

***2009 Troodos Rally - Round 5 – 2009 FIA Middle East Rally Championship
9th-11th October 2009***

STRONG LINE-UP CONFIRMED FOR 2009 FIA TROODOS RALLY

Organizers confirm 35 entries; New stages offer familiar challenge

With less than two weeks to go until the 2009 Troodos Rally, round 5 of this year's FIA Middle East Rally Championship, the organizers are looking forward to an especially exciting event. Final entries are now closed and it has been confirmed that region's top drivers will be lining up to do battle for the championship crown.

Current championship leader Yazeed Al-Rajhi of Saudi Arabia goes into the event at the top of the leaderboard with 28 points, while Qatar's Misfer Al-Marri is in 2nd with 21 points. Defending champion Nasser Al-Attiyah of Qatar sits 3rd with 20 points, but will be looking to gain ground on his rivals in an event he has dominated for several years. 2008 saw Al-Attiyah chalk up a record 6th consecutive Troodos Rally win, and he won't be pulling any punches in his efforts to score another victory next week, especially as there are just two rounds left in the championship after Cyprus - Jordan and Dubai.

Other international drivers heading to Cyprus for the event will include Qatar's Khalid Al-Suwaidi, Qatar's Abdulaziz Al-Kuwari and Lebanon's Roger Feghali, who can expect to face spirited competition from the Cypriot rallying elite, who will also be out in force. Constantinos Tingirides, who finished 3rd in last year's event, will be competing, as will Nicos Thomas who, as a winner of one of the coveted Pirelli Star Driver last year, has been competing in the World Rally Championship this season.

Following its successful move to the west coast of the island last year, the Troodos Rally will once again be based around the popular town of Geroskipou, located near the coastal resort of Pafos. Speaking this week, Mayor of Geroskipou Tassos Kouzoupos said: "We are very proud to be hosting this event for a second year and I am confident that thousands of spectators will turn out to support."

Set to be held over the second weekend of October, the event will get underway with a major Ceremonial Start in Geroskipou's attractive town square on the evening of Friday 9th October, followed by two days of tough competition that will offer the sort of challenging special stages for which Cyprus is renowned. While the exact route cannot yet be revealed, the organizers have confirmed that this year's event will be a blend of new and classic stages, offering similar pace and feel to last year.

The Troodos Rally is a popular event with local and regional drivers, not only because of its challenging nature but also because of its friendly atmosphere. With the Headquarters, Press Office and Service Park located in and around Geroskipou's popular Riu Cypria Bay hotel, the Troodos Rally promises to be another fun event.

Troodos Rally Clerk of the Course Nayia Kontopoulou is confident of a memorable event: "This is always a fun weekend for drivers and fans. With last year's move to

Geroskipou working out so well, we're heading back to this friendly town for what promises to be a great weekend's motorsport. Al-Attiyah has work to do this year if he's to retain his crown, and he'll need to build on his past successes here to keep his title hopes alive. On behalf of everyone involved, I'd like to thank the mayor of Geroskipou and his team for all their help in preparing for this year's Troodos Rally and I invite everyone to come along and enjoy the fun."

Organised by the Cyprus Automobile Association (CAA) and supported by the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, the 2009 Troodos Rally will be held over the weekend of the 9th-11th October.

For further information about this year's Troodos Rally, visit www.caa.com.cy or telephone the CAA on (00357) 22313233. For further information about Geroskipou, visit www.geroskipou-municipality.com

2009 FIA MERC Drivers Standings Ahead Of 2009 Troodos Rally

Pos	Drivers	QA	KWT	YR	RL	Pts
1	Yazeed AL RAJHI (SA)	8	0	10	10	28
2	Misfer AL MARRI (QA)	5	8	8	0	21
3	Nasser AL ATTIYA (QA)	10	10	0	0	20
4	Mubarak AL HAJRI (QA)	1	0	6	6	13
	= Nick GEORGIOU (RL)	0	0	5	8	13
6	Khaled AL QASSIMI (UAE)	6	6	0	0	12
7	Mufeed MUBARAK (KWT)	0	5	2	1	8
	= Michel SALEH (RL)	0	0	4	4	8
	= Khalid AL SUWAIDI (QA)	0	0	3	5	8
10	Abdullah AL QASSIMI (UAE)	2	0	0	3	5
11	Rashid AL KETBI (UAE)	4	0	0	0	4
	= Meshal AL NEJADI (KWT)	0	4	0	0	4
13	Meshari AL THAFIRI (KWT)	0	3	0	0	3
	= Salah BIN EIDAN (KWT)	3	0	0	0	3
15	Jaber AL MARRI (QA)	0	2	0	0	2
	= Ammar HIJAZI (HKJ)	0	0	0	2	2
17	Faisal AL ATTIYA (QA)	0	1	0	0	1
	= Ahmad AL SABBAN (SA)	0	0	1	0	1

ENDS

**2009 Troodos Rally Press Office
30 September 2009**