



Press release
10.12.2012

Review BMW Motorrad GS Trophy 2012. South American splendour.

Munich. The BMW Motorrad GS Trophy 2012 is complete. This, the third edition of the GS Trophy proved every bit as compelling, as challenging – and ultimately, as unifying – as the previous two. The biggest yet, it brought 15 teams with riders representing 19 nations together for a seven-day 2000 kilometre adventure across the Andean high country of the Chile-Argentina borderlands. Riding over terrain that was sometimes no more than a loamy single-track path through a forest, other times a hard pack high-speed piste across the vast open plateaux, the riders battled through clouds of volcanic ash, were exhausted by sun-baked afternoons, then soaked by rain and chilled by the cool of the mountains in this time of early spring in Southern Hemisphere.

The start came at Trailanqui Resort, near Temuco, Chile at 7.45am on the morning of November 25, the riders setting off early in anticipation of a long day in the saddle. In fact there were no short days, some were simply longer than others. The distances meant nothing, it was the complexities along the way that accounted for the time. Often the riders arrived at a bivouac as late as 5.30pm, some nine hours after they started, sometimes having been hampered by punctures or minor misadventures, but always buoyed by the experience. Exhausted they wanted only for food and sleep – and to go again.

The biggest GS Trophy yet, with over 113 people in the 'caravan' it was arguably a tougher challenge for the organisers than the riders. Where the BMW F 800 GSs and R 1200 GS Rallyes skipped along untroubled, the support vehicles struggled and often broke. By December 2, seven days after they set off, all – the riders and organisers – were back in Temuco, so much richer for the experience – for having come to know Chile and Argentina, for having come to know each other. And for having experienced the GS Spirit.

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Team Germany wins.

Team Germany had taken control of the GS Trophy competition on day three – and they never let it go. Consistent and committed, Team Germany placed in the top three for seven of the 16 special tests so as to win by a healthy margin. But theirs was by no means a runaway success. The teams from France, Italy and Argentina especially made sure the Germans would have to give never less than 100% on every test.

Team France, the youngest team in the GS Trophy, brought skill and flair in their riding, brought rescue to at least two teams when misfortune struck, and brought entertainment to the evenings. Very popular among all the teams they would have been much closer to the German victors but for forgetting to submit their entry for the first day photo competition (they won the second photo competition by a considerable margin).

Team Italy were a quietly competent team. They didn't win a single test, but they were always in the hunt. Very different to the Italian team from the 2010 GS Trophy – the 2010 team were (ironically) dubbed the Italian Navy Seals after a very wet canoe race – this Italian team excelled with the rafts, narrowly losing out to France for the win.

Team Argentina were probably the most popular team on the GS Trophy – although the often outrageously flamboyant Brazilians ran them close – for they featured most prominently in a survey of 'who did you best get along with?' Yet they were highly competitive, winning more tests than any other team and in winning the log crossing and technical (motorcycle electrics) tests they showed they were as practical as they were sporting.

Team Germany were, in such pressured circumstances, elated to have won. Tobi Weiser: "I could start crying, that is for sure, words can't describe the feeling, it is just wonderful.



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“What can I say? I love the GS Trophy, because we’ve met so many beautiful people, beautiful friends in this one week, it’s amazing, I love it. The morning of the last day I said before we started, ‘it’s not important to win, we got here, we had fun – it is what it is.”

Marc-André Oceau.

Team Canada’s Marc-André Oceau was injured out of the GS Trophy on day four of the competition. He had fallen during the Enduro test and sustained chest and shoulder injuries that required a period of hospitalisation.

The GS Trophy doctors had been on the accident scene – by Marc-André’s own words – within a minute and they visited him regularly during his stay in hospital. In fact Marc-André was impressed by the quality of the medical care in both Argentina and Chile. Marc-André made a speedy recovery and will return home to his family in Montreal very soon.

The BMW F 800 GS - ‘Unstoppable’.

The BMW F 800 GS once again proved more than up to the challenge. Severe abuse of the clutches in the beach racing meant a few clutch plates were changed on a couple of bikes but there were no mechanical or electrical failures.

Team Brazil’s Luciano Lancelloti even threw his F 800 GS 4 meters off a bridge into a ravine. It landed upside down. When 30 minutes later it was at last hauled back up to the track it was discovered only the mirrors and a mounting lug to the instruments were broken. Given a few minutes for the oil to return to the crankcases, the GS started first turn of the starter, no more repairs were necessary and Luciano was able to finish the event on the same machine.

BMW took four reserve bikes to the event, but none were needed.

Here are some of the riders’ thoughts on the bikes:



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Alessandro Bottani: “The F 800 GS is a good bike, one for all different conditions. It rides well on-road and off, even in difficult conditions. We found mud, stones, water and also sand but it was good in all these.”

Tom Barrer: “Unstoppable! You can ride on the road, on the piste, you can make a very good ride off-road, it’s unstoppable. I even have a motocross track near my house, and I have ridden there on my GS, it’s easy for this bike – it’s crazy!”

