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The adventurous spirit of Thierry Sabine is very much alive.

When at the beginning of the 80s, a young French adventurer named Thierry Sabine set the challenge to cross most of the North of Africa with reduced ressources (the ones available at the time) many drivers, who wanted even more, signed up for a competition where the specifications of the car were important but not determinant. That is how the Dakar was born; at that time, the Rally Paris-Dakar.

As years have gone by, with technological advances on the one side and difficulties to find the appropriate landscape to set this kind of competitions on the other, it has been difficult to organise races such as the Dakar and guarantee complete safety for the participants. Furthermore, such mythical adventures have lost the essence longed for by drivers, who want to experience extreme conditions in 4WD races.

Nevertheless, the petition of these drivers has been heard by some organisers, who have not balked at working to fill the gap in the calendars of 4WD competitions. Amongst these organising entities, it is worth mentioning the endevours of GEFEI IRIDIOS TRAVEL, located in the Principality of Andorra and run by professionals who have over 20 years experience with this kind of events in many countries.

Desert Raid is a 4WD navigation event set in the Grand Erg Oriental in Tunisia, an extension of 10,000km² of dunes, where all the stages are exclusively raced on sand. Along the route of the event, there are no roads, no connections, no tracks, no petrol stations, no hotels, no garages... there is nothing but a desert of dunes and sand.

The organiser, Albert Margarit, explains the main characteristics of the event: **Desert Raid is not a speed event**, but more of a strategy and ability race. Each stage has a series of waypoints placed in the middle of the dunes, some are compulsory and others voluntary (each of them has a different value according to its difficulty level), and each team has to plan their own strategy in order to get the highest score without going over the time and the distance limits established for the stage. This forces the participants to open their own tracks and decide their own route, more or less difficult according to their abilities and possibilities. It is easier said than done, I can assure you.

With these premises, the organisers have somehow determined that participating or even winning the event does not require the biggest budget of the competition: *It is true, for us the main goal has always been to create a unique event, in which neither the budget nor the car are crucial.* You require great mental strength, *driving abilities, commitment and team work to reach the finish line of each stage. This event brings back the adventurous spirit of the first African raids, where the human factor was more important than the car's engine. The difficulties we encounter in the desert makes us all equal.*

The seventh edition of the DESERT RAID is on its way. A few weeks ago the organisers completed the placement of most of the waypoints, which the participants will have to locate in-situ. Anyway, until the beginning of the competition, mid October, Albert Margarit and his team will be able to polish the details of the route, which the participants will enjoy or endure, to each their opinion, to the limits they will set themselves.

Press Service.



