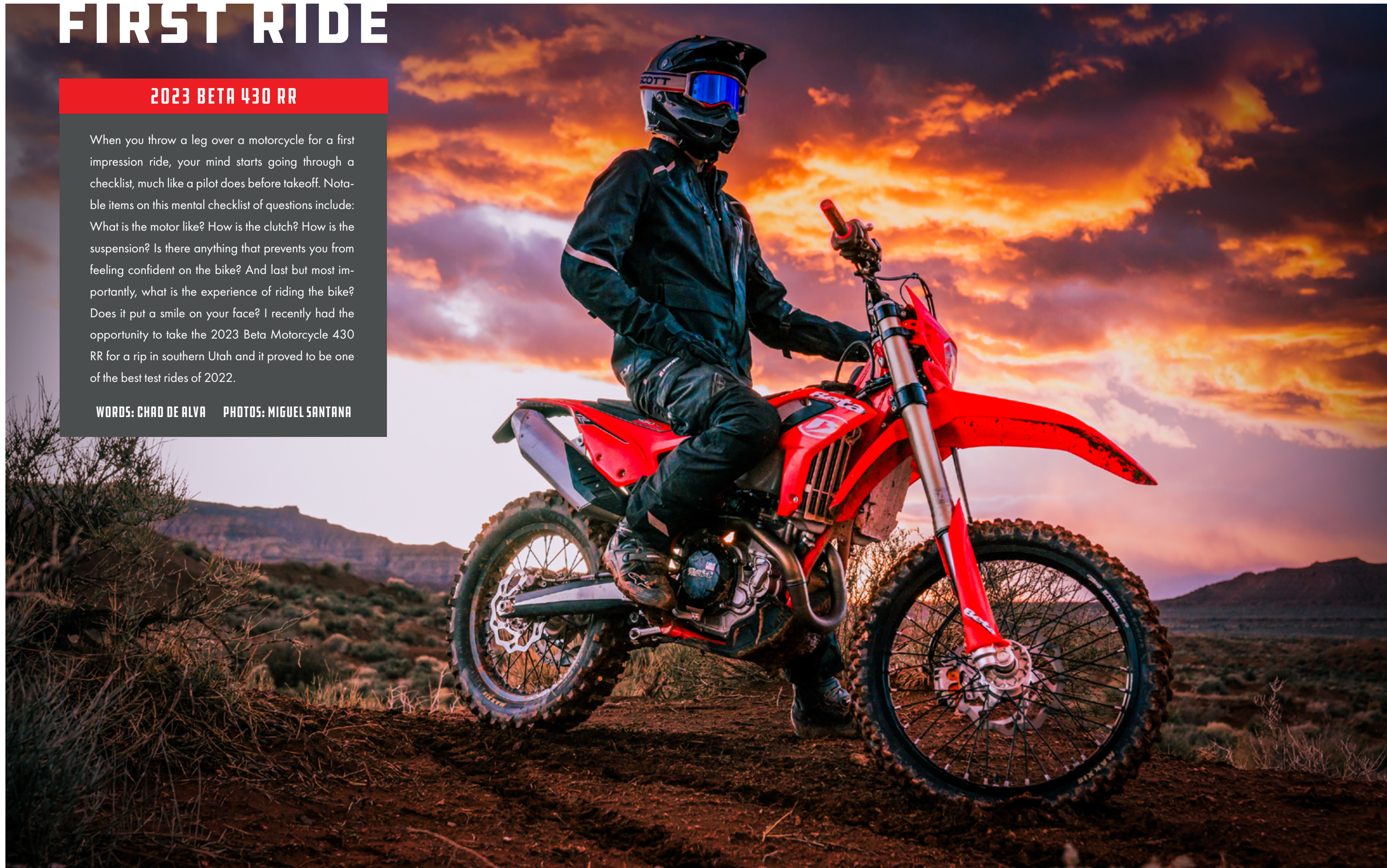


FIRST RIDE

2023 BETA 430 RR

When you throw a leg over a motorcycle for a first impression ride, your mind starts going through a checklist, much like a pilot does before takeoff. Notable items on this mental checklist of questions include: What is the motor like? How is the clutch? How is the suspension? Is there anything that prevents you from feeling confident on the bike? And last but not most importantly, what is the experience of riding the bike? Does it put a smile on your face? I recently had the opportunity to take the 2023 Beta Motorcycle 430 RR for a rip in southern Utah and it proved to be one of the best test rides of 2022.

