



SILK WAY 2017 RALLY 丝绸之路拉力赛



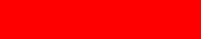
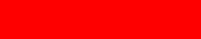
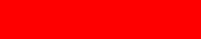
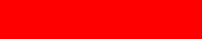
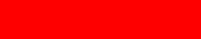
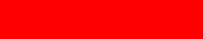
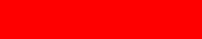
S.14 Despres and Sotnikov score doubles at Xi'an



Arriving in triumph and bright sunshine at the ancient capital of the Middle Empire, at the end of over 700 kilometres of liaison, the competitors on the 2017 Silk Way Rally were all smiles. Cancelled following heavy overnight rain in the Zhongwei region, the last 100,67 km special was transformed into a lap of honour for the competitors and their assistance, coming to the end of 15 days and nearly 10.000 km of racing that was varied and demanding for both man and machine. Pulling into the parc fermé, that marks the end of this 2017 edition, at Xi'an's exhibition centre, Cyril Despres and David Castera (Peugeot 3008DKR n°100) take a second consecutive victory in the car category, while Dmitry Sotnikov, accompanied by his Kamaz Ruslan team co-drivers Akhmadeev and Ilnur Mustafin (Kamaz-Master n°303) also takes a second victory in the truck class (after their first in 2013), at the end of a fierce battle with their Kamaz team mates.



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Key points

#Despres/Castera, the specialists

#Sotnikov proves the new Kamaz

#Vladimir Chagin: "Thank you all"

#Frédéric Lequien: "Suspense and excitement"

Despres-Castera, the specialists

On starting their second Silk Way Rally aboard their Peugeot 3008DKR, proudly baring the n° 100 of the title holders, Cyril Despres and David Castera were not expecting it would be easy to repeat their 2016 exploit. The two ex-motorcycle racers were after all up against formidable opposition just from within their own team. But Peterhansel, clearly cursed in Kazakhstan and Sébastien Loeb, still a little bit in too much of a hurry in the desert, fell by the wayside, to hand the lead to the French duo six days before the finish. With impressive mastery of their subject they took on the huge dunes of the Gobi desert and resisted the attacks from the Mini John Cooper Works of the American Menzies and the Saudian Al Rajhi, as well as those of the Chinese teams led by Lavieille's Baicmotor, second on the race and Han Wei's Geeley SMG Buggy, who completes the final podium. Shadowed by their guardian angels Peterhansel and Cottret, Despres and Castera pulled off a double that may well be a turning point. "Thanks to David Castera for the excellent work he did during this rally. Thanks to Peugeot who have given me this career changing opportunity," declared Cyril Despres, five times Dakar winner in the motorcycle category. "Thank you also to the engineers and all the mechanics at Peugeot Sport for having created such a competitive car. I am impatient now to take the start of the 2018 Dakar with the Peugeot DKR Maxi. It is clearly my next objective..."

Special wins: Peterhansel (5): SS2, SS6, SS9, SS11, SS13. Loeb (4): SS1, SS3, SS4, SS8. Despres (1) : SS5. Menzies (1) : SS7. Amos (1) : SS10. Lavieille (1) : SS12.

Sotnikov proves the new Kamaz

With the best teams at the start, the 2017 Silk Way Rally promised a fierce fight between the four Team Kamaz-Master trucks and their principle rivals from Team Iveco De Rooy, Mammoet Riwald, MAZ and Tatra. Once again the experience and team work of the men from



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Tatarstan proved decisive at the end of the 10,000 km leading to Xi'an. Patient in Russia and Kazakhstan, the blue armada held back until crossing the border into China. The only one able to carry on the fight was the Czech Martin Kolomy (Tatra Phoenix n°311) who finally let go in the Gobi Desert. And it was there, in the heart of the cathedral dunes, that Sotnikov, Shibalov and Mardeev let rip to share the spoils. Keeping a cool head all the way to the finish in his 100% new Kamaz, equipped with a 'small' 13.5 litre Cummins engine, Dmitry Sotnikov fought off the attacks of the young and talented Anton Shibalov to take a second Silk Way win. "I can't remember such a tough race," commented Sotnikov, "We had to fight for each second and every day the battle became more intense. I am happy that Anton Shibalov kept up the pressure because it really bought out the best in us. Unfortunately there can only be one winner. Anton could very well have won the race, as the gap between us was tiny and shows the degree of competition at this level of racing."

Special wins: Sotnikov (4): SS5, SS7, SS8, SS13. **Kolomy (3):** SS1, SS4, SS11. **Mardeev (2):** SS9, SS12.

Vladimir Chagin (General Director of the Silk Way Rally): "Thank you all!"

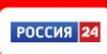
"This Silk Way Rally has once again proved itself worthy of its status as an international sporting event. In each country crossed there were many spectators at the side of the route. The race was even tougher than last year due to the rain that has followed us from Moscow, adding an extra degree of difficulty for the competitors. But nothing stands in the way of sport, courage and passion. I would like to thank all the competitors on this 2017 edition for their determination, that is the mark of all great sportsmen and women. I would also like to thank all the members of the organisation, as well as our partners, without whom this fantastic sporting and human adventure would not exist. Thank you all and see you next year."

Frédéric Lequien (Deputy Director of the Silk Way Rally): "Suspense and excitement"

"This 2017 edition of the Silk Way Rally was one of suspense and excitement. We've had two weeks of real rally-raid with the variety of terrain that is the key to the success of this discipline. All in the magnificent scenery of Russia, Kazakhstan and of course, China. The level of competition has never been so high. Cyril Despres and David Castera's second consecutive victory in the cars shows just how much off-road experience the Silk Way Rally demands. Bravo also to the Chinese teams and crews who contributed so much to the competition, resulting in the 2nd place of Christian Lavieille and the third of Han Wei. In the trucks the battle was intense from beginning to end, with a final



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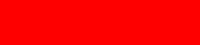
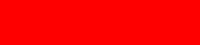
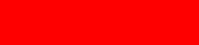
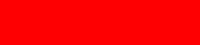
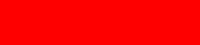
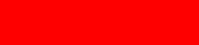
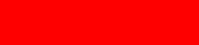


duel between the Kamaz. Bravo to Sotnikov and Shibalov for a fight that came down to the second, all the way to the eve of the finish. Bravo also to team Kamaz-Master for their emphatic podium! Throughout the 15 days, the sporting exploits and human adventure of this Silk Way Rally was broadcast in some 195 countries and thrilled millions of viewers."

Vladimir Putin (The President of the Russian Federation): I would like to congratulate the organisers of the Silk Way Rally for their excellent work. I am confident that such wonderful projects contribute to the development of international cooperation, the strengthening of friendship and increased understanding between people. I wish you success in your future projects.



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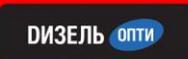




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