

Media Information
Silk Way Rally 2018
05 July 2018

MINI prepared for Silk Way Rally 2018.

- **Two MINI John Cooper Works Rally line-up for Silk Way Rally 2018.**
- **Significantly revised route sees event split into two separate races.**
- **First edition of Silk Way Rally 2018 will be contested in Russia only.**

Munich. Two MINI crews of Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA) with Timo Gottschalk (GER) and Joan 'Nani' Roma (ESP) with Alex Haro (ESP) will line-up for the start of the 2018 Silk Way Rally in Russia. The podium event will be staged in Astrakhan on Friday 20 July before the seven-day, 3,570km race begins the following day.

Unlike the previous edition of Silk Way Rally, this year the competitors will not travel across Kazakhstan to cross the border into China. They will instead complete the race in Moscow on 27 July before contesting a second edition of the rally in China this September.

It will be a gruelling start to the rally for drivers and navigators with a marathon stage planned for day two – this means that the competitors will have no overnight support from their team or mechanics during this part of the race.

Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA) is no stranger to Silk Way Rally, having contested the previous two events with MINI and X-raid. In 2016, together with this year's co-driver Timo Gottschalk (GER), the pair enjoyed success with a second place finish overall, including two stage wins along the way. For 2017, with regular co-driver Gottschalk injured, Al Rajhi was paired with Tom Colsoul (BEL) and the driver experienced a more difficult race.

Despite a strong start, finishing fourth in stage one, the pairing faced significant challenges and a resulting penalty on day two, forcing them down to 41st place overall. Refusing to give in though, the pair battled hard and scored a top ten finish overall. However, Al Rajhi is looking forward to returning to the event in the MINI John Cooper Works Rally with his regular co-driver.

Al Rajhi: "We have fond memories of the rally and finishing second in 2016. The routes are always nice and diversified and we are curious to find out what we will have to cope with in Russia. It is a pity that China will be omitted and the rally consequently will be far shorter, but the routes in Russia are anything but easy so it will still be a challenge. We had success with our recent win at the Kazakhstan rally, so we're hoping to replicate that."

For fellow MINI competitor, Joan 'Nani' Roma, the Silk Way Rally will be a completely new challenge. The experienced rally driver has never before raced in Russia. He will be

accompanied in the MINI John Cooper Works Rally by regular co-driver and fellow Spaniard Alex Haro. The race signals the pair's return to racing following Nani Roma's recovery from head and neck injuries sustained during the third stage of the 2018 Dakar Rally.

Roma: "After the long break, we are finally back in the cockpit of the MINI. We have practiced a lot and are prepared for the long stages that we will have to face, but Alex and I will certainly need some time to find our rhythm. I am looking forward to the event, even more so because I have not contested a rally in Russia. It's a pity that China is not part of the schedule as the dunes would have helped us to prepare for the 2019 Dakar in Peru."

For further information on Silk Way Rally 2018 and the full rally schedule please click [here](#).

Silk Way Rally 2018: MINI Family line up

Driver	Co-driver	Type	Team
Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA)	Timo Gottschalk (GER)	MINI John Cooper Works Rally	X-raid Team
Joan ' Nani' Roma (ESP)	Alex Haro (ESP)	MINI John Cooper Works Rally	X-raid Team

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