

FIRST RIDE – 2023 BETA 200 RR RACE EDITION







The Beta Motorcycles 200 RR Race Edition is unique to the world of off-road two strokes. Most manufacturers sell 300s, 250s, and in some cases 125 or 150 displacement two-strokes, but Beta is currently the only manufacturer selling a 200. If you're familiar with off-road two strokes, you're probably trying to figure out how a 200 stacks up to the other, more common displacements on the market. The short answer is that the Beta 200 RR Race Edition is in its own unique category, that in one word is best described as fun.

Like many Beta Motorcycles, the 200 is available as both a RR or a RR Race Edition. This article focuses on the Race Edition. If you're wondering what the differences are between these two models, know that it is much more than what might be visually obvious at first glance. The race edition bikes feature unique graphics and styling, as well as functional blingy bits, such as an axle puller on the front axle. Different foot pegs and other aluminum parts all contribute to a bike that looks brilliant in factory trim. Italy's ability to make beautiful things clearly extends beyond cars. Yet, perhaps the most significant difference between a race and non-race model is the suspension. The race models feature KYB closed cartridge forks and a KYB shock, whereas the RR models come with Sachs suspension. Additionally, the race edition motors get tweaks like a more aggressive CDI and other tuning adjustments to make a bike that is better suited for aggressive riding and/or racing use.

The 200's chassis is in a word, compact. This helps the bike exude a very agile, almost mountain bike like feeling. Swapping back and forth between the Beta 200, and a 300 from another manufacturer, the 200 almost feels like it has been scaled to 90% the size of other dirt bikes. While this may initially sound like an undesirable attribute, it all makes sense when you ride the bike in a low attack stance. This is not a bike that you can stand straight up on like you're starring in a BDR film – you need to get low and aggressive on this chassis. If you try and slack off by standing tall, the bike will feel cramped and twitchy, yet if you tuck in and really get into attack mode, you'll be able to reap the benefits of this super fun, flickable, compact chassis.

Press the starter button, and the 200's carbureted motor instantly jumps to life. Twist the throttle, and the bike eagerly and instantly reacts. Feed the power to the ground with Beta's awesome clutch, and you're off to the races. In stock configuration the bike's power valve is set to engage after the bike has some spool on to produce that classic two stroke warp drive hit, and staying in the power on this bike is a surefire way to install a perma-grin on your face. Just to see what the motor was capable of, we backed the pre-load off of the power valve spring to trade the warp drive out for maximum low end torque. This quite effectively turned the 200 into a little torque monster that performed well above what one would assume given that it's 2/3s the displacement of a 300. If you've ridden a 125 / 150 and felt like the bike had nothing down low for technical work, know that the Beta 200 has the twist for all of the hard enduro / technical work. Just watch Jonny Walker ride one like a trials bike if you want to see what a 200 can do when it comes to riding one like a trials bike.

Even with the power valve set to engage quickly, the bike still has plenty of go on the top end. The 200 is an absolute hoot on the turn track when you hold it on the throttle stop like a 125, and it still has an ample serving of torque when it's time to pick your way through the big rocks and lug things down low. The 200 has no problem hanging with 300s on single track, and when it comes to sheer power output when drag racing out of corners on a twisty windy dirt road that snakes its way up the side of the mountain, the Beta 200 RR Race pulls well above what you would assume 2/3s of the displacement would provide. The motor is a ton of fun – enough said.







In the suspension department, the KYB boingers are well suited to the bike's Race Edition moniker, and their performance is as good as advertised. The 200 Race Edition is valved for big hit high speed performance, and when bombing around the desert or other places where whoops or other high-speed hits are involved, the bike does great. However, when it comes to playing in the rocks or other types of riding (i.e. technical singletrack) where a more compliant ride is desired, the KYB's factory valving leaves performance on the table. Setting the bike up for this type of use would certainly help, but it's important to remember that Beta is very deliberate about the intended use of their bikes, and Beta encourages riders who want more of a trail bike to look at the RR edition models.

