

Adriatic Adventure 2019

Day Four - Zagreb to Banja Vrućica - 375 kms

We are very much living the dream on the Adriatic Adventure, days of endless and fabulous roads, all tackled in a fine array of classic cars. It is good once in a while however to come across something that brings you back down to earth a little, to encounter something that reminds you just how lucky you are to be having an adventure, irrespective of how hard you have worked to have such a privilege. Today our band of travellers had just such a sobering experience, but first there was a hill-climb to tackle...

The twisty road that climbs up the Medvednica ridge used to be a competitive hill-climb, and it is easy to see why. Located just on the outskirts of Zagreb and climbing high up to the peak of Sljeme, this is a tarmac paradise and is extra special as it is a one way road, so no need to panic about oncoming traffic, when the road runs out just as quickly as your talent does when entering one of the countless hairpins. Some chose a leisurely pace up the narrow incline and enjoyed the views that stretched across the clutter of Zagreb far below, whilst others, including Edmund Peel in his gorgeous 911 RS, attacked it with gusto. It served to blow out the cobwebs, before all of us had to knuckle down into a day that was more about transit and a border crossing, than successive regularities.

There were some though, at the end of proceedings, that dragged the cars through the narrow lanes of the rally's new country, Bosnia and Herzegovina. These came after an enthusiastically attended test, run at what can only be described as a grass roots race circuit, quite literally in some places as the vegetation broke through the haggard tarmac surface. The locals loved it though, and part of the joy of being on these events is to share it with people that may have never seen such an array of exotic machinery in the flesh before.

Indeed, as the rally made its way through Bosnia the road was littered with people hanging from windows and sitting in gardens taking in the circus that was rolling past their front doors. It must have been quite a treat, and whilst the fields full of crops and scattered hayricks proved to be a pleasing backdrop, there were also reminders that this is an area still recovering from conflict in its very recent history.

As if those thoughts weren't reminder enough of those less fortunate, the passage control before lunch at the Jasenovac Concentration Camp was a stark reality check of just how lucky we are to be able to rally freely from town to town and country to country. At least 82,000 people lost their lives at Jasenovac and whilst nothing remains of the horrors that took place here, save for some earthworks and a lone train that sits dormant on rusty rails. The concrete memorial that now stands here has a path leading up to it made from the sleepers that came from the railway into the camp. Those sleepers and rails would have been the last journey for many poor souls, but for our band of travellers, that are now four days into this wonderful Adriatic Adventure, the journey will continue tomorrow as we head to Sarajevo and for this, I am extremely thankful indeed.

Syd.