Adrian Tobler: “I love these bikes, I think they’re awesome. I have a 2009 version at home which is pretty similar except for a few details. The suspension is the biggest improvement on the new bike, like 10-fold improvement for sure, there’s no way I’d take my bike on a motocross track for 20 laps like we did these. It’s really impressive suspension, it’s not a motocross bike but it’s dealt with everything we’ve thrown at it for the last 2000km, it’s done a really good job. The engine is so strong as well, we had them wide open on the fast pistes, wide open again in the sand, and it can take it. Next morning first click of the starter and it’s ready to do it all over. The back tyre takes a beating, but the bike itself – it’s one tough machine.”

BMW R 80 G/S - History, coming along for the ride.

The GS Trophy had a very special companion in 2012 – a 28-year-old R 80 G/S. The bike that started the whole GS story. This one belongs to the BMW Museum in Munich and had been brought to South America by Dr Ralf Rodepeter, head of the BMW museum.

“None of our cars and none of our bikes have been built for the museum, they were built for riding and driving, so we regularly take the cars and motorcycles out from the museum and drive them. It’s very important to show that they are driving, not just something to put in a museum. And to show that we have always been a manufacture of great bikes.



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“Next year is the 90th year of BMW motorcycles – the first product that came from BMW with wheels was a motorcycle. We came from manufacturing aircraft engines, we started there and then decided to build motorcycles.

“Riding this 28-year-old G/S around the GS Trophy course has been a lot of fun. She's doing really really well, it's funny to ride that bike here but I'm surprised that it's so easy to ride. I'm riding a bit slower than the new models – there is 30 years of technology in between – but in the technical off-road it's almost as good. The G/S was ahead of its time and our bikes today are still ahead of the competition.”

The GS Spirit.

Heiner Faust, Vice president sales and marketing BMW Motorrad, is the father of the GS Trophy. The concept was originally his, coming from his time at BMW in Japan when he was looking at a means to demonstrate and share the GS philosophy. He passed that concept onto others and most notably today the driving force of the GS Trophy is shared between Michael Trammer and Tom Wolf. But on this occasion, the third GS Trophy, Heiner, now head of BMW Motorrad's sales and marketing, came back to witness first hand the fun and friendships his original idea has generated. This was what Heiner had to say from the finish line of the GS Trophy 2012.

“Firstly, the GS Trophy is a big part of the company, of the whole BMW Motorrad culture. It's our biggest event for our GS customers, for our GS community, for our GS friends. It's just amazing seeing those people riding here, through the rain forests and the wonderful landscapes. To see these people coming together from all over the world and just having fun together, this is incredible and this means a lot to us.



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“I wouldn’t say it’s just something we do to make some customers happy, once again it’s part of our culture, part of our dreams – this is GS! It is all about GS and sure it costs money, it’s not cheap, but with this event we can position ourselves in the motorcycle industry, there is no other company like us doing anything like this. I don’t think there is any other company who can do anything like this except BMW. And at BMW head office we know this is a great event, it makes branding, it makes friends, it makes community. The whole thing about this is that everyone talks about it and I’d like to think everybody who rides a motorcycle in the world would like to join us. This would be a perfect target, so everyone feels and gets the spirit of GS and GS Trophy.

“Personally it was most important for me to join the GS Trophy this year – I was looking forward the whole year to coming to these days and join in. As you see now, here at the finish, after seven days these people are arriving at their final destination, they are exhausted, but they are excited, they are jubilant, singing altogether, it is fantastic and once again I cannot put this into words, people have to experience it.

“For me, it is very important that we continue with the GS Trophy, this is something I’d like to continue forever, although we can never know the future. But my plan is for it to continue into 2014 for certain and already I have a nice destination in mind, very exciting. The countdown to GS Trophy 2014 has begun!”



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BMW Motorrad GS Trophy 2012 South America Final standings:

1. Germany	256pts
2. France	238
3. Italy	222
4. Argentina	215
5. Alps	202
6. USA	201
7. Canada	197
8. CEEU	196
9. UK	188
10. Latin America	181
11. South Africa	178
12. Russia	149
13. Brazil	120
14. Spain	109
15. Japan	89

The GS Trophy in their words

Team Brazil: Aloisio Frazao Jr: "From the very beginning, I knew the GS Trophy would be so nice to participate in, to be here. But I didn't have a clue that it would be this nice. It is much much bigger than the internet, the videos, the photos and the interviews could ever be able to express, or make people know. The feeling among us is so nice, we became so close – how nice the people were from Japan, from Costa Rica, from Germany. We got close to all the people so much in a week, it's like a small life that we live here. I'm sure everyone here shares the same feeling."

Team South Africa: Colin Gallop: "It's been pretty amazing, we were told to expect something amazing and that's exactly what we got, lots of twisty stuff, beautiful scenery, fantastic roads, great company, volcanoes, snow, ice rivers, good food... all thrown in for good measure.

"Not to mention the riding was just superb. Although it might only be around 300km a day, you are shifting up and down all the time, into a left hander, into a right hander, hard braking... very easily 300km turns into a six or seven hour day because you can't average more than 50km/h."

Team CEEU: Michael Zoll: "This was our first GS Trophy and now we can say something to the next people from Poland, for 2014. Because it was first time we didn't know what to expect but it was great, the most important thing for us was to meet these guys from all over the world, it was the best. For me, this was the best."



