CHALLENGE BIBENDUM 2006



Report 1 8th June 2006

Today was the first day of official activity at Michelin's 2006 Challenge Bibendum. This was the last opportunity to finish of our display stand in the Learning Centre, which itself was housed in a massive portable event centre set up in the middle of the CERAM automotive test track.

This portable building is two stories high, includes the exhibition space, all of the meeting venues, the massive dining room with 500 seats, the participant's lounge, and the vacuum operated toilet blocks. On Monday 12 June, the entire building comes down.



The Bibendum building

The Greenfleet stand is beautifully positioned at the entrance to the Learning Centre.



The Greenfleet stand is right next to the entrance

Outside on the expansive tarmac the 75 advanced technology vehicles, grouped by type, are undertaking their technical test program, including acceleration tests, braking tests, slalom, and drive-by noise tests. Aurora 101 was scheduled to compete in all of these events.

On the lowest lane of the high-speed, banked loop, the cars were doing regularity laps limited to just 100 km/h. Several entrants have come from China following the successful Bibendum event in Shanghai in 2004.





Testing on the high-speed track

Chinese participant by the side of the high-speed track

Lunch was served in large lunch boxes. At lunch, we were able to catch up with the FIA contingent, including Bruno Moretti from Italy, George Brasseur from Austria, as well as 10 other officials. (The official rally scheduled for 11 June down to the Eiffel Tower, is an FIA sanctioned event.)





FIA's alternative energy Commisioner, Bruno Moretti

FIA officials

Although the Learning Centre was still being finalised, it was obvious that there were going to be some interesting displays, including some small electric vehicles such as the AKASOL Oscar.



The chassis of the AKASOL Oscar electric car

By late afternoon, Kon, Theresa and Peter switched to tourist mode and took the train to central Paris, where they mastered the Metro and visited Notre Dame, the Arc de Triomphe, and a sunset trip to the top of the Eiffel Tower.





Barges "Canberra" and "Sydney" on the Seine

Paris by night, from the top of a large metal tower

David had arrange a meeting with Laurent Douek, a French journalist who had covered three World Solar Challenge events and was willing to contribute photographs to The Book. Laurent even had the pleasure of spending a night in the Berrimah jail in Darwin in 1990, for not having the right entry visa for Australia.



Laurent Douek

Tomorrow the Learning Centre will be spotless, as all displays will be complete. We expect that John Wright from CSIRO will visit Bibendum as organised by Henry O'Clery of Greenfleet.