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## **Lettenbichler triumphs on BMW G 450 X at Red Bull Romaniacs**

Here's what it takes to stage one of the world's toughest and most prestigious Extreme Enduro events: an opening prologue held downtown; four days of racing through the forests of Transylvania; gnarly ascents and gruesome descents; fast rally-type sections; and a wild climb up a five-floor inner city building. In brief, these are the ingredients of the famous Red Bull Romaniacs hard enduro.



The 2009 edition of the renowned race ended yesterday evening at Sibiu, in Romania. The victory went to BMW factory rider Andreas Lettenbichler, who dominated on his BMW G 450 X. 'Letti' entered the event together with his teammate Gerhard Forster – a two-times runner-up of this unique and challenging Transylvanian spectacle. Having had to withdraw just before the start of last year's Romaniacs due to a foot injury sustained while training, Letti was determined to impress this year, and found the format of the 800-kilometre extreme enduro to his liking. In fact, the friendly Bavarian left the other competitors literally scratching their heads – among them some of the best riders in the world.

## **BMW Group España Comunicación y RR.PP.**

"I've never raced such a rally before, so I knew little about navigation and it took me a while to get going at first because I had to 'find my feet'. But I soon established a rhythm and got on the gas. To be able to run with Cyril Despres – most notably a two-times Dakar winner – is more than I expected to achieve. This win means a lot to me. My BMW G 450 X worked perfectly the whole time, in the fast sections as well as through the tricky stuff. I am over the moon," said a beaming Lettenbichler after the chequered flag had fallen.

The likeable German started the fourth and final race day just 14 seconds behind Despres, so everything was set for a showdown between these two riders. Despres was leading the way in the beginning, but an almost insurmountable climb to the top of a hill changed the order. While Lettenbichler used all the skills acquired in his previous career as a trials rider, his rival didn't even attempt to conquer the obstacle. Despres received a hefty time penalty, and Lettenbichler brought home the win. He eventually crossed the finish line almost one hour before New Zealand's Chris Birch, who finished second.



Gerhard Forster rode a consistent race after having finished the prologue in third place. Unfortunately he overlooked a bump on the final day, crashed and injured his shoulder. "I was happy with third and looked forward to the opening stage," he said. "I managed to improve with each day and was going strong until the crash. Now I'm heading back to Germany to get the injury examined."

Lettenbichler's victory acknowledges the work of BMW Motorrad Motorsport. The team is already looking towards the legendary Roof of Africa, which will take place at the end of November in Lesotho in South Africa. The Romaniacs winner and his (by then hopefully healed up) team mate Forster will be eager to record BMW's next win at an extreme enduro.

**Overall results for the 2009 Red Bull Romaniacs**

- 1. Andreas Lettenbichler (GER) BMW Motorrad Motorsport, 20:29:11 hrs**
2. Chris Birch (NZL) KTM, 21:21:01
3. Cyril Despres (AND) KTM, 22:11:25
4. Lionel Seydoux (CH) KTM, 22:55:18
5. Paul Bolton (GBR) KTM, 23:38:05
6. Darryl Curtis (RSA) KTM, 23:41:36
7. Melcior Faja Beltran (ESP) GasGas, 23:55:51
8. Erich Brandauer (AUT), 25:04:24
9. Shane Cuthbertson (CAN) Husaberg, 25:20:55
10. Dieter Happ (AUT) Husaberg, 25:42:55