



GAUCHO TRAIL MOTOR CHALLENGE

2 - 28 November 2026

Uruguay - Brazil - Paraguay - Bolivia - Argentina



HERO-ERA.COM



Authentic Motoring Adventures Forged By Pioneers



This epic journey takes you through...

Rolling Valleys

Beautiful Uruguay



Photo: Blue Passion

Rainforests

Brazil and Paraguay's rainforests



Photo: Blue Passion

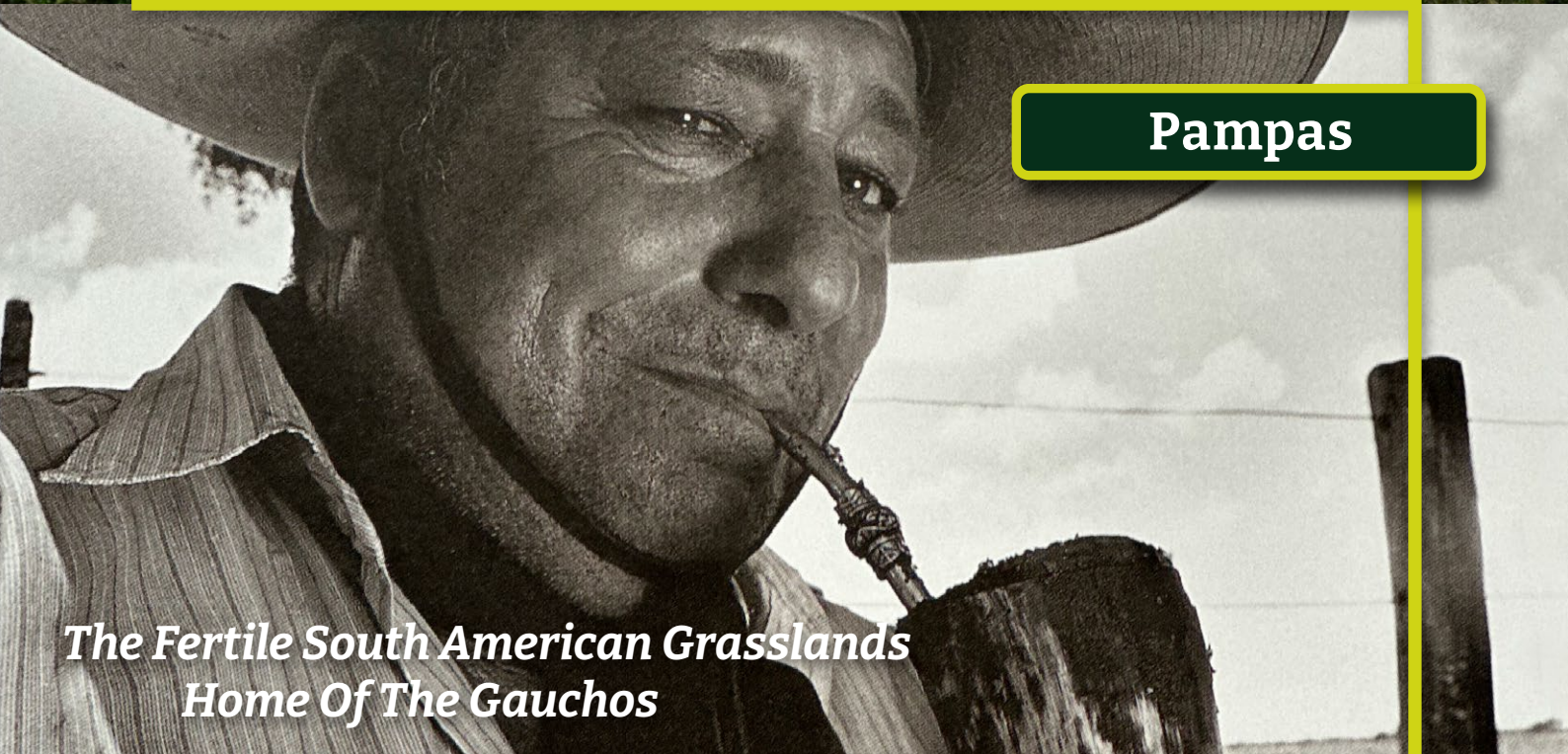
Iguazú Falls

The Largest Waterfall System In The World



Pampas

*The Fertile South American Grasslands
Home Of The Gauchos*



*The Second-Highest Plateau
On Earth After Tibet
4000-Meter Heights*

La Puna



Genuine 'Voyage of Discovery' revealed in first ever Gaucho Trail Motor Challenge 2026

*Top organisers HERO-ERA to continue their South American legacy with sixth authentic event

*Rally explorer and South American expert route finder dubbed the 'Amerigo Vespucci' of the rally world, joins to bring whole 'New World' to historic rallying

*First coast to coast historic rally in over a decade open for entries

The new Gaucho Trail Motor Challenge 2026 was revealed in a live launch at HERO-ERA HQ at Bicester Heritage on 31st October to an enthralled audience of attendees, with hundreds watching online.

A genuine 'Voyage of Discovery', the new Gaucho Trail Motor Challenge endurance event was announced for November 2026, the first to run from the Atlantic to the Pacific for over a decade in historic rallying, across six countries at a distance of 11,000 kms in 28 days. As it takes in the wonders of this fascinating continent, it will be a journey to rival the great Peking to Paris Motor Challenge.



Starting and finishing in Montevideo, the rally will uncover many new authentic trails in six countries all linked by the same Gaucho horseman and herding culture; Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile.

On a magical continent of extremes, the Gaucho Trail Motor Challenge will drink it all in, from the highs of the Andes at 5000 metres to the lows of the Chaco at 100 metres. Competitors will dip their toes in the Atlantic and the Pacific. In between they will encounter, sinuous mountain passes, rain forests, deserts, pampas and salt flats. The Salar de Uyuni Salt Flats in Bolivia for example, are 100 times bigger than Bonneville, and crews will pass the world's highest vineyard in Chile at 3100 metres!

