



CARBON NEUTRAL EVENTS
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE DRIVING



Syd Stelvio Day Ten

Marrakech to Rabat - 366 Kms

When you begin an adventure, the road stretches out before you seemingly forever, the days stretch on, and time is an infinite commodity. But as the adventure reaches its final days the clock appears to accelerate until such point that there is no time left at all. Tonight, this particular adventure ends in Morocco, and tomorrow after a morning's competition we will return to Tangiers and our African circle will be complete, albeit with a final day of sorting out to do in Spain.

The last full day in this wonderful country started as a few have, in the chaos of city streets, this time the ancient roadways of Marrakech as we attempted to break free of the many city walls and head onto the country's capital, Rabat. It seems the pedestrians and road users in the former imperial city have a special disregard for any sort of formality when it comes to the rules of the highway. Anything goes and a performance of even greater indifference than that witnessed back in Fez was enacted, as before our very eyes cars and motorcycles drove against the flow of traffic, multiple lanes were created at junctions and crossing when there were none and every sort of vehicle, whether animal, mineral or vegetable, took to the potholed and cracked tarmac in any way they saw fit, all to the tune of moustachioed police blowing their whistles with all their hearts.

Indeed, the police would have a big part to play in the day of the rally, as the machines moved between the four scheduled regularities. I say scheduled, as the first competitive section of the day had to be abandoned after the freak rain that had struck on day seven had caused several severe washouts of the road, that even the Hilux's of the advance cars were struggling with. The Police though would be ever present today, on almost every junction and intersection and instead of hindering progress they were doing everything they could to help the rally through.

Traffic was stopped and cars were waved on, they were smiling and even saluting the cars as they passed, including the rally team. At one point there were even high-speed escorts provided to whisk a few lucky crews through the busy city centre of one town, whilst pedestrians and other road users stopped and applauded the procession.

The behaviour of those entrusted with the law and order of this country is but a snapshot of the kindness shown to us in Morocco and whilst many might reflect on the adventure before boarding the boat back to Spain tomorrow, there must be much acknowledgment of our reception throughout our travels in this land. For the most part the cars and crew have been lauded, in every province within which we have travelled, up in the most remote towns and villages and long forgotten parts of the countryside, the encouragement and enjoyment in which the locals have taken in our passing cavalcade has been heart-warming. Men have given thumbs up and pumped the air with fists, women have blown kisses and children have



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gawped at the passing cars with wonder and amazement, great smiles upon their chops and absorbed the sights, sounds and smells of these alien craft the like of which they may never see again.

It has been inspiring stuff, and I hope that these machines, worth more in some cases than perhaps these people will earn in a lifetime, will inspire some of these kids to pursue any opportunities that they can scrape out in these lands that sit on the periphery of the humungous Sahara.

The competition has continued to bubble away today, and will do so tomorrow as we leave, but in this moment the competition matters not. In this moment the focus should be on the experience, on the hopefully broadened horizons and on what is left behind. This evening the rally was visited in the capital city by Sheik Hamad, an honour indeed, but it is the normal people, the regular folk, that have added an extra dimension to this rally and for their enthusiasm I am extremely thankful, and it is because of them that leaving tomorrow will be with some sorrow.

Syd Stelvio

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