



PRESS KIT





The TRANSORIENTALE: a truly extraordinary Rally

Extraordinary. There's just one word that springs to mind when describing this event. Due to take place in June 2008 (12th - 28th) everything about this event is simply extraordinary - a course exceeding 10 000 km, 17 days, 3 countries spanning 2 continents, trails across the wild nature, spectacular landscapes, encounters with vastly diverse cultures...

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1/ The birth of the project

Two years! This is the time that has been required to get from a simple idea to project conceptualisation... At the roots of this project is Gilles Martineau who, with the aid of an in-depth and up-to-date study on rally-raids, reached the following conclusion: there is currently an opening for a large rally marathon during the summer period, in Asia and, moreover, crossing countries which are in strong economical growth.

One name sprang immediately to mind: René Metge, a character renowned for his sound ground knowledge, contacts and experience necessary for leading this ambitious project. A former organiser of two now legendary rallies between Paris and Beijing, René Metge has grooved Asia on four wheels for almost thirty years and dedicates a true passion for this continent. As such, Gilles Martineau did not have any trouble in convincing him to join the team.

There followed long months of secret negotiations, numerous meetings and several approaches so as to obtain the necessary authorisations in those countries concerned, as well as the commercial and marketing support, essential for the success of an event of such importance.

So, after a final feasibility study last spring, led by René Metge Concept, and thanks to the support and collaboration agreements signed with subsidiaries of Group Largardère Sports, SPORTFIVE and IEC In Sports, the definitive decision was taken at the beginning of July: a new Marathon Rally-Raid would be created – the TRANSORIENTALE – of which the first edition would take place between the 12th and 28th June 2008.



2/ Completely new event, endorsed by a magnificent past

The idea of crossing the Asian continent in a motor vehicle has always been a fascination, creating important literature in motor sport history. Exactly one hundred years ago, the first course between Beijing and Paris was organised. Five cars set off on 10th June 1907 and three of them made it to Paris. The fastest was Prince Scipion Borghese in an Itala.

The other legendary rally is the “Croisière Jaune”, organised by Citroen in 1931. It was an expedition and an adventure of quite extraordinary nature, taking the autochenilles from Bayreuth to Beijing, passing by the Himalaya Mountains.

It was not until 1992 that such a crossing took place once again in the Asian continent. René Metge managed a true diplomatic feat, successfully reuniting Russians and Chinese around the same table and thus obtaining the authorisations necessary so as to organise the first rally-raid between Paris and Beijing.

Thus on the 1st September 1992, 93 cars, 20 vans and 15 motorbikes set off from Trocadéro in Paris, direction Beijing, with 16 000 km to cross in-between. Pierre Lartigue, partnered with Michael Perrin, for Citroen, and Stephane Peterhansel for Yamaha, were the race’s big champions, great lasting memories still talked about today.

In 1995, after two years of interruption due to technical and political reasons, the rally was taken over by Master Group and became “Master Rallye”. In Paris, 55 competitors set off, direction Moscow, Ulan Bator and Beijing.



3/ The TRANSORIENTALE: 10 000 km, 17 days, 3 countries . . . an extraordinary journey

St Petersburg

Founded by the Tsar Pierre The Great at the beginning of the 17th century, St Petersburg is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It is a real museum city, and its superb palaces and “hotel particuliers” dating from the 18 and 19th centuries line the banks of the River Neva and the numerous canals. St Petersburg, previously known as Pétrograd, was the capital of the Russian Empire until 1918. After Lenin’s death in 1924 the city was baptised Leningrad, before being named St Petersburg in 1991 at the collapse of the USSR.

On the 12th June, the first competitors for the TRANSORIENTALE will set off from St Petersburg, direction Beijing. The technical checks and administration will take place prior to this on the 10th and 11th June in the city centre, where the atmosphere is so special with the in-famous “nuits blanches”.