HERO-ERA are set to reignite their 25 year South American legacy of adventure when they run their sixth endurance rally on the continent with the Gaucho Trail Motor Challenge in 2026. Their record of running original events in South America started 23 years ago with the HERO Inca Trail and five years later La Aventura Panamericana. The Vintage Cape Horn (2013) was followed by the Rally of the Incas (2016) and Lima Cape Horn (2022).

HERO-ERA Chairman Tomas de Vargas Machuca commented: *"At HERO-ERA we are proud of our 23 year history of running endurance rallies in South America. By the time we have amassed two more years of work on the continent, it will become a 25 year legacy. They have always been authentic events, starting with John Brown running the HERO Inca Trail in 2001, with our last, the Lima Cape Horn in 2022. This will be our sixth South American voyage of discovery. The Gaucho Trail Motor Challenge will be the first to go from coast to coast visiting six different countries in over a decade, it will be a true and exhilarating experience."*

“It’s great to welcome Kim Bannister back to the fold. As one of the originators with the legend Philip Young, it means that we will maintain our record of running genuine endurance rallies in the ERA spirit of Philip, which we promised we would always do”.

The man who organised three of those rallies with ERA’s legend Philip Young, and another independently in 2019 before working with HERO-ERA on the Lima Cape Horn in 2022, was Kim Bannister. Dubbed the ‘Amerigo Vespucci’ of the rally world for his voyages of discovery and expertise in South America over two decades, Kim was announced as Route Finder and the lynch pin of the Gaucho Trail. He is charged with devising an authentic route and discovering new remote trails where he can. Kim will work in concert with HERO-ERA Competition Director Guy Woodcock who is also taking the renowned rally company to Paraguay for the very first time.

