

Adriatic Adventure 2019

Day Five - Banja Vrućica to Sarajevo - 212 kms

With its war-torn recent history, it is easy to forget that our base for this evening, Sarajevo, hosted the winter Olympics in 1984. In fact, it is probably fair to say that this fact has been all but lost over the years as more tragic events intervened. Indeed, whilst on our journey here today there were reminders of what has affected this entire region, with signs warning of landmines, bullet scarred buildings and the shrines and graves of many conflict victims. This however does not paint a fair picture of this extremely resilient part of the world, that has largely rebuilt itself and the happy, joyful folk that have been encountered on the road tell a different story to that of recent history.

The roads themselves, however, can bite. It is easy to be tricked into some over-zealous driving by the sheer fun of the flowing curves that flick from left to right as they follow the contours of the land. I will be the first to admit that the little breaks with traction achieved on the dusty surfaces of many of them, elicit giddy feelings of excitement and channel my inner Ari Vatanen. They can change quickly though, going from grippy tarmac to loose shingle in the blink of an eye, not to mention suddenly opening up in front of you with potholes large enough to swallow a house.

It isn't just the roads providing hazards, but free roaming livestock. Herds of Sheep were encountered today, making their way swiftly down a section of the highway completely without master. One can only assume they were beating a swift retreat to avoid becoming a local families Sunday roast, and who can blame them? There were also rogue Cows, stray Dogs and many smaller animals all threatening the progress of our teams.

But still the adventurers press on, and with today being an early afternoon finish, they have the chance to rest after such a jarring ride in places today. Thankfully the last regularity of the day was, for the most part, on tarmac and travelled through a very pleasant pine forest bathed in beautiful sunshine. Aside from the odd interruption from farmers on ramshackle tractors it made for a nice contrast to the grip-pinching, assault on the senses that some of the earlier roads of the day had provided.

Tomorrow the caravan continues, on what is the longest day of the rally, but also one that promises much in the way of tremendous roads and awe-inspiring scenery. Let us hope for a safe passage for all,

Until tomorrow evening,

Syd.