



CARBON NEUTRAL EVENTS
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE DRIVING



Syd Stelvio Day Two – Paracas to Ayacucho - 386 Kms

Humans aren't really designed for altitude, well, most of us aren't anyway. If you read the advice about travelling up to altitudes of above 3000 metres the biggest takeaway is that you should do it slowly over a few days. So not in a matter of hours then, as our little band of brigands did on day two of the Lima to Cape Horn. Well, the advice is only a serving suggestion, right? I mean the trip doctors didn't seem too fussed, oxygen had been distributed to the team as a just in case, but they didn't appear to be overly convinced we would need it.

The Doctors were prepared to deal with any and all reports of altitude sickness though, they're good like that, and in fact are used to setting up surgery in all kinds of locations and situations. It was odd however, when during the first hour or so of this morning's route they decided that a ditch was the perfect place to set up a field hospital, I mean that can be the only reason they decided to park their Hilux in it.

Still, who am I to argue with a medical professional. Elsewhere our mechanical doctors were no doubt expecting to be busy, as the old cars were likely to struggle towards the 4750m summit of the day. They may not however have been expecting so many of our own bright red trucks to expire during the day, with a few of us needing the assistance of those grease covered saviours before the day was out, with the proximity to the sky causing DPF issues for the travelling marshals. The sweeps were also extremely busy with competitor cars, and as I write this at 22:00 hours, the mechanics are still out on the road. Who needs the AA when our guys are on the job!

Best to get this kind of thing out of the way early though, if it has to happen, it is an indication of the toughness of this rally. But tough when it comes to mountain roads often goes hand in hand with beautiful, and the ascents today were certainly that. The Andes weren't visible on the horizon for a good long time this morning, and I was beginning to wonder if they might have been a fabricated truth, but slowly the silhouettes of these mighty mountains began to appear out of the morning haze. Before long we were in full on ascent, on at times terrifying single-track roads that had the double peril of a drop to one side and the threat of falling debris to the other.

Occasionally they were punctuated by small settlements, often with people gazing on in wonder at this unexpected Sunday morning spectacle. People clapped and cheered as well, and even took to standing in the road en-masse to take selfies with the cars as they attempted to drive along the road. Our rallyists had no choice but to wait until the crowds had satisfied their thirst for fan photos, and in true ambassadorial style smiled graciously at the gathering crowds.

The mid-day time control was getting on for 4000 metres in height, and here too the villagers and townsfolk turned out to greet our competitors, eager to see the cars and enjoy the show. The air was now definitely getting thin and brisk movement was met with dismay by lungs



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and it paid not to do anything too quickly. It was also much cooler and as the route broke out onto an alpine plateau for the first competition section of the day, the wind howled across the high-altitude lakes that were shining bright blue in the unrelenting sun.

It was glorious driving, smooth and flowing and a contrast to the tight twists that had been the defining feature of the ascent. Llamas and Alpacas stood confused on the side of the road as two score classic and vintage rally cars invaded their home, and some even decided that crossing the road in front of the cars was exactly the right thing to do.

A second regularity also featured in the plans for the afternoon, this time on a much wider road, but still with resident Alpacas. It rose and fell with the contours of the land, and this would be how the afternoon would continue and it was at this point that we would also reach the highest point of the day, in between the incredible geology that was a mixture of reds and golds, lit beautifully in the afternoon sun.

Most of the roads on the run to Ayacucho were in fine fettle, but occasionally they would contain surprise potholes, some large enough to sink a Lagonda, but still very much a surprise on a national speed limit. Full marks must go to Raj Judge though for entertaining pothole avoidance, I don't know if navigator Tim Guleri was calling them, or if Raj had just been at the coca tea, but the big Bentley Bobtail was making all kinds of shapes as it navigated around the obstacles like some pothole gymkhana.

Tomorrow, we have more high-altitude adventures, a theme that will continue for the next few days. Hopefully nobody suffers any ill effects from a lack of oxygen overnight and we can all run deeper into the mountains tomorrow morning.

Syd Stelvio

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