


NEWS

Girls On The Run

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Muscle cars, cross country rallying and epic driving adventures. If you think a coast to coast drive, fuelled by a \$1 million prize fund and legendary parties are the domain of the male of the species, The Great American Run is about to prove you wrong.

In an entry quota of 200, Ashley and Aimee Perlinger are the sole female entrants for the rally against time which begins along the east coast of America this July. Promising white hot action from start line to chequered flag, The Great American Run breezes through destinations including New Orleans, Indianapolis, San Antonio and Las Vegas.

Petrol heads and driving aficionados, hardcore racing fans and first time rally racers – all will spin their wheels in an attempt to travel the 3000 mile route in the time closest to that set by the event organisers. Entrants can choose to start from the sunshine state of Miami, FL or take in the hustle and bustle of New York City, NY.

The Perlingers may be newcomers to motor sport, but they're not phased by the thought of taking on 399 men. "The distraction factor is key and I believe we have that in the bag!", says Ashley. "Unless the male teams are wearing blinders, they will be distracted by the Perlinger gals... And if they are wearing blinders, well then we are sure to have the advantage. We are both extremely competitive by design – so experienced or not, watch out!"

With all entrants competing for a limited edition Saleen Ultimate Bad Boy Mustang, title honours and automatic entrance into next years one million dollar event, the Great American Run is about enthusiasm and spirit. As veteran Cannonball Run entrant and The Great American Run organiser, Tim Porter says, "It doesn't matter what you drive, a Lamborghini or Lincoln, Ferrari or Ford, Mini or Maybach – it's not the metal that counts but the spirit you bring with it."

The all-girl squad will be traversing the route in style. Their Bentley GT sports car with 552 horsepower is being prepared by Matt Crandall at GranPrix Imports, Oregon. As well as the usual assortment of GPS and radar detection systems, the girls are planning a full aural assault with driving tunes selected especially for the adventure. "We've spent time over the last year or so cruising around together but haven't had the chance to take part in any test sessions," says Aimee. "We figure if we're going to be sat in a car going across country, we should do it in style and do it in a Bentley."

Speaking of style, sibling rivalry has been put aside when it comes to agreeing on the best leg of the six day tour. "Vegas Baby!" confirms Aimee. "The leg from Vegas to LA is what we are drooling about. Vegas, enough said - guaranteed great time! Driving from Vegas to LA, the anticipation, the desert, the eventual win... we can't wait."

Following in the wheel tracks of the world famous Cannonball Run, the Great American Run is the first event of its kind in the United States and will make history when the lights go green at each starting city on 29 July.

For Ashley and Aimee, the challenge will not be getting to the finish line but keeping their competitive natures under control within the tight confines of their Bentley sports car. "The right mix of crazy and conservative is the trick," notes Ashley.

While they haven't been putting in the hours on the track, the sisters have become familiar sights in their local gyms and think their preparation will give them the edge. For Aimee, her workout sessions will help with her next mission, also being carried out for sponsor Fluge Global Adventures. "Fluge Global is giving me a spot on their Everest Team," confirms Aimee. "I will be trekking to Base Camp in October, so working out has become an essential part of each day for me."

The winner of The Great American Run 2007 will not necessarily be the car first past the flag. The Saleen Ultimate Bad Boy Mustang and event title will go to the driver or team posting an overall time nearest to that set The Cannonball Run crew. Adding to the excitement, the competitors will be challenged en-route by a series of checkpoints and unexpected detours on their way to Las Vegas, a track day at Willow Springs Raceway and final group run to Los Angeles.

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