WORDS: CHAD DE ALVA PHOTOS: MIGUEL SANTANA

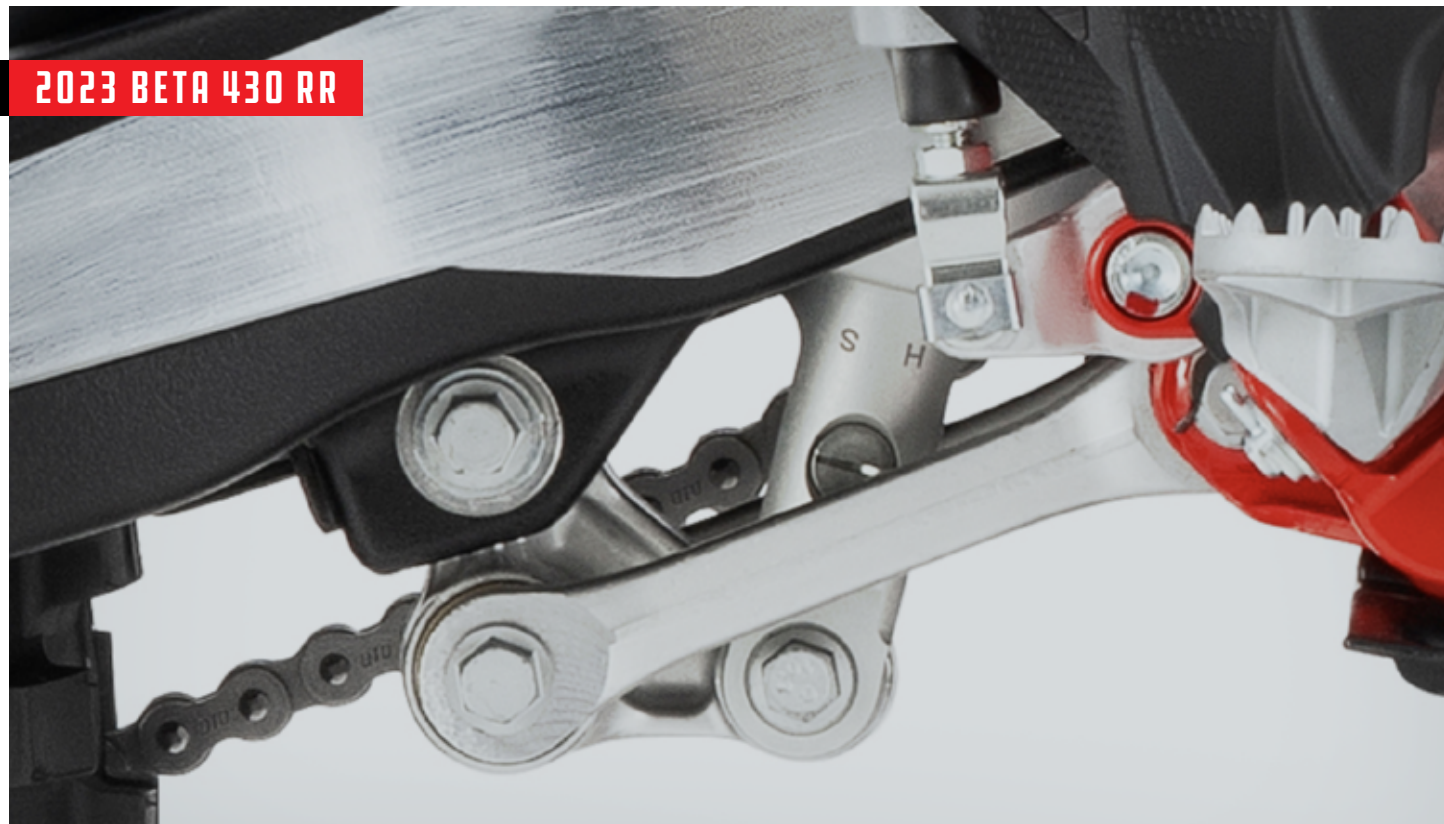




Beta's 430 RR is a special bike in a world where it seems like every other manufacturer only recognizes displacements in multiples of 50. We've got 350s, 450s, and 500s galore, but Beta is marching to the beat of their own drummer with their thumpers. The 390, 430, and 480 are all unique bikes – and it takes mere seconds from first seeing one in person to appreciate these differences. Sitting on the 430 RR for the first time, you're reminded of that wonderfully compact Beta chassis that makes the bike feel small and agile – something that you can easily manipulate and place exactly where you want it. Riders who are new to Betas usually ask questions to the effect of "Is this really a 430?" as they're surprised so much motor can fit in such a small and agile-feeling chassis.

The next thing you'll notice is the quality of the handlebar controls, and pulling in the clutch lever will introduce you to one of my favorite parts of a Beta, their outstanding Diaphragm clutch. Turn the handlebars from side to side and you'll notice that the steering range of motion is limited compared to other manufacturers, but there are plenty of techniques for turning around besides cornering on the steering stops. More on that in a minute. Further scrutineering of the bike reveals the other changes that Beta has made for the 2023 model year.

2023 BETA 430 RR



A new traction control system has been added to Beta's existing sun and rain map switch, giving the bike four distinct electronic control settings. Off to the sides of this new control switch, you'll find revised radiator shrouds which are narrower, and only increase the small and agile feeling exuded by the chassis. Inside the forks, new pistons help prevent cavitation and keep the suspension action smooth no matter where you are in the stroke or what you're riding over. 2023 Beta 4 strokes get a new longer exhaust header which improves low end throttle response and increases torque. It's always great to see functional changes that actually impact how a bike rides.

My test ride in Utah took place the day after a late season rainstorm dropped some serious precipitation in the area. All of this moisture turned the normally dry and dusty Utah desert into conditions that ranged from hero dirt to slip and slide muddy. With limited time, I simply rode the bike as delivered – something akin to borrowing a buddy's bike and not dinking with their setup at all.

