
Ferrari Panamerican 20,000 - the latest news

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Now over a month in to the 32,000 km route that started in Belo Horizonte, Brazil and will finish in New York on November 17th, the cars have crossed the Andes and have entered Central America. We last left them on the borders of Argentina, here's what's happened since -

Salta, 1st September 2006 - The tour vehicles covered some 400km today, the distance that separates Saenz Pena from Salta. Salta is a colonial city in the south of the country. The expedition made a stop at the village of Campo Santo, a place where the oldest fazenda (constructed in 1715) in Argentina can be found. The fazenda still functions as the traditional family centre for the production of tobacco, coffee and sugar. In the evening, the caravan pulled into Salta, set in the hills between the Pampa and the high desert plains.

Calama, 4th September 2006 - A quiet day for the 599 GTB Fioranos as they covered only 100 kilometres to reach Calama. Though the distance was a short one, the work to bring the photographic

and video session to a close called for a lot of effort.

However, it was worth it as the images captured the vehicles against the Andean mountains. The Panamerican team then took care of the Maranello berlinettas and gave them a thorough clean after two dusty days.

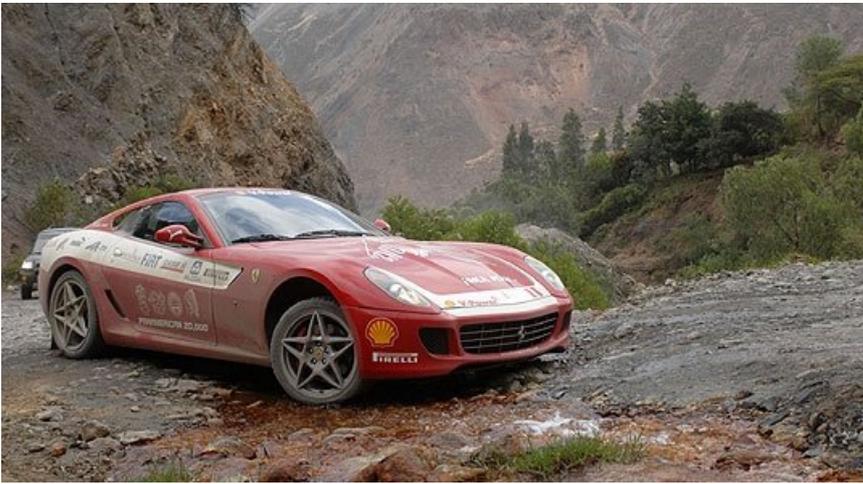
Uyuni, 5th September 2006 - The expedition crossed the immense Salar, populated by pink flamingos. The crews were surrounded by 3,000 metre high mountains and volcano craters. The sparse Andean fauna gave the area a spooky feel, and having crossed into Bolivian territory, the plant life became a more common sight. The greenery was not lush but there was enough of it to suggest that life is possible here, despite the cold. The uneven road surface meant that the convoy travelled slowly for over 300 kilometres before reaching Uyuni in the middle of the night.



Lima, 15th September 2006 - Organised by the Italian ambassador in Lima, Fabio Claudio de Nardis at the headquarters of the Banca di Credito Popolare, a huge party was thrown for the Ferrari Panamerican 20,000 on the evening of 15 September. Thousands of people were invited, from members of the Italian community, diplomats from other countries, government and council representatives and local business people.

Lima was the setting, a city in which the modern triumphs over the old. There is an almost permanent cover of cloud that hovers over the city. This means that its inhabitants see the sun only at dawn and dusk. The other feature that characterises the city is the chaotic traffic, common to all large cities in this zone. Here a host of minibuses criss-cross the city, cutting up other drivers as they stop suddenly to pick up passengers.

Huaraz, 16th September 2006 - The crews left Lima at 8.30 under the customary low skies and humidity. As the expedition neared the desert the road climbed and the cars entered the clouds that cloak the city. The mountains change in character towards the interior as vegetation appeared that accompanied the cars almost to the Conococha pass at 4100 metres. From there it was a descent to the Huaraz valley.



The plains that come after the Conococha pass recall the 'Piana delle cinque miglia' in the Abruzzo Appennines. However, the cloudy skies prevented the two ranges from coming into view and Huaraz was reached in showery conditions. Having refuelled for the morning departure, the expedition turned in for the night.

Trujillo, 17th September 2006 - The 599 GTB Fioranos left at 8.30 under cloud cover. The Alpine features of the valley continued for a while before it narrowed in a canyon called 'Canyon del Prato'. It is an arid, enclosed place with steep sides boxing in the most uneven roads. Holes and landslides fully tested the Ferrari journalist drivers - they often came across abandoned mine shafts and villages.

Finally, after a long and dusty day, the expedition drove onto an asphalted road as evening fell. The Panamerica then led the crews into Trujillo.

Piura, 18th September 2006 - The drivers removed the dust that had settled on the cars on the route between Huaraz and Trujillo. There was time for a quick lunch and a tour around Piazza Mayor, situated around a monument to celebrate the declaration of independence in the city. Then, at around 13.00, it was off towards Piura.

A desert of sand and black rock alternated in this area with fertile ground and farmland. The most commonly spotted crops were sugar cane and rice. Having passed Chiclayo, the field disappeared and flat desert zones with the odd bush took over. This terrain extended as far as the horizon. This was the Sechura desert. The road was more or less straight and ferried the crews across the desert to Piura.

Cuenca, 19th September 2006 - The border between Peru and Ecuador was set over a river on the scenic Macara bridge. The countryside became ever more rocky and uneven. The road rose and fell continually and the curves came one after another. This meant that the average speed was kept rather low. There were not many people spotted in this area and the villages were situated many kilometres apart. Once over the border, however, the 599 GTB Fioranos and support vehicles needed to refuel. For over one hundred kilometres, the Iveco vehicles had driven with the risk of running out of fuel.

The crews were travelling at an altitude of between two and three thousands metres. The road descended to Loja and then the road continued winding through the mountains until Cuenca.



Medellin, 24th September 2006 - The Panamerican 20,000 expedition left Cali at around 6.30. The destination was Medellín for a date with the Italian Consul in Colombia. Many varieties of flower appeared along the roadside as the crews enjoyed their weekly rest day. The 599 GTB Fioranos were then caught out by a tropical storm while they crossed a coffee growing area.

The last stage of the day was windy and uneven for the last 60 km into Medellín. The city was reached in the afternoon and the team members settled into their hotel, one that enjoyed a privileged position over the city.

Cartagena, 27th September 2006 - The Ferrari Panamerican 20,000 expedition today enjoyed the final day of its stopover in Cartagena. Tomorrow the crews will board a ferry for Panama, crossing the famous canal that divides the American continent in two. The two days spent in this city have given the crews a chance to rest after the heat of the Brazilian coast, the winds of the Argentinean pampas and the swings in temperature experienced in the peaks and valleys of the Andes.



Now came 48 hours of doing next to nothing and even the 599 GTB Fioranos took a break. The Prancing Horse cars have performed admirably and proved to be more durable than the crew on the tour.

Text: *Classic Driver*

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