

CHALLENGE 4

“On the longest roads with natural gas”

“Panamericana” and “Amur Transcontinental” – without a drop of gasoline

Using only natural gas, NG long-distance world champion Rainer Zietlow tackles the two longest roads in the world with the VW Caddy Maxi EcoFuel

Rainer Zietlow's two-part natural-gas marathon tour will comprise first driving from the Atlantic to the Pacific and then driving from Tierra del Fuego to Alaska. Stretching over 40,000 kilometers, Zietlow and his team will drive the world's two longest roads – Russia's „Amur Transcontinental“ and the “Panamericana”.

The VW Caddy Maxi EcoFuel is the new “natural gas long-distance champion” and the ideal vehicle for such an enterprise. No other series vehicle can drive 600 kilometers in operation using natural gas only. Due to this technical characteristic, Rainer Zietlow can traverse the greater part of Russia and the South American continent by travelling from one natural gas fuel station to the next. The range even suffices to drive across the USA from coast-to-coast without utilizing gasoline. The supplemental tanks have been built into Zietlow's Volkswagen for use exclusively in Central America and Siberia. Moreover, the natural gas Caddy is environmentally-friendly on the road: in relation to a comparable gasoline motor: two tons less of CO₂ will be emitted over the course of the two tours.

The first marathon tour, the “EcoFuel-Eurasia”, runs through the Eurasian continent and begins on October 4th, 2009 in Lisbon, Portugal. It leads from the Portuguese Atlantic coast via Moscow to Seoul and Tokyo where it ends on November 4th, 2009. In Moscow the team will visit the Russian natural gas exhibition “GASSUF 2009”, in South Korea the Asian natural gas exhibition “ANGVA 2009”. The lion's share of the route will be driven on the „Amur Transcontinental“ from Moscow to Vladivostok, which, with its over 10,000 kilometers, is the longest road in Russia. A drive tracing along this roadway is still quite an adventure. For example, 1,500 kilometers of it is gravel road, like one single construction site. “This section will be a proving ground for the sturdily built Volkswagen Caddy Maxi EcoFuel”, said Rainer Zietlow.

The second part of the marathon tour, the “EcoFuel-Trans-America”, meanders along the legendary “Panamericana”. With its 25,000 kilometers, the longest and most famous road of the world bisects the American double continent. The starter's gun fires January 2nd, 2010, in Rio Grande/Argentina at the southernmost natural gas fuel station of the world. Zietlow and his team want to see the chequered flag on April 2nd, 2010, in Barrow/Alaska at the world's northernmost natural gas fuel station. Additionally, side-trips will stray into Brazil and to the Eastern Seaboard of the USA.

Rainer Zietlow hails from Mannheim, Germany, and already has set a high altitude record with a Volkswagen Touareg as well as circumnavigating the globe in a natural gas auto, each of which earned him a place in the Guinness Book of Records. At the beginning of this year, Zietlow piloted the new VW Passat TSI EcoFuel to all 800 natural gas fuel stations within Germany.

As with his previous projects, Rainer Zietlow will donate 5 Euro Cents to two SOS Kinderdorf “Children's Villages” for every kilometer driven. He and his team will transfer the donations in SOS children villages in Vladivostok and Bogota. Both marathon runs are supported by partners in the supply and natural gas industry.

Those interested in keeping track of the natural gas long-distance team can do so around the clock. The first tour can be found on the website: www.ecofuel-eurasia.com and the second tour at: www.ecofuel-transamerica.com. Zietlow and his team will daily report in on these websites thereby submitting texts, photos and short videos recording their experiences. A virtual globe will enable viewers to trace the travel route “live”.

www.challenge4.de



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Rainer Zietlow in front of his VW Caddy Maxi EcoFuel



www.ecofuel-eurasia.com



www.ecofuel-transamericana.com