The Beta 430 RR's motor responds instantly to the throttle. There is no hesitation nor is there any hint of emissions compromised mapping – the bike just revs freely and lets you know it's ready for launch. Feed the rear wheel the exact amount of twist you want thanks to that awesome clutch, and you're on your way. Down low the 430.95cc mill has plenty of torque, and the throttle only pours more fuel on the fire carrying you all the way to the top of the rev range without checking out early. My test ride included everything from high-speed dirt roads to some technical moves and a few sketchy steep hill climbs, and at no point in my ride did the motor disappoint. The 430 has plenty of torque for wheelies and pivot turns, and it loves to rev for power slides when you're trying to hang with adventure bikes. In short – the motor is great, and its smaller reciprocating mass contributes to a chassis that is more agile and flickable. Think big four stroke power in a chassis that handles more like a two stroke, and you'll get the idea.



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In the suspension department the 430 RR is no less inspiring. The linkage rear end and the updated fork were great for the conditions in which I rode. A big disclaimer here – I didn't get the chance to hammer through anything that was properly rocky, so I can't speak to that aspect of the bike's performance. However, on dirt roads, two tracks full of washouts/G-Outs and a sampling of square edge obstacles, the suspension worked well soaking up the big smacks without losing composure. The few slightly rocky sections we did get to play with indicate good things, so mark me down as eager to see what the 2023 suspension can do in the rocks.

Our riding area in Utah was a textbook example of a place that rewarded exploring. A network of roads and tracks fed into washes and trails that snaked their way through a quintessential desert landscape carved through eons of erosion. On two tracks with no shortage of wash outs and bermed corners built by 4-wheeled vehicle traffic, the 430 was a weapon – I was able to go as fast as I wanted, sail over the whoops and G-outs in the trail, and dive into the corners with solid brakes. Exiting a corner was no less enjoyable – the 430 pulls, and shooting off down the trail with the 430 cranking away never got old.