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Team Germany: Ali Métayer: “For me, the big landscapes in Argentina were the highlight and the camp on the side of the volcano – it was great. But to be in this group with these other nations is for me the most exciting experience of all.”

Team Argentina, Flavio del Zotto: “I have just taken a ‘shower’ in the lake – beautiful. I like these little things about the GS Trophy. This Trophy is amazing, we have so much fun. We are not really competing, we are forming a group with everyone and in all stages finishing well, this is our idea. All days are perfect and beautiful.”

Team Italy, Alessandro Bottani: “The week was a lot of fun, we saw a lot of nice places, we rode some stages that were nice, some less nice – in other words difficult! But we enjoyed all of the week. Possibly the first day was the best, we really enjoyed the riding, it was very technical, but also the forest trail was nice on day five. The experience matched my expectations.”

Team Japan: Haruki Hisashi: “We have really enjoyed the week, surpassed all our goals, we have made many many friends from many countries. Our English is not so good, but we all share the one passion so that makes it easier to make friends.

“The competition and the riding was harder than we thought. This is not racing, but the long distances, riding in many different situations and the high speed, make it very challenging.”

Team Spain: Jorge Vera Simavilla: “We enjoyed very much the landscape, the riding, living this incredible adventure with all these people from all these countries. It’s very hard, we are very tired and we have not done so well in the qualification, but we don’t worry, we enjoyed doing the tests. We did our best. And my teammates – we didn’t know each other before, but now we are friends forever.”

Team Russia, Andrey Sokolov: “Everybody is tired, from the hard week, for some of our team-mates it’s the first time in tents in such cold situations – and yet they love it.

“And it’s really nice to meet different people from all over the world, we enjoy riding, playing the challenges but for us it’s amazing when everybody works in a big team like it was when the Brazilian journalist fell from the bridge and everybody stopped to get him out of his problem. It was an amazing feeling with everyone from every country being so friendly, trying to help.

Team France: Tom Barrer: “Friendship is, I think, the spirit of this competition, it’s a competition but before that it is a friendship between the teams. And as we ride and see another team with a problem then we stop, it’s no problem and we help – it’s a very nice friendship this week.”



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Team Alps: Martin Anrig: “My highlights were the whole event, it was a great adventure, the tracks were well chosen, it was unbelievable, really really great. The camping was the right way for this event and I slept very well in the tent. But now I am very tired, now it’s finished I really must sleep!”

Team Canada: Adrian Tobler: “I really can’t find any words to describe it, it’s one of the best experiences of my life so far; I’m really thankful for BMW putting this on for the average rider who likes riding and wants to see what kind of a rider he is.

“We’ve met all these great people, we all have motorcycles in common, we’re all from different walks of life, different cultures, different languages, different ages, from 22 to 58, all different except for one thing – the BMW GS brings us together.”

Team UK: Nick George: I’ve enjoyed this far more than I expected and my expectations were very high, it’s been a fabulous week, the riding has been wonderful, the company as well.

“The white water rafting was something we didn’t expect – and white water swimming was definitely something we didn’t anticipate (we overturned)! The week was full of surprises. Riding up on the Argentinian plains was out of this world, there are so many things that I will keep coming back to over the coming months and years.”

Team Latin America: David Fonseca Chinchilla: “We will remember the landscapes, places that in my country we cannot see, big open places, snow, mountains. I particularly enjoyed the camping, with the team members and other people, because in that way you actually interact more with the other people, it’s more fun like this. Harder but more fun.”

Team USA: Ryan Frazier: “We’ve had a couple of struggles here and there, but overall it’s been a blast for all of us, that’s what’s most important. We could have done better in some of the events, but hey, we’re here. The whole experience has been great, I’ve met a lot of great people and earlier this week it was my birthday and I wouldn’t rather have spent it anywhere else – I had a great time.

“Of all the days, day five with all the rain, the wet, the mud roads – that was the best, the real adventure riding. We had a lot of struggles with a couple of teams with flat tyres, people going off the road, but that’s where all the work and camaraderie and teamwork come into play. That coming together, all of us from different countries, working together with our GS bikes, that was one my biggest highlights.”



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The BMW Group

The BMW Group is one of the most successful manufacturers of automobiles and motorcycles in the world with its BMW, MINI, Husqvarna Motorcycles and Rolls-Royce brands. As a global company, the BMW Group operates 29 production and assembly facilities in 14 countries and has a global sales network in more than 140 countries.

In 2011, the BMW Group sold about 1.67 million cars and more than 113,000 motorcycles worldwide. The profit before tax for the financial year 2011 was euro 7.38 billion on revenues amounting to euro 68.82 billion. At 31 December 2011, the BMW Group had a workforce of approximately 100,000 employees.

The success of the BMW Group has always been built on long-term thinking and responsible action. The company has therefore established ecological and social sustainability throughout the value chain, comprehensive product responsibility and a clear commitment to conserving resources as an integral part of its strategy. As a result of its efforts, the BMW Group has been ranked industry leader in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes for the last seven years.

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