

Fiat Dealer Rally 2011



Every felt that your Fiat or Alfa could do so much more, that it was designed for some real fun? Here is a chance to participate in a very safe and low cost form of low level motor-sport while exercising your Fiat or Alfa with passion.

The Fiat Dealer Rally is the 2nd event in the 2011 SA Regularity Rally Association Championship, and marks the 2nd year of the return of Fiat to the field of historic motor sport.

The Fiat Dealer Rally event harks back to the days when the Fiat sponsored rally was part of the SA Rally National Championship, in the late 1970's, and had a fearsome reputation for toughness, an ideal proving ground for the Fiat 128's and 131's of the day.

The up-to-date event is being organized by Fiat Club Africa in co-operation with the Fiat Dealer network, with generous assistance from Fiat Group, and this year takes place on Sunday 13th March 2011, starting and finishing at the East Rand McCarthy Fiat dealership in Boksburg.

Between 1978 and 1980, the event was run in what is now Mpumalanga, starting in the Witbank/Middelburg area and running through areas which have become

synonymous with SA rallying.....Louws Creek, Nelshoogte, Elandhoogte, Kaapschehoop, Ermelo, Badplaas, Belfast and Machadodorp. The event usually started at 18h00 in the evening, and ran through the night. The 1979 event, for example, was 1 143 km in length, with 15 special stages that comprised 684 km. It was the era of the 131 Racing in the production car class – pictured above is Kassie Coetzee and Vic Deiner in action in the 1978 Castrol International Rally, in which they ended 6th overall and 1st in the production car category, on the car's rally debut.

The 1979 event, which was won by Eric Sanders and Reg Ridden in a Datsun, saw the rally debut of Eddie Keizan in a Fiat 131 Abarth, navigated by Chris Hawkins. They ended 3rd overall in that event. The 1980 event saw Bob Hardy and Mike Swarbreck also end 3rd overall and first in the production car class, behind the winning pairing of Sarel van der Merwe and Franz Boshoff in a Ford Escort.

These days, the event is far more relaxed, taking into account the more modern restrictive traffic conditions and laws and the fact that the entry of cars covers a very wide range of ages. This is reflected in the entrants too, being suitable for young and old and all ages in-between.

The all good tar rally will start and end at the East Rand McCarthy Fiat & Alfa Romeo dealership, North Rand Rd, Boksburg at 09h00 on Sunday 13th March 2011.

Documentation opens at 07:00 and closes at 08:30. The route is only approximately 221 km in total, and there is an optional refuel and leg stretch after about 150 km. The first car should arrive back shortly after 13h00. There will then be a lunch at approximately R50 per head while results are awaited, followed by the prize giving.

The organizers would like to attract Italian cars in general, and Fiats in particular, to the event, and hence have created 2 attractive options for prospective participants. For those who want to participate in the rally as competitors, the organizers have decided to grant a 50% discount to all first time competitors, as long as they compete in an Italian car. For those who do not want to be part of the rally but wish to follow the route, the organizers have created a touring class, which will follow the route but will not be scored as competitors. The latter option is merely a drive along the same route as the competitors followed. Those who own Italian cars but do not even want to drive the route are still welcome to join the rallyists for lunch, to see the cars and hear the war stories.

To enter the rally, in either the competitive class or the touring class, please visit the SARRA website for entry forms, which can be found under the events section of the website (www.sarra.co.za) or contact the secretary of the event, David Gilson, on 083 417 8848. www.fiatclub.co.za