In the washes and on smaller trails, the Beta 430 RR felt at home. Granted, hero dirt makes just about every bike feel awesome, but I couldn't point to a single chassis characteristic that I wasn't a fan of. The bike quickly became something that I was very comfortable on and felt confident, and that meant going just about anywhere was fair game.

When mother nature had other ideas in the form of a cliff or other obstacle that I wasn't going to get past, turning the bike around was no factor – even with less steering angle than other bikes. Thanks to that outstanding diaphragm clutch, pulling 180-degree pivot turns on the first (okay, on the second) try, or ripping an elephant turn to get an about face was no worries. When you're riding up a wash to the end or following a tight trail just to see where it goes, there's always the thought in the back of your mind to the effect of "how am I going to turn around?" Yet on the Beta 430, I found myself thinking "I'll get to do another pivot turn when this trail stops me. Sweet!"



2023 BETA 430 RR

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The end of my test ride on the Beta 430 RR was spent flying down a well-maintained dirt road with a couple of ADV bikes as we raced the last remnants of light to get back to the truck. Here is where I found my two wants for the 430: The first is a better headlight, as it's quite easy to outrun the stock headlight on this bike. The RR-series four strokes have 48 watts of DC power available from their stators, so adding a light from MotoMinded would be a no-brainer. Second, would be a better seat. The stock seat doesn't impact your ability to ride the bike when standing up, but when it's actually being used as a seat, well let's just say there is room for improvement. Thankfully, Seat Concepts has a number of options for Betas.

Without a 350, 390, or 450 along for the ride to make objective A/B comparisons, I can't definitively speak to exactly how the Beta 430 stacks up to its cousins with different displacements. What I can say for certain is that the 430 RR is a very fun bike. It had plenty of power to hang with the 500 that was also on our ride, and the Beta chassis was certainly more agile than the 500. This makes the 430 a very intriguing bike for off-road and dual sport use.

The 2023 Beta 430 RR answered all of the questions on the checklist: It has a great motor, good suspension (again, for the condition we rode in), an awesome clutch, confidence inspiring chassis, and it definitely delivered a great riding experience. This left me to focus on riding, exploring, and just enjoying some of the best riding country in the southwest. Another bike with some weird quirk, be it motor, suspension, chassis or something else would have certainly tainted the memory of a great ride. Yet the Beta 430 RR enabled one of my favorite test rides of 2022, and I'm eagerly awaiting my next encounter with this intriguing bike.

For more information on the 2023 Beta 430 RR, visit www.betausa.com

2023 BETA 430 RR



SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE

Type:	Single cylinder, 4 –stroke, liquid cooled, 4-valve (Titanium intake and exhaust), electric start (back up kick starter as an option)
Displacement:	430.95cc
Compression Ratio:	12.33:1
Ignition:	Dual-Map Kokusan 200w output
Lubrication:	Twin Oil Pumps w/Cartridge Filter & Separate Compartments for Engine & Transmission
Fuel System:	42mm Throttle Body w/Dual Injectors
Traction Control:	On-Demand with push of a button
Clutch:	Wet Diaphragm-style
Transmission:	6-Speed

CHASSIS

Frame:	Molybdenum steel, double cradle w/ quick air filter access
Wheelbase:	58.7"
Seat Height:	37"
Ground Clearance:	12.6"
Footrest Height:	16.3"
Dry Weight:	239 lbs (wet weight, no fuel)
Fuel Tank Capacity:	2.4 US Gallons
Front Suspension:	48 mm Sachs Open Cartridge with compression, rebound & spring preload adjustment
Rear Suspension:	Aluminum Body Sachs shock w/adjustable rebound and hi/low speed compression
Front Wheel Travel:	11.6"
Rear Wheel Travel:	11.4"
Front Brake:	260 mm floating rotor
Rear Brake:	240 mm rotor
Front/Rear Rim:	21" (Front) 18" (Rear)
Front/Rear Tire:	Maxxis Enduro
Final Gearing:	13T Front/48T Rear

Price: MSRP \$10,699 Destination Fee: \$439.00