Guy Woodcock explained the choice of Route Finder; “Kim’s South American experience makes him an expert in my book. Not only does he have great route finding and organisational skills, but he is also an experienced navigator of old who recently competed in the HERO Challenge Championships. I am really enjoying working with him on this exciting new event and sharing his great knowledge of the South American continent.”



A Motor Challenge event requires endurance and resilience from both crew and car as they are tough but rewarding experiences, the Gaucho Trail will be no different. Preparation of both machine and crew will be paramount, despite the chances to take in some of the wonders of the continent, some trails will be rough and some days very long.

However, this is just the challenge that most historic motoring adventurers relish and they won’t be disappointed. The 11,000 km route will be demanding enough, but add the competition element of Sporting Time Controls, race circuits and regularities in the mix, then you have a heady cocktail to rival any Brazilian Caipirinha!

This is a land that loves the motor car. Old cars are revered and many people still fix and use them for their daily transport, so historic rally cars will be welcome. But this is also a land that loves and understands motorsport. From Grands Prix in Buenos Aires and the continuing F1 in Sao Paulo, Argentina also ran the winter F2 Temporadas Series for decades. South America has hosted Dakar, it has provided World Rally Championship territory almost since the FIA world series started, from Argentina to Brazil. Kalle Rovanpera recently won the first WRC Chile Rally, and the Gaucho Trail Motor Challenge will run over some of the same remote WRC tracks a part of the competition route.

Then this is the continent that brought us Juan Manuel Fangio, five time F1 World Champion. Fittipaldi, Reutemann, Piquet and Senna followed later in his wheel tracks, inspired by the great Argentine. Fangio cut his teeth road racing and rallying in old Chevrolets to the point that his ‘sawn off specials’ were named in his honour, ‘Fangios’. HERO-ERA expect to see 30s and 40s Vintage Fords and Chevrolets on the 2026 Gaucho Trail Motor Challenge entry list.

This is a rally is ideal for Vintage cars, who in the tradition of Motor Challenges, will be eligible for not just class wins, but also outright victory. But most importantly, on the continent of perennial repairs for old machines, the local blacksmith will be ready to provide a fix should any falter!

For both competitive crews seeking wins and endurance teams aiming for the satisfaction of finishing, there will be the pure geographical, cultural and social joy of the Gaucho Trail Motor Challenge spanning out over the vibrant, colourful and fascinating landscape that is South America.

The start finish venue of Montevideo is not just historic, but sits on the widest river in the world, the Rio de La Plata at 220kms across. The pampas, the world-famous fertile plains continue through Argentina to Uruguay and Brazil, further cementing the Gaucho culture of the horsemen and their herding role which expanded in the 18th and 19th centuries. The lush grass that feeds the cattle will doubtless offer up the biggest juiciest stakes ever, but then it's cattle fed most of Europe during WW2.

There is the Hill of Seven Colours in Salta Argentina, the incredible Mendoza-Chile wine region and the Paso Internacional Los Libertadores, the breath taking Andean mountain pass between Chile and Argentina at 3,200 metres which will test anyone who is not prepared for altitude sickness.

One not be missed, which won't be difficult as it's the largest waterfall system in the world, are the magnificent Iguazu Falls. With the highest drop point of 82 meters and a length of 2.7 kms, this is a spectacular global landmark with 275 different cascades, which teams will visit from the Brazilian side. The culture and colour of the six different territories will provide a visceral experience beyond belief. In addition, for wildlife lovers there is the incentive of trying to spot a Puma, Condor, Armadillo, Vicuna, Huemul or Alpaca. With such a blend of endurance, competition and culture, it will combine all to create such an alluring voyage of discovery that the forty entries will fill fast – in fact entries opened as the launch started.



Kim Bannister commented on his experience in South America and the draw of that continent.

