

"Tour d'Excellence" and its "Epilogue" - an epic EV record

Bold and pioneering EV adventure "Tour d'Excellence" by GIMS and its "Epilogue" successfully completed. The sustainability journey from Geneva to Doha (Qatar) and on to Salalah (Oman) over 12'500 km of which more than 6'000 km without any available charging infrastructure proves the limitless and sustainable travel with EVs.

"Improvisation skills beats range anxiety," says organizer and driver Frank M. Rinderknecht. "All we needed to do was to find a preferably 380V power outlet to charge our vehicle on the fly. Sometimes easier said than done, language barriers needed to be overcome, and comforting the owner that our charging would not shut down the Mosque, gas station, shop, or house we were to charge from a necessity", he explains. Each charging stop proved to be its own challenge and some of the electrical installations found were more than ludicrous.

Across 20 countries in 49 days the ultimate adventure found a global echo and impact. The execution representative of Swiss automotive innovation and sustainability to make the "Tour d'Excellence" and its "Epilogue" reality Frank M. Rinderknecht, CEO of the renowned Rinspeed Inc., Guinness record holder, and 42 times exhibitor at the GIMS, is the perfect match in pioneering spirits. "I am very honored and proud to work with Sandro Mesquita and his GIMS team, but also with various partners, to make ideas and dreams come true - a philosophy which guided my career of 46 years and became part of my DNA", says Frank. "Moreover, to have achieved the goal with only two blown tires and right on time makes all members of the team very proud, and unforgettable memories will stay in our minds forever", Frank states and adds "not even to flooding of the century in Dubai could stop us, yet it meant to carefully maneuver the electric VW ID Buzz with the nickname "IDeFix" around knee deep water zones and countless stranded and abandoned cars in the streets with wife Michèle as the walking ahead "depth-sounder".

The Geneva International Motor Show (GIMS) is a leading motor show since 1905 and celebrating 100 years of international exhibition in 2024, held its first outside of Switzerland venue - the GIMS Qatar - in October 2023.

For the recognition of the outstanding motor show in the Middle East, the partnership of excellence between Geneva and Doha, and to symbolically connect the two host cities, the "Tour d'Excellence" was created and executed in September 2023.

After a five-month exhibition presence at the Doha Expo, the record adventure restarted in April with the "Tour d'Excellence Epilogue". This time the journey led from Qatar to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to all seven Emirates, to the Northern tip, and then through Muscat to the Southern tip of Oman. Again, a good part of the 3'500 km journey was to be conquered with innovation as there are - again - no charging stations available.

The Oman Sustainability Week was the final destination of the "Tour d'Excellence" and its "Epilogue" to promote the GIMS, its visions and efforts for sustainability, power of innovation, and global positioning.

Swiss Rinspeed Inc. with its rich and leading history of over 46 years of automotive innovation and cutting-edge technologies, is globally known for its out-of-the-box concept cars illustrating the future of mobility. The amazing twenty-six concept cars build the foundation of the "The Rinspeed Collection" - the most unique and thought-after collection on the globe.

The Harting Technology Group is at the side of this amazing trip. VW's Tier 1 supplier for electrical cables, VW Group Award 2020 winner in the E-Mobility category, and ID Buzz supplier develops

robust, reliable, and user-friendly charging solutions. Marco Grinblats, Managing Director at Harting Automotive, explains: "By participating as a partner in the "Tour d'Excellence" and its "Epilogue", we have once again taken the opportunity to demonstrate the performance of our e-mobility solutions. Robustness and performance - these product features are important on this tour. Here the team can completely rely on our charging solutions."

During the breathtaking Muscat-Salalah leg of the electric vehicle expedition, Frank and his team stayed overnight at Oman's world-class workforce accommodation, Renaissance Village Duqm (RSVD), to recharge man and machine. Speaking on the occasion, Sami Al Shaikh, General Manager of Renaissance Village Duqm, said: "As a pioneer of world-class standards and sustainability in worker accommodation welfare in Oman, Renaissance Services is delighted to support this pioneering journey, which brings electric vehicle mobility forward in the region." Renaissance Services, which owns and operates RSVD, is Oman's leading company specializing in accommodation, services solutions, and IFM in Oman.

Hud Hud Travels, an Omani tour operator and DMC that is renowned for building 5-star pop-up accommodations all over the country, provided the local knowledge and guidance not only to overcome the various charging obstacles and language barriers but also to showcase the beauty and richness of Oman's culture and landscapes along the journey.