



CARBON NEUTRAL EVENTS
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE DRIVING



Syd Stelvio Day 15 – Villa Carlos Paz to San Luis

Day 15 of this marathon adventure and the halfway point has been reached. Apparently, it is the fifth of November and fireworks night back in the UK, I say apparently as by this point of the proceedings all of us are well and truly immersed in the rally bubble, existing only by rally time and day number, I couldn't even tell you what day it is anymore. But that is superfluous information on a quest such as this, and to be burdened by the unnecessary clouds the enjoyment of what is in front of us, and from this day onwards what is in front will be less than what is behind and what is left must be enjoyed to the utmost.

It's also at this stage of the game that fatigue can start to come into play, and in fact I'm fairly sure I was hallucinating earlier as car number 20 appeared on the first regularity of the day, and we all know that's extremely unlikely. Did anyone else see this apparition? I don't know if it was the Luigi of Christmas past of the Luigi of Christmases yet to come, has anyone seen Luigi?!

There were also some other unfamiliar cars enjoying the regularities today, including number 28, the BMW of Ib Sorensen + Mogens Lauritsen enjoying a competitive section for the first time in a few days. I must also mention Mike Velasco + Maria Garcia Fernandez, who re-joined us at Salta in the venerable Bentley Derby 3 ½ L.

But as some cars return to the nest some leave to make room, and missing from the fray today was Julia Kirkham + Brendan Flood, who are now in a hire car after their Volvo Amazon gave up the ghost, Brian Palmer + Mark Townson, who are still sorting repairs on their Peugeot 504 Coupe after a head gasket failure, but are hoping to be back with us early next week, and finally a new name on the injury list, number 32, the 911 of Mattia Nocera + Ingino Angelini, after their machine developed clutch problems.

Back to the road going action and there were a mere 450 clicks to knock off today, a snip of a distance on this continent and the road miles would be book ended by a pair of regularities, as is the fashion of the previous few days. Both of these would be in the vicinity of, or on roads used by the WRC chaps when Rally Argentina is in town, and many road signs bore stickers dedicated to this event.

The tarmac took us up again, not quite to the heights experienced in Bolivia and Peru, but certainly high enough for the Condor's to take off and we saw many of these enormous Vultures swooping overhead, majestically riding the thermals. The only thing that was perhaps more fun than gliding about in the updrafts was driving on the roads beneath them, they were, as almost always they are, brilliant. The only real problem was the traffic, and it seemed that on Saturdays most of Argentina comes out to play on the RP34 in the Quebrada del Condorito National Park and a sake of cars built up that was so long it could be seen from space.

During the middle part of the day, the traffic disappeared, but the route was another distance busting run, on an almost dead straight road for more than 100 km's. This was the kind of road where you can see so far into your own near future you become borderline clairvoyant, yet the centre markings on the road almost always seem to be double solid lines, preventing overtaking, despite being able to see somewhere into next week, so it was fortunate there was next to nobody else using the road.

Time passes slowly on these roads, but the distances disappear rapidly and before long it was time to enjoy the last regularity of the day, up into the Los Manantiales Nature Reserve, and its neolithic rock



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formations. But there was a problem, as a pack of maniac skateboarders had set up camp on the steep ascent that we were to be using for the reg and had closed the road as they were using it as a descent! These lunatics dressed in leathers were racing their specially designed tea-trays on wheels downhill as fast as they dared, quite the spectacle, but it meant that our own fun had to be curtailed and our transit through their course was under their direction during breaks in the action. Well, I suppose we have gone a few days now without some sort of external influence getting involved with the destiny of the rally, it was about time somebody meddled with our plans.

In the end the disruption was minor, and the day reached its conclusion. Tomorrow is a half day as we head to Mendoza, an opportunity for some to enjoy the rest and for others to either catch up or make repairs, as there are some big days looming on the horizon.

Syd Stelvio

HERO Events Limited

138 Southern Avenue, Command Works, Bicester Heritage, Bicester, OX27 8FY, United Kingdom
t. +44 (0) 1869 254979 · enquiries@hero-era.com · www.hero-era.com
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