“I have covered an awful lot of the continent across many events in South America, from reces to events, but it still draws me in. It's just the continent itself, it's so varied and so different and alluring. There are so many amazing things to see and experience, mountain regions like the mighty Andes, chaco, pampas then rain forest, it is breath taking! The culture is fascinating too, but it is a wonderful place to take your old car to. People there are very much car people, they love their cars, particularly old cars, and they love motorsport. So you're always welcome, especially if you drive an old car, but for them the memories of Fangio, Gonzalez and other motor sport heroes live long in their memories.”

ends

11,000 KM



28 Days



Up To 4,200m



Photo: Will Broadhead

Photo: Will Broadhead

Photo: Will Broadhead

Provisional Itinerary

Date	Country	From	To	Km
30 Oct.	Uruguay	Home	Montevideo	0
31 Oct.		Montevideo	Montevideo	0
01 Nov.		Montevideo	Montevideo	0
02 Nov.	Uruguay	Montevideo	Rivera	561
03 Nov.	Brazil	Rivera	Santa Cruz Do Sul	433
04 Nov.		Santa Cruz Do Sul	Chapeco	459
05 Nov.		Chapeco	Iguazu Falls	468
06 Nov.		Iguazu Falls	Iguazu Falls	0
07 Nov.	Paraguay	Iguazu Falls	Asuncion	451
08 Nov.		Asuncion	Mar. Estigarribia	523
09 Nov.	Bolivia	Mar. Estigarribia	Tarija	573
10 Nov.		Tarija	Uyuni	401
11 Nov.		Uyuni	Uyuni	0
12 Nov.	Argentina	Uyuni	Humahuaca	446
13 Nov.		Humahuaca	Cafayate	529
14 Nov.		Cafayate	La Rioja	490
15 Nov.		La Rioja	San Juan	443
16 Nov.	Chile	San Juan	Viña Del Mar	562
17 Nov.		Viña Del Mar	Viña Del Mar	0
18 Nov.		Viña Del Mar	Chilán	532
19 Nov.		Chillán	Pucón	420
20 Nov.	Argentina	Pucón	Villa La Angostura	407
21 Nov.		Villa La Angostura	Zapala	404
22 Nov.		Zapala	Malargüe	550
23 Nov.		Malargüe	Mendoza	357
24 Nov.		Mendoza	Mendoza	0
25 Nov.		Mendoza	Villa Carlos Paz	574
26 Nov.		Villa Carlos Paz	Santa Fé	470
27 Nov.	Uruguay	Santa Fé	Salto	330
28 Nov.		Salto	Montevideo	549
			Total Km	10,932

The HERO-ERA Legacy of South American Events



Inca Trail 2001

06 Oct – 29 Nov – Rio to Rio in 55 days - 18,000 km

On 6 October 2001 around 100 classic cars and modern 4x4s set out from Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana Fort. It started one of the world's great motoring adventures: the Inca Trail.

Their crews also took part in a competitive Classic Reliability Trial, one of the toughest endurance tests possible. Those who did exceptionally well won a coveted gold medal.

The Inca Trail travelled some of the best, most thrilling rallying terrain in the world: with test sections along spectacular little mountain passes with dizzying drops; rolling pampas; and superb gravel surfaces towards and past great volcanoes. Ran in the wheel tracks of the Argentinian Mil Millas into Bariloche. The annual Caminos del Inca shared its territory with some of the HERO route through Peru, and Inca Trail roads also retraced part of the 1970 London - Mexico World Cup Rally. HERO's John Brown drew on his knowledge from those days to help in the creation of the Inca Trail.

Winners:

1st – John Bateson & Colin Francis – Ford Escort RS2000

2nd – Bart Rietbergen & Jolijn Rietbergen – Volvo PV544 Sport

3rd – Paul Kane & Mary Kane – Ford Mustang Shelby GT350



La Aventura Panamericana 2006

7 Nov – 7 Dec – Ensenada to Panama City in 31 days – 8,000 Km

The 2006 "La Aventura Panamericana" The rally started in Ensenada, Mexico and continued through Mexico, Baja California, and into Central America, covering over 8,000 km (5,000 mi) across multiple countries. 31 days.

