



CARBON NEUTRAL EVENTS
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE DRIVING



Syd Stelvio Day Seven

Ourzazate to Tafraoute - 461 Kms

The rain in Spain falls mainly on the plain, whereas the rain in Morocco falls mainly on the 25th of September, or at least that is what it has felt like today. I ought to be writing this nestled in a comfy khayama, observing the sinking sun and looking forward to an evening under the stars on the trips second camp, but the camp is under water and plan b has been put into action.

Plan B is a hotel in the area that was shut for the close season, but head of hospitality Ele and the Moroccan fixers are a persistent lot and the doors of the place have been flung wide to welcome us. Well, not too wide, we don't want to flood this place as well. Even the local news has turned up to greet the caravan of cars, though they should perhaps steer clear of those in the open top machines, at least until they've had some time to shake the water off.

Anyone who sees photographs of today without prior knowledge of the event could be forgiven for thinking that this was the Welsh Wonder rather than the Sahara Classic, as under the thick cloud and persistent precipitation the landscape seemed to lose all colour and resembled something more akin to the Brecon Beacons rather than the mountains above Ouarzazate, a region that is described as being hot, arid desert and has been used as the film set for many a film because of this. It's even nicknamed the door of the desert, but there was scant reminder of that today.

But rain or shine we will rally, and so under the heavy morning weather the cars set out on a 460km day that would see switchback and hairpin turns on a scale that would induce motion sickness in a fighter pilot and tie even the most hardcore of navigators in knots.

The roads were lonely at times as well, particularly over some of the highest passes, that also had the roughest roads. Save for the odd person on a Donkey or the sparse settlements the morning was filled with solitude, especially so for those manning the controls on the competition sections.

It felt like a long slog, and the seventh day on the road may have felt like the marathon runners wall for many, not helped by the fact that the summer had seemingly packed its bags and gone elsewhere. But the roads were brilliant, a proper driver's route and the run to the middle of the day time control was especially so with its never ending undulations and technically challenging roads that bought the route out of wilderness and back into civilisation, punctuated as it was by villages and their often cheering inhabitants, who's enthusiasm for the rally passing their doors was not dampened by the weather one iota.

The afternoon leg was similar, except on better roads and the drop down into the evenings halt in the town of Tafraout, nestled in the Anti-Atlas Mountains, was a particularly pleasing



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descent on the racetrack smooth roads, even if their levels of saturation prevented any serious attack. The rest of the weeks weather is set fair, and so usual service will no doubt be resumed, but this evening we will all make the best of our new camp and no doubt share stories of the day, a day that will always be remembered as being the day we caught the rain.

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