

Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson: Off to Ulaanbaatar

More than four weeks of route scouting are done

The destination is Ulaanbaatar, the way there is difficult and long. After more than four weeks of scouting out the route in Russia and Mongolia, the 14 daily stages of the Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson are recorded in detail on 150 pages altogether. GPS data and reference points in the shape of drawings, will allow the 64 participants from 24 nations to find their way in the mostly unknown regions after the starting signal is given on July 11th in Moscow.

Bad Hindelang, July 4th, 2008.

At the end of May, a team of scouters, armed with an extensive amount of maps and native support, got on the way towards the East. They covered a total 13000 km, which is almost double of what the rally route is. The objective was, to explore the routes and the terrain, which offer exciting challenges for demanding special tests, particularly in Russia, where the transportation phases are especially long. Many routes led nowhere. Bridges which were recorded, were non-existent. Neither the first, nor the second one. They were planned at some point in time, but that's the stage they stayed in. Various kilometers didn't lead to the desired destination, the scouters had to turn back and start anew.

Intense bad weather with storms and rain or temperatures above 35 degrees, made the conditions in Russia even more difficult. The result however is convincing. There'll be off-road evaluation tests with different degrees of difficulties, which demand precise navigation, as well as good driving abilities from the teams of the Transsyberia Rally 2008. In case the weather stays dry, it's already ambitious, but if it's wet, it get's really difficult. After the start in Moscow on July 11th, the participants have to cover a total of 4785 km in Russia, before the border crossing to Mongolia on July 18th. Here you can rest for the first time, since the border officials last year took a long time with the service.

In Mongolia you go high. The route follows the one from the Transsyberia 2007, but the evaluation tests vary. Swamp, marsh, snow and sand: Mongolia offers every conceivable underground – definitely no asphalt though. The really hard part of the rally starts. This also applies to the conveniences. Showers, bathrooms and cozy beds are things from the past. From now on, the nights are spent in a bivouac or tent. Running water doesn't come out of the tap and the temperatures are uniformly refreshing.

2450 km of pure nature are in store for the rally pilots before Ulaanbaatar, the coldest capital of the world. Chief scouter Michael Zerwer from Germany also took part in 2006 and 2007: "Mongolia holds surprises time and again. We found highly assorted routes. It'll be strenuous, because there's a lot of debris and rubble, as well as stone fields with boulders the size of a horse's head. If you rely on speed here, you'll have to brake". The valuation provides for this, in that you receive time penalties, in case you undercut the approximated time. Last year the sportive manager, Richard Schalber, already cautioned: "A lot of the time you can't go more than 35 km/h, or the vehicles will touch down. In addition, one can very quickly lose one's orientation in this maze".

However, the solution is on-board: GPS systems, which are considered an obligatory component for all of the participating all-wheelers. And of course the indispensable road book, which is handed out a day before the start. The adventure begins on July 11th in Moscow.

You can follow the Transsyberia Rally 2008 from the perspective of the participants in the daily photo blog at www.transsyberia-rallye.com. The teams will record their personal impressions and experiences with the new water and dust resistant Sony Ericsson C702 Cyber-shot cellphone.

You'll find additional information, as well as downloadable text material and extraordinary pictures/images of the Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson:

<http://www.transsyberia-rallye.de/en/presstart/> (English)

<http://www.transsyberia-rallye.de/de/presse/> (German)

Your contact: Transsyberia Rally 2008 powered by Sony Ericsson

REBEL Media GmbH

Claudia Rickmann

Holzstrasse 28-30 • D 80469 Munich

T: +49 (0)89.2000 347 15

F: +49 (0)89.2000 347 29

M: +49 (0)170.958 23 42

rickmann@rebel-media.de

TV and Online

REBEL Media is accompanying the teams during the entire rally with a TV production crew who'll record the rally events in HD quality. Daily news feeds, rough cuts and video clips are guaranteed, as is up-to-date reporting in text and photo on a daily basis.

We'll be happy to supply you with further details upon request.