

Back from the Dakar Classic, we spoke with the Niva Red Legend Team

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Following their triumphant return, we sat down with Mario and Sladjan of the Niva Red Legend Team to reflect on a very successful first run at the 2022 Dakar Classic.



What were the most challenging and rewarding aspects of the Dakar Classic?

Mario: "As rookies, the most challenging thing was getting used to the terrain. You're driving over sand and getting stuck, and it's something you don't have experience with. Getting used to driving over dunes and the various surfaces you encounter on the Dakar Classic takes time".

Sladjan: "By far the most rewarding thing was the progress we made. When we set out, we wanted to start slow and gradually pick up our pace, and that tactic really worked. We started in 125th position and eventually we made our way up to 115th. The support and sense of community among the Dakar Classic participants was also amazing, all the teams were in it together and helping each other with finding spare parts and repairs, which is quite different to the competitive nature of the Dakar competition itself."



And how was the car?

Sladjan: "It was really good - it performed well! What we realised is that we need to do some enhancements to the car. We were really strict about adhering to the rules, so anyone in Russia could go out and buy the parts to build our car, there aren't any custom components. Overall, the car ran really well: we didn't have to replace any of our Pirelli tyres, and we only had to replace one damper. However, we could do with a bit more ground clearance, so increasing the ride height and the dimensions of our tyres is probably our biggest modification for next year, so we can increase our speed over the terrain."

Finally, what have you learned for next Year?

Mario: "You have to test your equipment. We arrived at the first stage after 12 months of preparation and feedback from people with a huge amount of experience and we get to the point where we were setting up our intercoms. We got really good Bell helmets with integrated digital intercoms with zero noise, and then we realised the cables didn't fit. So you can do as much planning as you want, but you have to test your equipment properly."

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