An ERA and 4x4 Explore rally, it was a challenging off-road adventure through Mexico, specifically designed for classic cars and capable off-road vehicles. The rally covered both scenic and rugged terrain, passing Baja California, the Copper Canyon, and along the Mexican coast. A mix of gravel, paved roads, and mountain paths, often requiring skilful navigation. It provided challenging conditions that tested both drivers and vehicles.



This event was an endurance rally that encouraged mechanical self-sufficiency. The journey mixed high-altitude mountain roads with desert landscapes.

The HERO-ERA Legacy of South American Events



Vintage Cape Horn 2013

12 Nov – 04 Dec – Buenos Aires to Rio Grande – 5,000 Km

Buenos Aires and Chile, 20 days November-December 2013 Vintage Cape Horn Rally that ran through Argentina and Chile, and then back into Argentina, finishing in Rio Grande.

Teams encountered thunderstorms, rain, sleet, sunshine and snow. There was drama right from day one, with ex F1 McLaren man Alistair Caldwell just one of the casualties who worked with rally's technicians late into the night to rectify a Head gasket issue on his 1968 Mercedes 280SL.

Following in the footsteps of Che Guevara, the rally took in stunning views of the Andes before beginning the climb up to Cordoba, with condors watching from high above.

Winners:

1st – Pam Lyford & Chuck Lyford – Chevrolet Fangio Coupe

2nd – Clinton Smith & Trevor Finn – Chevrolet Coupe

3rd – Olaf Pothoven & Monica Pothoven-Fels – Bentley Derby



Rally of the Incas 2016

13 Nov – 09 Dec – Buenos Aires to Lima – 8,000 Km

The Rally of the Incas 2016, 13 November to 9 December in Argentina, Chile and Peru, 8,000 kms, 27 days. ERA, 45 crews competed on Endurance Rally Association event exploring the fantastic terrain and stunning scenery.

Winners:

1st – Chuck Lyford & Pan Lyford – Chevrolet Fangio Coupe

2nd – Paul Carter & Vincent Fairclough – Bentley Derby

3rd – Graham Goodwin & Marina Goodwin – Bentley Super Sports



The HERO-ERA Legacy of South American Events



Lima to Cape Horn 2022

23 Oct – 20 Nov – Lima to Ushuaia – 11,500 km

11,500 km 30 days. Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile.

For those who have made it to Ushuaia, they experienced their fair share of trials and tribulations. Part and parcel of an endurance event such as this, but the mechanical assistance crews worked harder than usual to keep machines going, especially after tough, steep climbs into the Andes early in the rally.

There were unforeseen events thrown down by the rally Gods, including protests in Peru that saw the rally stuck in Ayacucho.

The incredible route travelled through Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile, and during the traversing of the length of South America, Teams witnessed the colossal Andes Mountains, breath-taking valleys, drove on the world's largest salt flats and explored the vast Patagonian wilderness.

Winners:

1st– Herman Wielfaert & Katrien Tremerie – Bentley Speed 8

2nd – Mark Oates & Catherine Fielding – Chevrolet Fangio Coupe

3rd – Tim Eades & Jim McLaren – Ford Cabriolet 68



Gaucha Trail Motor Challenge 2026

01 Nov – 28 Nov – Montevideo to Montevideo – 11,000 km

Gaucha Trail Motor Challenge November 2026.

Uruguay, Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile. 28 days 11,000 kms

The latest genuine 'Voyage of Discovery' in the HERO-ERA South American legacy.

Taking In the wonders of South America from the Atlantic to the Pacific across six countries. This will be a genuine, but tough Motor Challenge event to rival the Peking to Paris.

Rally explorer and route finder Kim Bannister Is committing his 20 + years of South American experience Into the route. A mix of regularities, tests and Time Control Sections for competition, whilst mountains, salt flats, chaco, rain forest, waterfalls and pampas will be a major experience for all.