Russia

This vast country, the largest in the world, spans over two continents, Europe and Asia, separated by the Ural Mountains. The surface area of the country is 18 times that of France, and yet only a few more than 142 million inhabitants. It is the largest of the 15 republics of the former USSR, and has been independent since 1991, with a Federal Republic system.

At the start of this long trek, the participants of this 1st TRANSORIENTALE will need to cover some large distances across the Russian planes. Short, special tracks in the forest will enable them to get across. Alternating between large, forested, fairly fast tracks and sandy tracks with superb woops (real “Russian rollercoasters”!) these special tracks will make good practice for the rest of the programme.

From Kazan onwards, these special tracks will get longer, continuing through the large Russian forests, with some spectacular view points in the Volga Valley.

The first big leg will come with the crossing of the Ural Mountains, marking the frontier between Europe and Asia. After a superb course through the foothills of the mountains, the TRANSORIENTALE participants will be able to pass through this mountain range by following a pipeline pathway. After the forest, the course snakes into spectacular glens. Numerous direction changes will make this a particularly difficult leg in terms of navigation and driving. A link-path will then lead the competitors towards the Kazakhstan frontier.



Hazakhstan

This former republic of the USSR reached independence in 1991. A vast central Asian country, it covers 2.7 million km² (5 times the surface area of France) and has a population of just 15 million inhabitants. It has thus one of the weakest population densities in the world. The capital was transferred from Almaty to Astana in 1997.

With its arrival in Kazakhstan, the rally will penetrate the large steppes of central Asia. Vast herbaceous spaces with good tracks will be on the programme for the first two legs. However, vigilant navigation will be required so as to get around the numerous lakes and flood zones which are true ornithological reserves. There will be several fords and bridges to pass, with one particular bridge constructed entirely out of enormous tubes!

The 3rd Kazakhstan leg will take place in the mountains, with spectacular birch forests where navigation will be particularly tricky.

To reach Karamay during the 4th day in Kazakhstan, the competitors will confront a special short track – just 80 km - of which two thirds will offer truly spectacular scenery. Marked out along the foothills of the Altai Mountains, this special course will also be a royal test in terms of driving, with numerous ford crossings.

Finally, the competitors will arrive in the Far East!

China

China, also known as the Far East, is heir to 4000 years of history, at times rather colourful.

The working-class Chinese Republic was proclaimed in 1929 and marks the rise to power of Mao Zedong's Communist party. Still officially communist, China has, needless to say, adopted a "market socialist economy", giving rise to one of the most important development rates in the world today. With 1 321 million inhabitants, it is the most densely populated country on the planet, whilst also one of the most vast, covering a surface area of 9.5 million km².

The first day of the race will take the participants towards Urumqi via the "oil" desert. Navigation will be particularly difficult with numerous false tracks marked out by the prospecting oil. The start of the course will be very rolling, with a pathway through the Turfan depression at -154m. After there will be dunes, the first to be covered with vegetation.



Continuing towards Hami, the competitors will tackle some incredible dunes, never previously seen during a rally. Made up of large, dark and soft sand particles, this 25 km pathway will test the spirit! Finally, the course will follow the path of the cliffs, a landscape which merits being called Monument Valley! The participants will continue for 200 km off-piste to complete one of the most beautiful special legs of the rally.

The most beautiful of all the legs however, and the one which will surely remain a lasting memory, will be tackled the following morning. It will commence by 60 km of difficult tracks, including descending the cliffs, and will be followed by 100 km of “unforgettable dunes”, according to René Metge... To finish, there will be 80 km off-piste where it will be necessary to wind around the tips of small, undulating and broken dunes. The gold-diggers’ path will drive the competitors next towards the challenge that awaits at the foot of the last fortress of the Great Wall.

The rally will then continue in Inner Mongolia, with a short leg so as to get back the emotions from the previous day. The small dunes and sandy track will allow a little time to breathe because, the next day, the challenge will be on – time to confront some gigantic dunes (some of the highest in the world) some of which reach more than 2000 m!

