



CARBON NEUTRAL EVENTS
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE DRIVING



Syd Stelvio Day 16 & 17

The past couple of days have been shorter affairs than of late, with a half day on day 16 that finished with a sun kissed lunch in one of Mendoza's Bodegas, a treat after so many rushed lunches in truck stops, and then today was a later start and earlier finish. Mind you, with what's to come tomorrow the shorter mileage days were much needed, as in the morning we begin the longest day of the event, a 750 km monster that will get us down to Neuquén, the largest city in Patagonia.

Shorter days these might have been, but there was still plenty for the competitors to get their teeth into, with a double helping of tests and a regularity all in the first hour or so of yesterday morning, and a further regularity and test today, as well as some fabulous gravel driving, for those that chose to do it.

The tests on this event have largely been on proper race circuits, with minimal, but appropriate measures in place to reduce the speed of the competitors, offering them the chance to really let loose in their machines. The first one yesterday though was a slight twist on the theme, as whilst it did occur within a race circuit, the Potrero de los Funes is one of Argentina's various street courses, meaning that it was open to the local traffic, so the test occurred in the pit lane of this fearsome 8.7-mile track.

There was certainly no racing on the cards during this morning's escape from Mendoza, as our route out of the city was chocka-block with road works, leading to some serious work on route amendments by the organisers. A grid system is all well and good in a city, but with many roads one way a slight wrong turn could put you well off course and on a much larger escape trajectory than needed, so keen eyes were needed by the navigators. One particular section of the seemingly calamitous construction split the road above and under a bridge and choosing the right path here was vital to staying on track. Once out of the haze of dust and traffic snow capped mountains were visible in the near distance and the route started to wind up towards these white topped peaks, the traffic lessened and eventually there was a certain calm after a hectic first hour. A simple regularity up to the top of one of the mountains, albeit on gravel, added an element of competition for the morning and then post reg the climb plateaued, and a long gravel section finished off the morning before re-joining the main road, with it's associated traffic that made progress slow at times.

Progress was especially slow for Tim Eades + Jim McLaren, in fact it was almost non-existent as their Ford Cabriolet was off the road for clutch repairs. Shiv Sikand was MIA again too, after more problems with the drivetrain of the Peugeot, that for once were not related to the diff, hopefully we will see three-diff-Shiv back in the fight again soon. Back on the route, but not in a hire car were the other Peugeot runners Brian Palmer + Mark Townson, finally giving up on their 504 Coupe, but determined to make it to the end in something at least, the same as fellow Brit's 19 Julia Kirkham + Brendan Flood, perhaps they could have their own rental category in the results.

Luigi Fontana + Michele Lumbroso have been spotted on the route again in the dark blue Fiat 2300 S Coupe, they have even made it to the tests and whilst they might not be on every reg it seems that we have now found Luigi, or Luigi has found the rally, either way it's great to see them enjoying themselves.



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In sadder news the rally has today said farewell to Bill + Julie Holroyd, after they have been forced to retire through ill health. It is a real shame and the rally is a poorer place without you both, rest up Bill and we will look forward to seeing you both again soon!

It is now time for an early night, as the road is certainly long tomorrow and we are away early, although there is a test to kick start the morning and provide an additional adrenaline spike to help with the first few miles of journeying. From there though it is very much a concentration run and a drive, but with the promise of Patagonia and the more remote regions of this country within reach, the rewards will hopefully outweigh what will be a long day in the saddle.

Syd Stelvio

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