



SILK WAY RALLY 2018

丝绸之路拉力赛



PRESS RELEASE

The Red Square in Moscow, 27 July 2018

Temperature: 26°

GMT +3

S.7 – LIPETSK-MOSCOU: “Finish in the Red Square” - 497,22 km

Special Stage 7: 79,1 km

AI RAJHI AND KARGINOV CROWNED IN THE RED SQUARE!

Yazeed Al Rajhi and Timo Gottschalk (MINI John Cooper Works n°103), in the car class, and Andrey Karginov, Andrey Mokeev and Igor Leonov (Kamaz-Master n°309), in the trucks have today won the 2018 SILK WAY RALLY at the end of the 7th and last stage between Lipetsk and the capital of the Russian Federation. Crowned on the podium set up in the Red Square in Moscow, the victors were at last able to savour their first wins on this event, at the end of a week's thrilling racing between Astrakhan and Moscow. For all the competitors the arrival at the foot of the Saint Basile Basil's Cathedral, opposite the Kremlin, is synonymous with an extraordinary achievement after some 3500 kilometres of racing through the heart of the most beautiful scenery in south east Russia. After the podium ceremony at one of the most famous squares in the world there will be a gala evening at the Ritz-Carlton hotel just next to the Red Square, bringing to a close an exceptional week's racing.

OF NOTE

Cars: Hunt sprints, Al Rajhi stays efficient

T2 & T3: Zi Yun Gang imperial, Opariina pulls off the double

Trucks: Van Den Brink in extremis, Karginov at last!

Winners' portraits

Cars: Hunt sprints, Al Rajhi stays efficient

Slowly, the MINI John Cooper Works n°103 comes to a stop at the finish line. Smiling, Yazeed Al Rajhi and his co-driver Timo Gottschalk extricate themselves from the cockpit and unfurl a Saudi flag across the windscreen. Having got their car safely home, the X-Raid team crew savour this victory achieved with efficacy and reliability. Because while they weren't the fastest on the track, throughout the 3.500 km from the start last Saturday in Astrakhan,





SILK WAY 2018 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



the MINIs lost less time than their main rivals. Nasser Al-Attiyah and Matthieu Baumel (Toyota Hilux n°101), Mathieu Serradori and Fabian Lurquin (Buggy SRT n°108), 2nd and 3rd respectively on the podium, eat dust due to the lack of reliability of their vehicles over the particularly demanding terrain. Harry Hunt and Sébastien Delaunay (Peugeot 3008 DKR Maxi n°107), took full advantage of this special stage, shortened due to an impossible to cross river, to take their 2nd stage win on this 2018 SILK WAY RALLY.

T2 & T3 categories in brief

Zi Yun Gang imperial, Opariina pulls off the double

Here at the request of their national motorsport federation to celebrate the friendship between China and Russia, Zi Yun Gang and Lu Binlong (Toyota Land Cruiser) couldn't have hoped for a better result. In achieving this emphatic one-two in the T2 class, the two drivers showed their complete mastery of this demanding terrain. Already winners last year in Xi'an, Mariia Opariina and Taisiia Shtaneva (Maverick X3 n°115) drove another perfect rally to once again win ahead of the many men they left trailing in their dust. The Bulgarian Petar Cenkov (Quaddy Xzy n°130) gets on to the second step of the podium, while the Pole Szustrowski (Polaris RZR n°133) took advantage of this final stage to complete the final T3 (SSV) podium, beating his French Xtreme Plus team mate, Nicolas Duclos (Polaris RZR n°117) in extremis.

Trucks: Van Den Brink in extremis, Karginov at last!

It was a pleasure to see his joy. At the finish line of this last special, Andrey Karginov didn't hold back when celebrating his first SILK WAY RALLY victory. A victory that many seasoned observers anticipated would go to one of his team mates: the two times winner and title holder, Dmitry Sotnikov, Airat Mardeev (winner in 2012 and 2016), or Eduard Nikolaev (2010) and his famous 'Kapotnik'. But in the end Karginov (Kamaz-Master n°309) confounded the pundits by being the only one to get the Russian manufacturer's new model, still suffering from a few teething troubles, to the finish without drama. Unlucky at the start of the rally, the Dutchman Maarten Van Den Brink (Renault Sherpa n°304), who had come along to throw the cat among the pigeons in the back garden of his main rivals, won this last stage, a victory he had been chasing after these last five days.