The adventure will continue with a leg alternating between soft sand, steppes and seeded dunes, so as to arrive at the unique site of the “singing dunes”.

Finally, the last legs will lead everyone to the foot of the Great Wall, close to Beijing, where the finishing line of this first TRANSORIENTALE will be judged!

Beijing

Capital of the most densely populated nation in the world, Beijing is the heart of one of the most ancient civilisations on the planet. Excluded from large international events for a long time, Beijing will be in the limelight in 2008 as it hosts the Olympic Games. Dynastic capital since the 18th century, Beijing possesses a turbulent past: destroyed by Genghis Khan, chartered by Marco Polo, remodelled by the dynastic Ming... China is currently being completely transformed by the economic boom and the enormous preparations for the Olympic Games.



4/ The TRANSORIENTALE: an adventure for everyone

In order that anyone can participate, regardless of their level, passion, vehicle or budget, several competition categories have been set up. They will all share certain aspects, such as the same sized legs and the same tracks, as well as the logistics and general safety measures.

The Rally-Raid Marathon

The great tradition of rally-raids that mixes competition and adventure, driving and navigation!

Open to all cars, vans, motorbikes and quads, in function with the necessary current requirements laid down for most all-terrain rallies and set under the aegis of the FIA and the FIM. Vehicles that correspond to the US requirements will also be accepted.

The Relay Race

A real innovation in the world of all-terrain rallies.

The category "Relay" allows the sharing of one vehicle between several people:

- 3 drivers allowed for one motorbike
- Up to 4 people for one car

The entire team needs to be declared at the administration checks and needs to fulfil the same administrative requirements as individual entries, notably the FIA or FIM 2008 licence, driving license etc.

The relay must take place in complete legs and cannot, under any circumstances, be split between legs. The Directing Committee must be informed of the crew names before the departure of each leg, so as to avoid elimination from the race. The category "Relay" also allows people who would not normally be able to be absent for the entire duration of the rally to alternate at the halfway stage during the rest day.

One "joker" driver per vehicle, for both cars and motorbikes, can also be named in the case of a physical or emotional failure of the nominated driver, thus allowing the vehicle to still make it to the finish of the "Relay" rankings.

A special "Relay" ranking will be given, in conjunction with the "scratch" ranking relevant - either Raid Marathon or Regular Raid - respecting the groups and sub-groups for each category.



The Regularity Raid

This category has been created so as to allow for a slightly “less-supported” rally, encouraging simpler and thus more economic vehicles. The main idea is to follow part of the rally-raid marathon special tracks, respecting an average speed which will have been put in place. This category will be open to off road cars, trucks, motorbikes and quads. The cars and motorbikes must meet the requirements of the Raid Regularity, prescribed by the French Federation for Motor Sports (FFSA). These requirements include clauses particularly concerning the safety equipment (hoop, harness, circuit-cutter, extinguisher...). The oldest or non-ratified vehicles can thus be accepted. The motorbikes and quads must have a minimum autonomy of 250 km and a cylinder minimum of 250 cm³ in mono or bi-cylinders. No superior limit has been set. All vehicles will be equipped with a tracking box which, in addition to safety functions, will allow long-distance control of the obligatory passage points and the speed restrictions imposed.

The Discovery Raid

This genuinely new category aims to open the world of rallying to all those who dream of carrying out this mythic journey between Europe and Asia, without needing to be a true fan of all-terrain driving. It allows those who are passionate about driving to carry out a single long trek, crossing thousands of kilometres at the wheel or the handlebars of their favourite vehicle.

The competitors will be able to participate in this fantastic adventure with all types of road vehicles: sport, GT or saloon cars, including collectors’ cars; road, GT or trail for the motorbikes. A minimum level of preparation will be essential in order to hope of reaching the end of the adventure. Finally, two safety wheels will be obligatory for each car.

