

Rallye solaire 2006



Girona, Spain to Toulouse, France

1st - 4th June 2006

Day 1

On May 23 the carefully packed shipment of solar car, trailer, equipment, spare parts and tools left for Paris on Cathay Pacific. A change of planes in Hong Kong had the Aurora 101 solar car land in Paris on 25 May, a public holiday. Clearance on the 27 May proved difficult, because Customs were understaffed as a result of the holiday. Odile, of Schenker, managed to gain Customs clearance at the end of the day. Finally, after months of preparation, the Aussie solar car was in Paris.



Aurora air freight shipment from Melbourne



Odiele from Schenker, Paris

The following day, Kon Kotsonis, our driver for the two French events, arrived from Greece and was booked in for a medical examination necessary to secure an FIA Type D International Licence, to allow him to lead the rally to Paris scheduled in Challenge Bibendum. This rally would have the advanced technology cars on show at the Eiffel Tower on 11 June.



Driver Kon attempting a French medical



A tower in Paris

On 29 May, the last two Australian team members, Peter Pudney and Theresa Dolman, arrived at Charles de Gaulle airport early in the morning, to immediately commence the journey south from Paris to Argeles sur Mer, where the Mediterranean joins with the Pyrenees. This trip of about 850km was completed on high priced but fast toll roads in cold and wet conditions. The Land Rover Discovery support car was excellent for towing, and rock steady at 135 km/h. Fuel stops were unavoidable, with prices starting at about 1.20 Euro per litre (almost AUD 2.00 per litre).



Starting the road trip from Paris to Argeles sur Mer, 850km



One of the many toll roads



Truck stop



Aurora 101 getting wet behind the Land Rover Discovery

We arrived at Argeles sur Mer at about sunset, thankful for hotel rooms with balconies overlooking the beach, and fresh seafood. Tomorrow we will explore first hand the long, steep mountain sections planned for Rallye Solaire.



View from our beachfront hotel at Argeles sur Mer