



ACROSS THE

... aboard a Land Rover Discovery. Car India follows the

SEVEN SEAS...

adventures of a couple from Greece on an epic journey

Story and Photography Vula Netu & Akis Temperidis

Who are we?

WE HAVE DRIVEN 77,000KM through 37 countries so far and after 400 days on the road we are in India. We are a couple from Greece, a car journalist and a dance teacher. We had a dream for many years; to travel the world without a return ticket but we never had the money, the time or the guts to take this seriously. One day, we said to each other: "That's it. We have to do it now or never". It was not simple to make this dream come true but anyway, 23 months later we were both in a brand new,

sponsored Land Rover Discovery 3 departing to...wherever we wanted. We had a motto as well, 'Explore the earth in 800 days!' Off-road, possibly... We planned to cross Europe, get to Africa and drive around the continent for six months. In the end, we spent almost ten months till getting back to Greece for a break. That meant 41 border crossings, 58,000km, 45,000 pictures, 70 hours of video filming and more than 150 pages of travel stories published in different media. In 291 days, we did not have a single scratch

on the car or a tyre puncture. "Now we are strong enough to challenge Asia", we said after a two month break in our home country. So, after we crossed Turkey, Iran and Pakistan – three very hospitable countries – here we are in India.

What is our impression of this country? I admit that India is a challenge for any traveller. Despite our experience, the cultural shock was unavoidable. This is a tough country to digest. You need a strong stomach, strong eyes, strong ears (don't horn please!!!), a strong nose and a big heart to survive India. Driving here – you know better... is not easy. Communicating with people is tricky. In the beginning it's a love and hate relationship between you and this incredible melting pot of people, cultures, religions, languages and spices. At the end, India proves to be addictive. I still don't know why...

Our next destination is Malaysia and from there we plan to make a breathtaking roundtrip to South East Asia. Our aim is to reach Australia and from there to ship karibu (our car) to America or to Japan. We don't know what comes next. Overlanders are like rolling stones. So let's rock 'n roll together. Just stay tuned to Car India and follow our adventures from now on. We'll depict our journey thus far through pictures this time, as it's impossible to cover 400 days in a thousand words. We'll use more words from next issue on though...



So you wonder...

Where do we get the car serviced?

There are more than 1,500 Land Rover official workshops around the world.

How do we wash our clothes?

We give them to a laundry or wash them by hand and dry them in the car.

What do we have for lunch?

Most evenings, Vula cooks. Our menu includes pasta, noodles, rice, eggs, fried vegetables and fruits. Greek salad (tomatoes, olives, onions) with olive oil is a must. In India, we cook less as the local cuisine is great even at the cheapest dhabas.

How do we know where to camp by night?

We don't! We search on Lonely Planet and if there is nothing, we try to find shelter anywhere. So far so good.

Do we carry a gun?

No. A smile is the best protection!

The worst moment of our trip?

In Kathmandu when Akis' brother died of cancer in Greece.

Our best moment?

Difficult to say. Just take a look at the pictures of this article.



THE CAR

Land Rover Discovery 3 TDV6 S, MY 2007, Tonga green colour provided by Land Rover Greece (KEDO S.A.) with a manual gearbox, coil springs and 17inch wheels.

EQUIPMENT

Full list of G4 Challenge accessories was used and many more customized items for the specific model.



Double spare wheel base by Kaymar

Car graphics designed by the Art Director of 4Wheels magazine and applied by Dobby Design-Athens

Snorkel, protective sliders and 10mm sump shield



Italian made Autohome Maggolina roof tent is the shelter of the crew

Roof rack and headlamp protectors

Bull bar with auxiliary headlights



Position reporter. It automatically transmits the real position of the car to a satellite so you can see where we are on the web



75W solar panel by Conergy provides 220V electricity through an auxiliary 45A dry type battery and a 500W inverter



Garmin 276C GPS



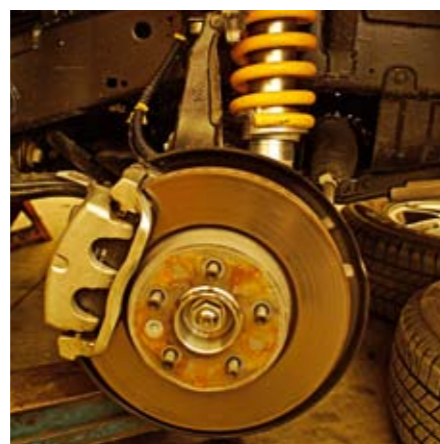
9.500 lb. Warn winch



Motorola 9505A Iridium phone. Charges are a dollar per minute to landline phones



Tyres used: Cooper Discoverer STT (245/70-17) in Africa and BF Goodrich 245/75-17 in Asia.



Heavy duty coil springs by King Springs and custom made shock absorbers by Jam Sport of Greece is the new suspension



Outback Import (www.outback-import.com) auxiliary 110-litre fuel tank fitted at the spare wheel compartment



Engine CPU is tuned by Overfinch for better torque at low revs. It is combined with a TGI air filter. Car interior: Rear seats were deducted. Two customized safe boxes and a 55-litre water tank are fitted.