The course will be entirely on tarmac and close to rescue services. The itinerary will be issued uniquely by the road-book. At times the legs will be very long (almost 1000 km on some days!) and over difficult routes – everything is subject to road condition and the local traffic, which may sometimes be encountered. As such, the Discovery Raid will be far from a simple tourist trip - it will be a real sporting challenge, as much for the vehicle as for the participants.

The ranking will be based on the capacity of finding the correct route and the entry paths necessary for reaching and discovering the exceptional and extraordinary sites and view-points. All vehicles will be equipped with tracking boxes which will ensure the safety and control of the passengers at the obligatory passage points. Penalties will be given out for each missed point, which will equally help when ranking the competitors.



5/ TRANSORIENTALE and the environment

Ecology is an issue that concerns everyone these days and which must naturally be taken into consideration in the management of motor sports and in the creation of all large sporting events. As one of the main issues for the future of these disciplines, all of the organisers, from endurance to F1, are beginning to integrate the environmental criteria into their development perspective. Of course, the organisation of a large rally in today's world could not take place without taking into consideration the management of environmental protection during such an event.

Determined and voluntary on the matter, the TRANSORIENTALE organising committee has thus decided to integrate pollution problems, energy consumption, the consequences to the environment generated by a rally taking place and, more generally, the question of ecology.

So as to accompany this approach and give themselves means to achieve their ambitions, TRANSORIENTALE has nominated somebody who is dedicated exclusively to this concern. This person will be in charge of advising, suggesting solutions and confirming all logistics and sporting choices with the greatest respect for our environment.

By taking into consideration these essential concerns, imposing innovative measures and planning research into new solutions, TRANSORIENTALE has engaged itself in a real long term strategy, demonstrating its willingness to be the first "eco-friendly" rally-raid marathon .



6/ Safety and the Rally

Assuring safety of the competitors and the populations encountered is one of TRANSORIENTALE's most important issues. At all levels, all organising team members have perfectly integrated this problematic and are taking it into consideration in their approach and their decisions.

From the tracing of the special tracks to the mise en place of the logistics, everything will be done so as to guarantee the best safety possible for all participants – competitors, organising team members, the press, TV teams... Doubles for each team, rest time for drivers, vehicle tracking (allowing rapid localisation of vehicles in the case of a problem, but also so as to monitor safe driving throughout the course) are just some of the measures already taken onboard in the organisation of the rally.

The competitors will benefit from all of the technology used in rally-raids – Iritrack, Sentinel etc. and will be covered by experienced teams as much as for medical surveillance as for the safety of the course. Important logistic measures will be put into place, both in the air and on the ground.

For the safety of the populations encountered, an important plan will be set up in sensitive areas: warning information displayed on sign-boards, cooperation with local police and armed forces, designated pathways for safety rescue teams, the marking-out of "risk zones"... Given that safety was a criterion already taken into consideration by René Metge's rally, many of the chosen course areas are actually marked as being far from residential zones.

Of course, in difficult zones, such as when crossing towns or villages, there will be speed limits and controls put into place for each category, support/rescue vehicles included, with heavy penalties for those who dare to break them.



7/ Communication

The TRANSORIENTALE: one name, one logo and one graphical identity

Young & Rubicam Retail & Publishing advertising agency has been responsible for the work involving the creation of the name, logo and the graphical rules for the event.

TRANSORIENTALE: “trans” represents crossing. Not just a simple crossing, but a total change in scenery, where steppes, dunes and mountains knock at the door of imagination. Competitors, whether professionals or amateurs, will be transported along the longest rally-raid marathon in the world.

The essential graphical elements of the TRANSORIENTALE (stylish stamps, colours and use of font types) inspire, in a modern way, the journey and the transcendental mysteries of the Orient.

www.transorientale.com

The official event website has been developed by Newsweb, a subsidiary of Lagardère Sports, specialising in the management and animation of media websites.

On-line from the 8th November 2007, the website will be the natural preferred communication route for the event, allowing professionals, amateurs and motor sports fans to find all relevant information regarding the event.

