



Just over 100 years ago in 1906, an Italian pioneer by the name of Vincenzo Florio started the TARGA FLORIO an endurance race through the streets of Sicily.

In its day, the race was the most important in Europe.

Covering a staggering 277 miles, the race was also one of the most difficult of its day. The first non Italian winner in 1926 was of German origin; Christian Werner was the only outsider to win in 50 years. In later years the risks to human life became apparent as hundreds of spectators lined the streets with little or no protection from the speeding cars. The late, great Stirling Moss was amongst the list of legends that raced here.

It is true to say that the race has now become a rally with several 'special stages' (roads closed to traffic) and not a race of endurance as it was years ago, the circuits winding around the island. The name Targa* was used by Porsche as the model name for their convertible 911 after several convincing wins here.

The end of the Targa Florio as an international professional race dwindled from 1972 onwards becoming a national event then stopping in its original form, all together in 1977 after the loss of a life during the race. It is now run as a rally. Part of the FIA Historic rally championship.

Since problems about ownership of the name occurred, the rally is now called Trofeo Florio and soon will drop even the name Florio from its title. This however is very unlikely to take away the magic of the 24th to the 27th of May 2007.

Gian Franco Pucci, a well dressed, good looking, middle aged, passionate sportsman is the organiser of the Trofeo Florio. Every minute of the event is planned, every eventuality is covered. At least that is the intention of this Sicilian whose life has surrounded automobile sport. His father, in a Porsche 904, won the race in 1964 whilst it remained the great Targa Florio. A real champion, and the love of this race is passed from father to son, Gian Franco is the guardian of a Sicilian treasure.

Friday saw the line up in downtown Palermo, official verification and a chance to meet all 97 participants, followed by the official send off in the evening. Saturday saw the main race which was concluded Sunday morning. After 2 days of racing, scrutineering, officialising, testing, time keeping and a 1st class prize giving evening, the rally 2007 comes to a close.

The Italian organising team and the officials of the F.I.A. have done a wonderful job of keeping the Florio spirit alive. It is, for the 'connoisseurs' a race of spirit, a race of steeped in history or records and of legends. The hundred year old ghosts of the race are ever present through each stage and as the newer reduced mileage of the race means safer and shorter distances, the feeling of being here and part of the legend exists still. As Jean Claude Menut, Chairman of the F.I.A. Historic rally committees put it.....

The winners of the Trofeo Floriobecome part of history.
Winning ahead of 2nd placeand 3rd placethey gave their
all to be part of this amazing legend, that, thanks to people like Gian Franco Pucci, sided by a
descendent of the Florio family, Mrs Florio, will stay alive for a long time to come. Sicily has so
much to offer, this larger than life rally deserves its place in the auto-sport calendar.

**TARGA MEANS SHIELD*

Simon Kirby
Palermo, Sicily.







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