

Media Information
Silk Way Rally 2017
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MINI prepared for Silk Way Rally 2017.

- **Three MINI Family crews line up for Silk Way Rally 2017**
- **Silk Way Rally 2017 to cover two continents and 9559 km over 14 days.**
- **Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA) and Bryce Menzies (USA) to race the new MINI John Cooper Works Rally.**

Munich. Silk Way Rally 2017 is go. Three MINI Family crews line up for the start of the 9559 km rally that crosses two continents and three countries. Starting date for Silk Way Rally 2017 – the second longest marathon cross-country rally of the year after the famous Dakar Rally – is 7th July 2017, with the opening ceremony once again in Russia's historical Red Square in Moscow, The podium event takes place 22nd July, after 14 days of spectacular racing and just one rest day (16th July), in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province in central China.

Of the 9559 kilometre route, 42.6% km is designated as Special Stage, where speed, driving skill, navigation and a cool head are required by the two-man crews. Let us not forget stamina, too – the previous Silk Way Rally (sixth edition) placed competitors in some of the most scenic landscapes, but which are also some of the remotest and difficult regions to traverse.

Taking the MINI competitive spirit to Silk Way Rally 2017 are three MINI Family crews; two from X-raid Team and a privateer crew under the banner of G-Energy Team. All three crews are experienced and respected combatants in the world of cross-country rally, rally raid and Baja.

Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA) is no stranger to Silk Way Rally. Together with regular co-driver Timo Gottschalk (GER), the pair made a significant mark when they raced with MINI at last year's event. The duo completed this exhausting race in second position, taking two stage wins along the way.

Al Rajhi returns to Moscow for this year's start of Silk Way Rally with the new MINI John Cooper Works Rally but without Gottschalk by his side. The German co-driver is recovering from injury, of which the MINI Family, competitors and fans of this incredible sport wish him a speedy recovery.

Joining Al Rajhi in the X-raid Team MINI John Cooper Works Rally machine (#101) for Silk Way Rally 2017 is yet another experienced MINI Family member, Tom

Colsoul (BEL). Colsoul is presently experiencing good fortune within the 2017 FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup with regular driver Jakub Przygonski (POL) under the banner of Orlen Team, where they presently sit second in the overall standings.

Al Rajhi: “This is our second participation in Silk Way Rally. The first one in 2016 was a distinctive and unique experience, where we managed to secure the second position overall. This rally consists of diverse types of stages; each one is more interesting than the other, with terrain that varies between dunes and gravel. The legs are tough and very long, one of the stages measured 908km, all of that gives the Silk Way Rally its special trait.

“I expect the competition will be fiercer than last year, but we are well prepared – crew, service team, the car – and ready to go to the podium. Our car is ready to cruise in the Silk Way desert; the MINI John Cooper Works Rally is a strong car that you can depend on in tough situations, I hope everything will go well till the end.”

A second MINI John Cooper Works Rally (#105) of X-raid Team will undertake Silk Way Rally. This car will feature Silk Way Rally newcomers Bryce Menzies with co-driver fellow American Peter Mortensen as part of the development programme towards the 2018 Dakar Rally. Both are itching to be reacquainted with the MINI Family and spectacle and competitive / technical nature of long-distance rally outside of the U.S.A..

Following an unfortunate withdrawal from the start of this year’s Dakar Rally due to injury, Menzies has been training hard for his return to long-distance rally competition. Together, Bryce and navigation specialist Mortensen are a force to be reckoned with. This was clearly demonstrated in 2016 when Menzies placed highly in his first experience with MINI, including select rounds of the FIA Cross Country Rally World Cup.

Menzies: “I’m really looking forward to participating in this year’s Silk Way Rally. There is no better race to get prepared for Dakar so I’m taking this race very seriously. Pete and I have been practicing our navigation as that’ll be really important in the latter stages of the rally when we get into the dunes and we are looking forward to seeing how we do. Aside from the race, I’m excited about this adventure where, one day, I can tell my kids how I raced a MINI from Russia to China!”

Long-term MINI Family members Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS) and Konstantin Zhiltsov (RUS) are hoping their vast experience along with terrain knowledge of the opening stages of Silk Way Rally will assist their MINI podium challenge.

Silk Way Rally 2016 saw the ever competitive Russian duo take their G-Energy Team MINI ALL4 Racing to third overall through consistent top three stage placings. This year's start for the Russian duo mirrors last year's with the exception of their G-Energy Team's iconic four-wheel drive category MINI ALL4 Racing wearing the race number #102.

For further information on Silk Way Rally 2017 please click [here](#).

Silk Way Rally 2017: MINI Family line up

Driver	Co-driver	Type	#	Team
Yazeed Al Rajhi (KSA)	Tom Colsoul (BEL)	MINI John Cooper Works Rally	101	X-raid Team
Bryce Menzies (USA)	Peter Mortensen (USA)	MINI John Cooper Works Rally	105	X-raid Team
Vladimir Vasilyev (RUS)	Konstantin Zhiltsov (RUS)	MINI ALL4 Racing	102	G-Energy Team

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