



CARBON NEUTRAL EVENTS
ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE DRIVING



Syd Stelvio Day 29 – Punta Arenas to Rio Grande

This is it, the last hurrah. After 29 days there is just a couple of hundred kilometres to go on the final day, which, after some of the stunts we've put in on this trip is more like a drive to the shops than a day rallying. Then, before we know it the adventure will be over.

The past couple of days as we have driven through the rest of Chile and back into Argentina have had an end of the road kind of feel about them, in fact so sparse has the landscape been at points they've almost had an end of the road feel! The last of the mountains disappeared from view during the morning of day 28, and since then it has been like driving through one of Sergio Leone's sets. Don't get me wrong, the wilderness in this part of the world is still pretty spectacular, and there is still wildlife in droves, but it is spartan in comparison to some of the landscapes we have driven through, but that just shows how special those scenes have been.

One characteristic of this part of the world that I could do without is the incessant and persistent wind that howls across the land at a hell of a rate of knots, a vicious constant that is also prone to even more severe gusts making driving quite the challenge at times. This might explain why Mark Oates + Catherine Fielding managed to beach their Chevrolet Fangio on the first regularity today, I can't think why else they would possibly have driven into the large hillock of sand serving as a central reservation, they certainly can't blame their steering, as they fixed that yesterday evening!

It was actually turning round in haste after not quite getting a classic 'long way around a triangle' right towards the end of the regularity that did for them, they weren't the only ones to get this wrong mind you, with a few tasty manoeuvres to rescue the missed turn on the gravel.

Still, it wasn't speed tables flummoxing them, these tricky little changes in speed had caught out a few on a long regularity the previous day, including Bertie + Charlotte van Houtte (GB), who have been challenging for top honours in the Classic Category since the start in their '65 Porsche 911. The time lost has pushed them down almost into the clutches of the third placed Datsun of Roy Stephenson + Peter Robinson and given Filip Engelen + Ann Gillis some breathing space at the top of the tree – for now at least.

You see whilst there aren't many kilometres to go tomorrow, there is a lot of competition still to contest, with two tests and three regularities all to be conquered on the final morning and between those three at the top of the classic category it is still incredibly close, especially considering just how many miles have been covered. All is still to play for.

For most though arriving at the finish tomorrow will be about personal achievement, although there will be plenty of category triumphs of course. But to think of this rally as purely competition is somewhat missing the point, it is far more than that and if you asked most people I daresay the competitive element wouldn't be top of their list for coming.

This has first and foremost been an adventure, and it has certainly been that. Adventure is defined as an unusual and exciting or daring experience, or to engage in daring or risky activity, and those boxes have most definitely been ticked. From being caught up in protests in Peru, to ascending mountain ranges and traversing tricky roads, as well as experiencing new cultures and environments that have pushed us out of our comfort zones, the adventure requirement has certainly been there.

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The other key element of this rally is endurance, and just the length alone has seen to that, as well as the incredible mileage, 11, 500 km is more than some people manage in their modern daily, never mind in a classic or vintage car, on roads that time forgot. Even the daily mileages have been impressive, many being the equivalent of driving from Oxford to Glasgow, yes, endurance has certainly been at the heart of our day to day.

During the past month everyone has achieved something, everyone has been pushed and pushed as well. Our little travelling band is now a tight little unit and friendships have been formed and bonds made as we have been in this together, once the competition is over tomorrow it will be a time to celebrate, to reflect and to absorb just what an extraordinary journey this has been. For all the good, the bad and the ugly, the Lima to Cape Horn has provided memories and stories to stand the test of time.

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