



CARBON NEUTRAL EVENTS
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE DRIVING



Syd Stelvio Day 11 – Tarija to Salta

Ah, border crossing day. Three words that strike fear into route planners like no other. Will it go ok? Will everyone get across? Will anyone break down at the border? How long will it take? All of these questions and more are enough to give a Clerk of the Course palpitations and a sleepless night, and well they should, especially after our first experience of border hopping on this trip, which is now only spoken of in hushed tones and known as “the Bolivian job”. So, what exactly did the Argentinians have in store for us?

Well, in the end it was pretty easy. There was a bit of a moment when the computer system went down, but aside from that the process went as planned and we even got into Argentina a little ahead of schedule. There was a slight moment of panic for Michael Strasser + Eveline Erni, crew of car 15, when their documents were taken by a mystery man wearing border force uniform to an unknown location, that nobody who worked there seemed to know about, but after a slightly nervous wait it turned out that everything was fine, and he wasn't an imposter.

The only other incident of note in the customs office was some outrageous queue jumping, orchestrated by Manuel Dubs and his navigator Leunam Sbud, who showed no remorse when pushing in front of American pairing Tim Eades + Jim McLaren. I'd be running scared if I were you Manuel, it's a well-known fact that Jim taught Mike Tyson how to punch and Tim is a black belt in the art of 'I'm gonna mess you right up'.

So, we were all across the border, competitors and crew and nobody left behind, even Brian Palmer + Mark Townson made it across, despite doing their best to get marooned in Bolivia when their Peugeot 504 Coupe showed symptoms of a blown head gasket. Still, they crawled across the frontier and then had the machine trailered the rest of the way. Bolivia? Completed it mate, and all here to account for it. Hang on, actually, has anyone seen car 20? Luigi! Luigi!??

Once into Argentina there was some ground that had to be covered, and so began a few hundred kilometres of largely straight roads, a fact that would have pleased Raj Judge in his Bentley, who declared at the end of day 10 that he was 'done with hairpins, man'. The constant direction changes through the mountains have certainly taken their toll on the Bentley's tyres, and Raj's shoulders, and rumour has it that he's being lined up to star in the new Incredible Hulk movie.

It wasn't all just straight running though, there was some competition to look forward to at the end of the day, with a late afternoon regularity on a wonderfully slick dust road around a lake. The sinking sun glinted on the water on a beautiful spring afternoon, as the cars put plumes of dust into the air, that looked incredible backlit and the whole thing had a safari vibe about it, as the competitors danced their machines through the forest lined track.

The reward for completing the reg was a brilliant stretch of road through dense forest canopy, and whilst it was a little on the narrow side it was mostly quiet and the sight of all the greenery stretching into the distance was a welcome antidote to the desert conditions that had been a signature of Bolivia. It felt almost jungle like and was a fabulous introduction to Argentina, where our adventure will continue in the morning.

Syd Stelvio

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