

Day 2 Rioja - Alcaniz (401km)

9 October 2019

VIVA ESPAÑA

The superb day we enjoyed yesterday had perhaps lulled some of us into a false sense of security. Maybe there were those who thought that this Carrera was going to be something of an early autumn wind down. Sure there was something of a holiday feeling to the beginning of the rally; a seaside start, sunshine and blue skies, wide roads, a long lunch and very relaxed timing. But today, it all got a bit more real, and the rally moved up a gear.

Over the 401km of the day, we enjoyed a long section of remote singletrack, passages through mountaintop villages, some steep broken tarmac (suffused with the heady scent of hot brakes, hardworking clutches and nicely warmed tires) and finally a night halt at a magnificent and ancient hilltop Parador.

It proved to be an epic day, and there was absolutely no-one in the carpark at the end of the day who would disagree.



The Bentleys are coming, led by Keith & Norah Ashworth's 1927 Le Mans



Photos: gerardtown.co.uk

Paul and Matthew Hartfield, 1936 Packard Super 8 Sedan

The fun began shortly before dawn though, albeit with a slightly grey and damp start, when the cars made their way to the MTC in the Cafe Fernando, in downtown Rioja. Whereafter they once again slalomed their way through miles of vineyards and acres of olive groves. Sadly Wilfried and Sandra Schaefer's were to see none of this as they have retired from the rally. A family issue has taken them and their venerable old Porsche back home. We wish them well and look forward to welcoming them again very soon however.

There was then a gentle climb all the way to the Passage Control atop the impressive Canyon de Leza, where the ace medic / marshal combo' of Alan Smith and Mansoor Khan were hunkered down enjoying the bracing atmosphere as well as keeping a tight grip on their check sheets and packed lunches as dozens of hungry Griffin vultures wheeled overhead with a beady eye trained on the latter.

The first Regularity at Sancho Leza followed hard on the heels of this avian encounter and, with it the road rose further into the clouds at 1390m. It certainly felt like an Alpine climb, and the cowbells tinkling in the thick woodlands meant that the Swiss crews felt right at home.

Another Time Control had been scheduled for a quick coffee and a 'natural break before the second Regularity at the Puerto de Piqueras which rose to a very misty and damp



Mike Hand Lorna Harrison, 1959 Triumph TR3A



Rogier Quekel and Marjan te Velde, 1970 Mercedes-Benz 280SE

1700m and the border with Castilla y Leon. Thankfully, the sunny skies and warmer temperatures returned as we dropped off the mountain to the Passage Control at Los Villares where more refreshments such mushroom tortillas and slabs of decidedly rustic looking pork crackling were on offer to anyone who needed them.

Spain is a hilly country and via the Puerto del Madero (1162m) and a short section of freeway, we reached the lunch halt and Time Control at La Vina, where Graham Rood put all of his aeronautical know how into creating the perfect formation of parked cars along the main street.

The rally had already crammed lot in for one day, but this was only the halfway point and there was more

great driving to come. Vast and empty, the landscape was immense as we pressed on through Fuendetodos, the one time home of the great Francisco Goya, the last of the old masters famed for his skill as a portrait painter. And it was here we finally caught up with the Rally the Globe media team, furiously sketching the cars as they passed by on their way to the Test at the Motorland Track where once again David and Susan Danglard put on a bravura display of pedal to metal Porsche precision.

The short drive to the night halt at the Parador was an easy one, made more so by the fact that the hotel could be seen from some 10km away. Perched as it is on the biggest hill for miles around.

Cold beers in the courtyard were the order of the day for most of the crews but naturally there were one or two jobs to take care of before dinner. Clint Smith for example was hard at work under his Bentley. It had suffered a broken spring yesterday and had been carefully nursed throughout the day. But, thanks to the good offices of David Ayre back in the UK, (who had couriered a replacement) he and Dawn should be running with the pack once again tomorrow.

Dinner this evening, in the medieval banqueting hall was magnificent and, after a day such as this there was plenty for the crews to reflect on. Tomorrow, they've been promised more of the same so for some the choice of an early night or more time "reflecting" was a difficult one.



Roland Singer and Bernhard Ziegler, 1966 Saab 96 V4

Geradus Mercator

Geradus Mercator, Dispatch reporter