

Mazda Route3

Mazda compacts complete intercontinental test drive

- All-new Mazda3s prove themselves during arduous Challenger Tour
- Two of the eight vehicles delayed by border bureaucracy
- Several of the tour cars to be exhibited at the IAA in Frankfurt

Frankfurt, 7 September 2013. The convention-defying Hiroshima-Frankfurt marathon is complete: After 15,000km, the convoy of all-new Mazda3s crossed the finish line today at Mazda's European R&D Centre in Oberursel, just outside Frankfurt, right on schedule. Featuring a design as innovative as their technology, all the new compacts withstood the expedition fully intact, demonstrating their robust and dependable Mazda genealogy founded on outstanding build quality. And four of them will be at this year's Frankfurt Motor Show (IAA).

Hidden potholes couldn't stop them. Football-sized rocks couldn't stop them. Nor could overturned trucks, herds of livestock and roadworks one was forced to drive through rather than around. The only thing that could delay two of the Challenger Tour Mazda3s was bureaucracy at the Belarusian border. So if crumbling highways were the primary concern particularly during the earlier legs of the tour, there was no lack of suspense during the later stages, either. Now waiting for the go-ahead to cross the border into Poland and the EU, the two Mazda3 stragglers are expected to resume their journey soon.

The overland portion of the Mazda Route3 tour began on 3 August, after the cars had been transported from Japan to Vladivostok via ship. Starting out from Russia's Far East, they covered two continents, nine time zones and some 30 cities. Along the way, the Mazda3 teams took in a variety of sights, including Lake Baikal, the Altai Mountains and the Kungur Ice Caves. They stood on the border between Asia and Europe, and were escorted on more than one occasion by dozens of Mazdas driven by local fans. During the final leg, they visited four distinct European capitals – Moscow, Minsk, Warsaw and Berlin.

For further information contact:

Mazda Motor Europe GmbH

Hitdorfer Str. 73 | D 51371 Leverkusen

Tel: +49 2173 943 505 | Fax: +49 2173 943 553

mazda-press@mazdaeur.com | www.mazda-press.com

But no matter where the new Mazda3s went, they attracted waves, smiles, friendly curiosity and sometimes even applause. So in spite of all the flat tires and other tribulations, the otherwise flawless motoring fun and warm reception kept spirits high among the Mazda Route3 teams.

“What an adventure! If I had to single out the one aspect that was most impressive, I’d say the interaction – with the people along the way, with the Mazda Route3 participants, with the support team, and of course with the cars,” says trip organiser Sascha Postner, who accompanied the tour all the way from Vladivostok to Frankfurt. “The new Mazda3s were such a joy to drive and at the same time so tough and so reliable. They took everything Eurasia had to offer.”

As for the cars, four of the Mazda3s will go on display at the IAA – one at Mazda’s stand (B12 in hall 9) and three more at an outdoor area of the exhibition grounds dedicated to the tour.

About Mazda Route3

Halfway around the world from the factory in Japan to the IAA in Germany: The 15,000km “Mazda Route3 – Hiroshima to Frankfurt Challenger Tour 2013” is Mazda’s convention-defying live demonstration of its all-new Mazda3. It’s the third time Mazda models have taken such an extreme test drive after similar expeditions in 1977 and 1990. This time around, eight of the company’s new-generation hatchbacks, driven by rotating teams of journalists, bloggers and Mazda enthusiasts from Europe and beyond, crossed nine time zones on unpredictable roads through breathtaking landscapes and vibrant cultural diversity. The overland portion of the trip was split into seven stages, traversing Russia, Belarus and Poland. An overview of the Mazda Route3 convoy’s adventures can be seen online at www.mazdaroute3.eu or via Twitter at [#mazdaroute3](https://twitter.com/mazdaroute3).

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