SILK WAY RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



A WORD FROM THE ORGANISERS

Vladimir Chagin (Silk Way Rally Director): 'This 2018 edition of the SILK WAY RALLY run in the south of Russia and in the Kalmoukie Desert was very tough for both man and machine. The scenario of the rally therefore wasn't a surprise to us. We know this region for 30 years and it always creates team spirit and solidarity between men in adversity. It is in those moments, when people come together, that great things happen. It is one of the values that we want to transmit via our event.'

Frédéric Lequien (Silk Way Rally Deputy Director): 'We'd like to thank all the participants who believed in our event. We have just experienced an exceptional rally in every sense of the word. All the ingredients came together on this 2018 edition of the SILK WAY RALLY: a magnificent route, suspense and a fantastic atmosphere on each stage. I can tell you now that the SILK WAY RALLY has a great future in front of it...'

WINNERS' PORTRAITS

Al Rajhi, THE Sheik of Central Asia

The Al Rajhi family have a culture of success. Rally driver in the Middle-East Championship, followed by stints in IRC and WRC2, Yazeed quickly discovered he preferred a bucket seat to the comfort of an office in one of the biggest banks in the Gulf. He didn't really discover the world of rally-raid until he took his first stage victory on the 2015 Dakar. And while the Saudi driver impressed right from the off, in the end he was forced to retire from the race with mechanical problems while in 3rd place in the provisional results. Since then this owner of a chain of fast-food restaurants has put in a series of impressive performances, without actually taking the final victory. Moving to the X-Raid team in 2016, it was at the wheel of a MINI All4 Racing that he climbed on to the 2nd step of the SILK WAY RALLY podium. 2017 has seen a few disappointments but Yazeed Al Rajhi managed to take his first win a few weeks back in Kazakhstan. Wiser, but still extremely fast out on the track, the Saudi Arabian driver continues his run of success on this 2018 SILK WAY RALLY 2018. Almost certainly the start of a long series of victories.

Karginov triology





SILK WAY 2018 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



At 42 years old, Andrey Karginov is a pure product of the Kamaz system. Brought up in the motorsport tradition so central to the culture of the Naberejnye Tchelny factory, he started out as team mate and mechanic for Ilgizar Mardeev, the founding father of the current team, before being promoted to factory driver in 2012. Third on the 2013 Dakar, he won the event the following year (2014) before achieving a 3rd consecutive podium in 2015. Then two years ago (2016), it was on the shores of Lac Rose that Karginov took the honours on the Africa Eco Race. By taking his first victory on the SILK WAY RALLY, Andrey Karginov joins Vladimir Chagin, as the second driver in the Russian team to be victorious on all three continents... on the three major events of the rally raid season.

INTERVIEWS

CARS

Yazeed Al Rajhi (SAR/MINI John Cooper Works n°103 – 1st)

‘We come back next year to win again...’

‘Thank you to the organisation, thank you to everyone who supports this rally because it is a very high-class race and for sure next year we come again to win this race.’

Nasser Al-Attiyah (Qat/Toyota Hilux n°101- 2nd)

‘A fantastic race...’

‘I am happy to finish. We had a problem on all the previous stages so second place is a really good result. Thank you to the team, thank you to everybody who helped us. A really fantastic race, thanks to the organisation. The Silk Way Rally is one of the best races in the world.’

Mathieu Serradori (Fra/Buggy SRT n°108 – 3rd)

‘Very emotional...’

‘I’m very happy to be at the finish, on the podium, it means a good future for the SRT. It is very emotional for my team, my family, for my co-driver, for myself. The Silk Way Rally was really a good experience. We were very well received in Russia, the organisers did a formidable job, the conditions weren’t always easy but it was the same for everyone. Very happy indeed!’

Nani Roma (Spa/MINI John Cooper Works n°104)

‘Not an easy race for me in the beginning...’





SILK WAY 2018 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



‘For myself I feel good, for the result not so perfect for sure. Not an easy race for me in the beginning with the gastroenteritis, yesterday was the first day I was able to drive well without any pain and we did an amazing stage – a really good connection between Alex and me. And then I’m happy for Yazeed and all the team – the car is excellent. And then we finish here in this amazing place with so much history.’

TRUCKS

Andrei Karginov (Rus/Kamaz-Master n°309 – 1st)

‘It was my dream to have this trophy...’

‘I was hoping to win. Every participant who comes here hopes for a good result. This is 10 years that I have been coming to the Silk Way Rally. I was first in Africa and on the Dakar but never here. It was my dream to have this trophy and this tiger will bring back good memories’