Competitors will also be able to enter the event by using this website: www.transorientale.com



8/ The organisation

An event of great scope, the TRANSORIENTALE requires a solid organisation structure, with experience in all areas.

Alongside René Metge Concept, the sports organiser for this rally, SPORTFIVE and IEC In SPORTS, subsidiary companies of Lagardère Sports, are managing all the commercial rights for this event, both at a marketing and audio-visual level. These two companies will thus contribute their expertise and international network so as to place TRANSORIENTALE at the highest level in this discipline.

René Metge Concept

Created in 2003 by René Metge and Christian Boudas, the company has organised three editions of the Orient Rally, a qualifying competition for the FIA World Cup and FIM World Championship for Cross Country Rallies. In addition, René Metgne Concept has co-worked with large companies in raid organisation for the E Class Mercedes Challenge and the Louis Vuitton Classic.

SPORTFIVE

The European Leader in sports marketing, SPORTFIVE offers its clients marketing expertise and added value, supported by its international network (presence in 15 countries), market knowledge (more than 30 years) and unique know-how.

Consultant to numerous federations and professional clubs, SPORTFIVE offers its clients a full portfolio of services and marketing expertise in the world of top level sports: commercialisation and management of marketing rights and sport audiovisuals, PR operations, rights activation for advertisers, advice to clubs and federations, stadium development (conception, finance and management) and exploitation of rights in new technology.

For businesses, SPORTFIVE develops numerous partnership programmes, hospitality programs and consulting so as to optimise their communication through sport.

With an undisputable role in the football world, SPORTFIVE is also present across a wide spectrum of other sports, including rugby, tennis, handball, basketball and motor sports.



IEC IN SPORTS

IEC is a company specialised in the trading of sports rights, with particular focus on tennis, football, volleyball and athletics. Each year IEC commercialises more than 3500 hours of programmes and 250 sports events throughout the world. Blending on the diversity of its catalogues, IEC elaborates sporting programmes covering several disciplines, thus constituting a complete and key sporting programming solution for its clients.

IEC has also developed a TV production activity and TV consulting service for large international sports federations.

The Organising Team

René Metge Concept

Sports Director: René Metge

Organising Director: Gilles Martineau

Financial and Logistics Manager: Christian Boudas

Competitors' Relations: Anne-Marie Gérandi

International Logistic&Coordination: Antonia de Roissard

Communication: Pascal Rostagny

Logistics: Laurence Ferreyra

Logistics: Nathalie Einsargueix

Technology / IT: Dominique Francelin

Comptabilité : Deborah Chen

SPORTFIVE

General Coordination / Organisation / Marketing / TV : Corinne Vanier

Sales / International: Kai Müller

TV Production: Eric Ginet

IEC IN SPORTS

TV Rights: Nick Haigh



René Metge Digest

As a Driver:

- *Three times champion Paris-Dakar Rally (1981, 1982 and 1986)*
- *Six participations at the Le Mans 24 Hour Race – victory in the category IMSA in 1986*
- *Champion Le Mans 24 Hour Race for vans in 1983*
- *Three times French Champion and two times French Vice-Champion in Supertourisme*
- *Champion Porsche Cup in 1987*

As an Organiser:

- *Organiser of two Dakar in 1987 and 1988*
- *Organisation of the first rally Paris Moscow Beijing in 1992*
- *Creator and organiser of Harricana, first snow bike raid in Canada*
- *Organiser of seven Master Rallies, helping to groove the tracks in Asia*
- *Organisation of three Orient Rallies*

Gilles Martineau Digest

Director of the Ford France competition from 1991 to 2002: responsible for the French Championships and the European Championships for Formula Ford, as well as the teams taken on by the constructor for rallies, circuits and the Andros Trophy. Involvement in the Rally Raid, alongside Bruno Saby and Jean Louis Schlessler.

Competition Director at Nissan Europe from 2003 to 2005 and Team Manager for the Rally Raid team that included drivers Vatanen, Mc Rae and De Villiers.



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