

EcoFuel Asia Tour 2007: 20,000 kilometres in a VW Caddy EcoFuel

- Adventurers Rainer Zietlow and Franz Janusiewicz back on the road in their CNG Caddy -

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Press Release

With natural gas to Bangkok

Two men, one VW Caddy EcoFuel, 13 gas tanks and more than 20,000 kilometres: on Monday, 17th September 2007, Rainer Zietlow and photographer Franz Janusiewicz will set out on a new CNG marathon (www.ecofuel-asia-tour.com), taking them to Moscow, Lhasa, Shanghai and Bangkok. Last year, Zietlow and Janusiewicz drove the very same car around the world in six months, setting a spectacular new Guinness World Record for their EcoFuel World Tour.

The EcoFuel Asia Tour is the ideal opportunity to carry out a first series of field tests to discover the potential of a new storage material powered by nanotechnology, which has been filled into one of the VW Caddy EcoFuel's gas tanks. BASOSTOR®, which has been developed by BASF, consists of extremely small nanocubes. The enormous surface area of each gram of this highly porous, spongy material is equal in size to that of a football pitch. Due to its adhesive force, the product binds significantly more gas molecules than would be possible in an empty gas tank. Thanks to this development, the maximum range of the CNG Caddy increases by up to 30 %. The goal of the Far East challenge is to assess this new storage material's ability to successfully pass such an extreme practical test.

The CNG industry will follow the tour with heightened interest as it expects the storage material to positively influence eco-friendly CNG vehicles. The EcoFuel Asia Tour will take its team across the Urals to Turkey, Egypt, India and Nepal on its way to China, Vietnam and Thailand. From Berlin, where the tour starts, the first destinations are Ukraine and Moscow, the seat of the headquarters of Gazprom. The route partially follows the famous Russian "Sojus" gas pipeline. The tour then goes on to Orenburg (2,000 kilometres to the southeast of Moscow) to one of the world's largest natural gas fields, where about one third of the Russian natural gas for Germany is produced. "We want to show CNG drivers in Central Europe, where some of the natural gas for their CNG vehicles comes from", says Rainer Zietlow.

One of the highlights of the EcoFuel Asia Tour is the journey through the Tibetan Highlands with several 5,000-metre mountain passes. The agenda also includes a visit to "Challenge Bibendum" in Shanghai, an international event organised by Michelin that focuses on sustainable road mobility. The VW Caddy EcoFuel will be the first European CNG vehicle to visit China over land and will also be the only car to arrive to the event using its own power[EC2]. During its final stage, the tour will follow the Chinese coast on to Thailand's capital, where the CNG adventurers will present their tour to the Conference of the Asia Pacific Natural Gas Vehicles Association (ANGVA) on 27th November 2007. At the end of the ten-week tour, the CNG Caddy will then return to Germany by ship.

The VW Caddy EcoFuel used is a series vehicle. Before starting the CNG marathon, the vehicle's front and rear suspensions were raised by three centimetres to provide more ground clearance while driving on the rough gravel roads in Asia. Nine additional gas tanks help to increase the maximum range of the car to a total of 3,000 kilometres without refuelling. The standard 13-litre petrol tank will only be used in Tibet, the one region along the route where natural gas is not available. "However, the distance that we will have to drive using petrol will not exceed approx. 800 kilometres", says Rainer Zietlow.

For every kilometre driven, Rainer Zietlow will make a donation of 20 cent, equally divided between two SOS Children's Villages in Nepal and Tibet. He will visit both villages and present the money in person.

Dear colleagues,

All press releases and PR matters concerning the EcoFuel Asia Tour 2007 are co-ordinated by press-inform. For further inquiries as well as photo or interview requests, please contact:

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