Thrane Explorer 300 Inmarsat satellite antenna provides broadband (492kbps) internet connection anywhere on earth (98 percent coverage). It is provided by Navarino Telecom-Greece



The journey thus far...

Day 1 - 223km: In the superfast ferry from Patras to Ancona



Day 109 - 20,750km: Hewa Bora Airlines cargo flight to Lubumbashi is the only way to go on



Day 116 - 22,087 km: Bungee jumping and rafting at the Zambezi river (Zambia)



Day 31 - 5,046km.: Camel trekking and off-roading in the Sahara next to the Algerian border



Day 130 - 25,020km: Skydiving over the Namib desert in Swakopmund, Namibia is the most thrilling experience of our trip so far



THE ROUTE



HOW DO WE SURVIVE?

We are not rich, so we have to work on the road. We write articles for different magazines, report on the radio and have our site www.theworldoffroad.com. In this way we earn a salary that permits us to keep going on. Our daily budget is basic. We spend an average of 300 rupees per night for sleep. At times we bush camp (that is for free) and sometimes we stay in a basic hotel paying a maximum 800-1,000 rupees. This is okay for a shower even if we carry about 60 litres water in the car. Food costs us about 300-400 rupees per day. Most of our money is spent on diesel fuel (8kmpl average), visas, shipments (like the ship Chennai-Kuala Lumpur). Car repairs cost almost nothing as long as the "Disco" is under guarantee. How we get cash money? From VISA compatible ATM's that are spread everywhere. In case of emergency, we have an amount of just a 1,000 dollars well hidden in the car.





Day 206 - 38,964km: Two nights with the Hatzabe hunters, the most primitive tribe in Africa



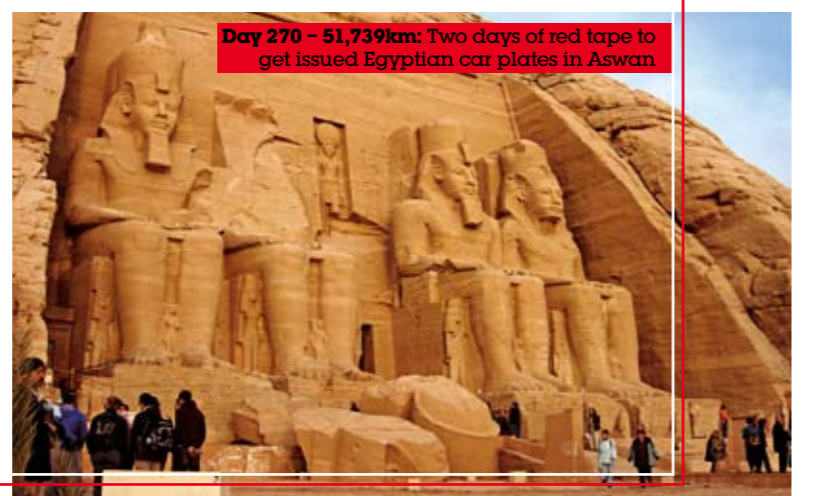
Day 218 - 41,515km: We follow the classic safari rally in Kenya



Day 238 - 44,699km: A close encounter with a family of Gorillas in Kahuzi-Biega N.P., D.R.Congo



Day 246 - 47,253 km: An armed Kenyan soldier escorts us to the border of Ethiopia



Day 270 - 51,739km: Two days of red tape to get issued Egyptian car plates in Aswan



Day 291 - 57,853km: We cross Syria and Turkey and arrive at Thessaloniki, our hometown in Greece!



Day 297 - 59,814km: We fly in a balloon over the majestic landscape of Cappadocia



Day 307 - 62,184km: We get lost in the mountains of Iran and find shelter in a local house - beautiful people



Day 347 - 69,160km: We leave behind the peaceful Kalasha people and drive through the infamous NWFP to Peshawar. We have no encounters with Taliban militants



Day 363 - 71,246km: We drive on the Khardung La, the highest motorable road in the world (5,602m) and three more passes at over 5,000m on the road to Manali



Day 324 - 65,130km: The Iranian police escort us all the way to the border in the Balochistan desert, a place that is notorious for some kidnappings



Day 340 - 68,551km: It's freezing on the Khunjerab pass (4,730m). We want to enter China but red tape for the car would cost us a fortune



Day 358 - 70,566km: The shikara tour in the lake is a peaceful parenthesis so far in our trip

HOW DID WE MEET THEM?

Car India received an email from Akis and Vula, a Greek couple who had traveled extensively and were planning to come to Asia on one of the most capable four-wheel drive vehicles on earth. We could hardly wait to hear tales of their multi-stop dream trip and finally met them on the Indian leg of their trip, right here in Pune.

A day together in the office, followed by a few drinks, food and all night long conversations and we became the best of buddies. The fact that they survived the night at Amit and Bunny's terribly messy and typical bachelors' pad says a lot about how much they can endure. Akis and Vula will share the experiences of the remaining 400 days of their trip over the next year, once every two months. Stay tuned...