Facts and Stats Gaucho Trail Motor Challenge 2026



The name - Gaucho Trail, the culture expanded in the 18th and 19th centuries to cover much of Argentina, all Uruguay, and state of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil. The gauchos, a group of horsemen who herded livestock in the grasslands of these regions.

Their values - solidarity, loyalty, hospitality, and courage

Their lifestyle - a simple life in the campo, working with livestock

Their clothing - loose trousers (BOMBACHAS), a poncho, and a wide-brimmed hat

Their food - Asado, a national dish of Argentina

Length: 28 days

Distance: 11,000 km

Countries visited: 6

Countries: Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Bolivia, Chile

Rest days: 4

Competition: mix of Regularities. Tests, Time Control Sections

Racetracks: 7

From: the Atlantic to the Pacific

From: Caipirinha to Pisco

- **Montevideo** - start and finish venue, on the Rio de La Plata, the widest river in the world, 220km
- **Montevideo** - the birthplace of Carlos Gardel, the most famous Tango singer in history
- **Beverage** - Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil and Paraguay share the same national beverage, called the Mate. Each country has a very different and proud way of serving and drinking
- **The pampas** - world famous fertile plains of South America (its cattle fed the whole of Europe during the world wars) extends from central Argentina through Uruguay into southern Brazil
- **Iguazú Falls** - the largest waterfall system in the world, stretching over 2.7km
- **Iguazú Falls** - 275 different cascades - 82m is the highest drop at the Devil's Throat
- **Paraguay** - renowned for its Harp players
- **Paraguay** - one of the few countries in the world where most of the population is bilingual (Spanish and Guaraní - an indigenous language)
- **Western Paraguay** - El Gran Chaco, home to large Menonite communities of German descent
- **Bolivia** - Uyuni Salt Flats, world's largest covering 10,000 square kms, altitude of 3,656m
- **Bolivia** - Ayala, will reach event's highest elevation at approximately 4,200 m
- **Argentina, Salta** - rally will pass Colomé, the highest vineyard in world 3,100m (10,200ft)
- **La Puna Argentina** - The Second-Highest Plateau On Earth After Tibet
- **Salta** - second largest city in Argentina. Quebrada de Humahuaca, Unesco World Heritage site
- **Salta** - in foothills of Eastern Andes. Purmamarca, the Hill of Seven Colours, one of most iconic natural landmarks in Argentina. colour range; pink, red, green, yellow, white and purple
- **Molinos** - Calchaquí Valley of Salta, is famous for its traditional Ponchos
- **Mendoza** - world famous Wine region
- **Chile, Mendoza** - Chile, Paso Internacional Los Libertadores, also called Cristo Redentor, is a mountain pass in the Andes between Argentina and Chile at 3,200m (see image)
- **Wildlife to spot** - Alpaca, Vicuña, Puma, Condor, Huemul, Armadillo, Chinchilla





Photo: Will Broadhead



Photo: Will Broadhead



Photo: Will Broadhead



The Gaucho Trail Motor Challenge 2026

WHAT TO EXPECT?

Experience the ultimate challenge in South America!

This thrilling route demands both adventure and skill, taking you through diverse landscapes and road conditions—from misty rainforests to cold, rugged mountain passes. Prepare to tackle various terrains and elevations while keeping your car in peak condition, as self-maintenance will be essential. With daily distances averaging 400 kilometers and occasionally reaching up to 650 kilometers, this is a true endurance rally that will test your mettle.

WHO CAN ENTER ?

Eligible Cars :

There Are Three Main Categories and Two 'Invitation' Classes:

A – Pioneer up to December 1920

B – Vintage & Vintageant from January 1921 up to December 1947

C – Classic from January 1948 to December 1975

D - Pre-1985 4X4 Vehicles by 'Invitation' only some categories may be subdivided into classes based on engine size.

E – Pre-1985 2WD cars production based for 'Invitation' consideration. D and E classes will have separate classes and awards from the main event.



Photo: Will Broadhead

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