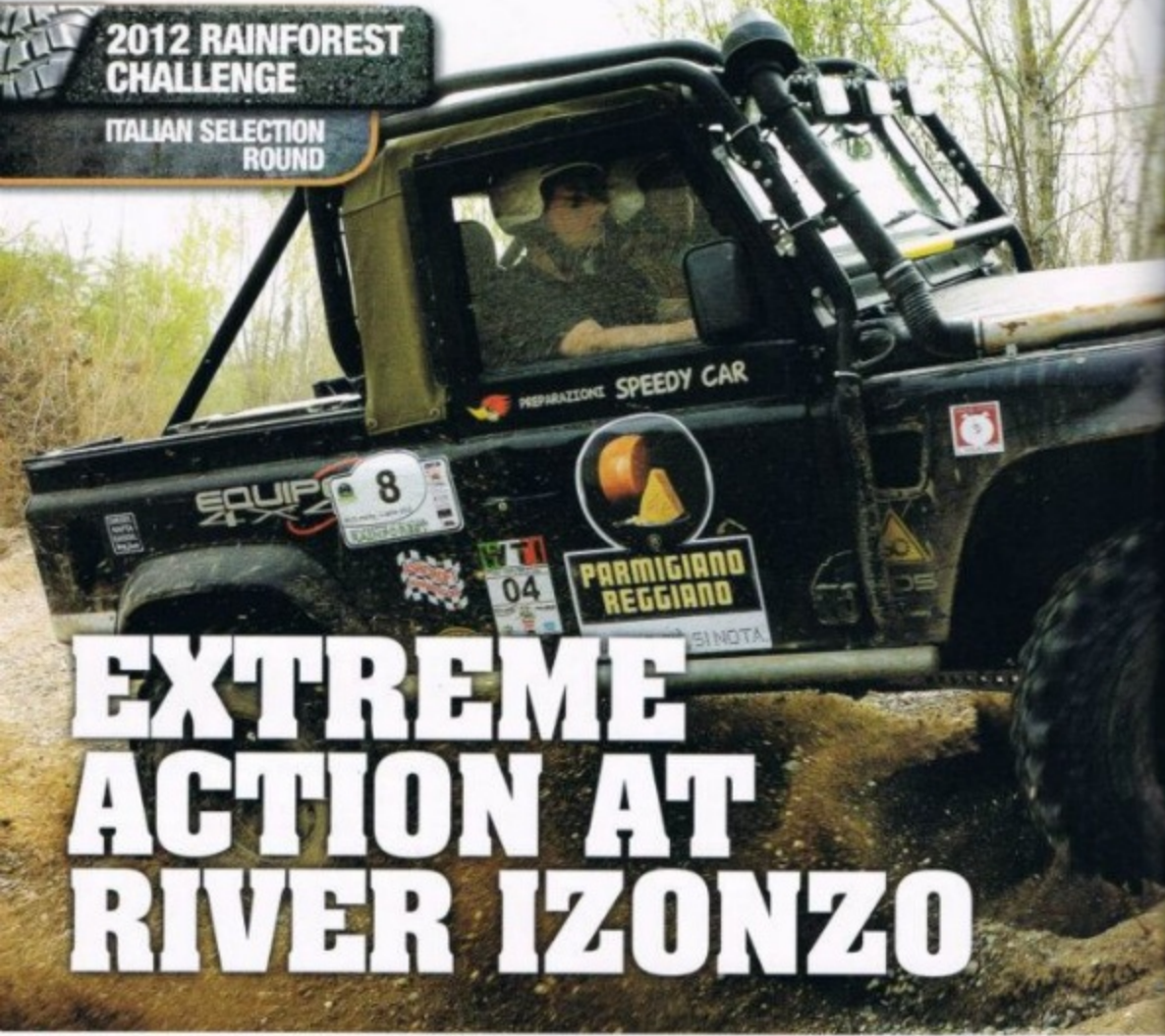


2012 RAINFOREST CHALLENGE

ITALIAN SELECTION ROUND



EXTREME ACTION AT RIVER IZONZO

BY LUIS J.A. WEE

THE first international selection round of the 2012 Rainforest Challenge kicked off along the banks of the Isonzo River in northeast Italy on March 30.

Twenty special stages (SS) had been meticulously designed for extreme 4x4 driving and recovery by the organising committee from GFI Alpe Adria S Andrea led by event director Ales Plesnicar.

For the 27 competitor teams from Austria, Slovenia and Italy, logistic crew and supporters taking part in the Rainforest Challenge (RFC) Italy, the cool weather at 20° C was most welcome.

It also attracted hundreds of spectators who came down on day trips, which delighted the hospitality outlet owners.

The Friuli-Venezia-Giulia region facing the borders with Austria (north) and Slovenia (east) is a region renowned for some of Italy's finest wine vineyards as well as gastronomy.

When the action started off on the first day, the teams, much to the delight of the spectators, rattled and rolled their machines through water, steep river beds and gullies as well as undulating and muddy terrain.

The game of brains, brawn and skills was played out strategically throughout the three-day event.

There was no let up in the passion to finish the SS from all teams even though some encountered mechanical breakdowns and bruised egos for making tactical errors.

The second and final days proved to be very taxing on both man and machine



Dashing through the SS along the banks of the Isonzo River.



Proto Type (Special Class) winner.



Ramingo 4x4-4 Zampe Off-Road (Italy) took home the Team Spirit award.

as they tackled the more difficult and technical SS of the event.

Cheered on by the spectators each day, the tempo, momentum and tension to do well picked up with greater vigour than ever as the teams pushed forward to complete the SS. Some did well, others not so well but the leading teams made steady progress.

The organising committee was also in a jubilant mood because this is the 15th anniversary year for the RFC.

2012 RAINFOREST CHALLENGE

"We are the first in the world to celebrate this special occasion," said Italian RFC representative Patrick Silvestric at the RFC Night on March 30.

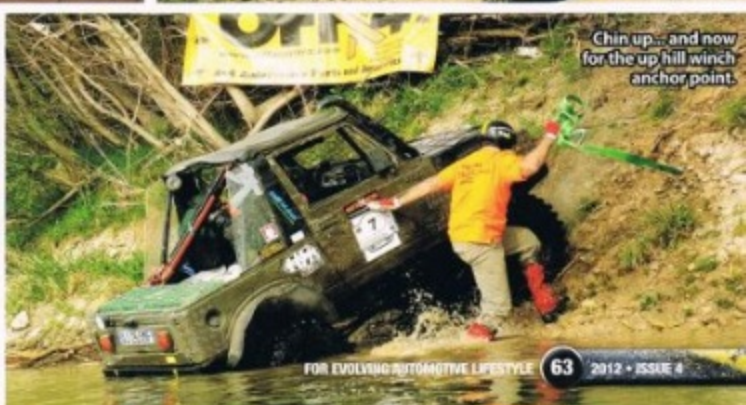
Italian photo-journalists Paolo Baraldi and Giulia Maroni presented an RFC special book that they published at the RFC Night which recorded the 2011 event in Italy, China and Sri Lanka (qualifying rounds) and Malaysia (main event).

The 2012 RFC main event in Malaysia will be held on Dec 1-10.

RESULTS

- **Modified Class:**
 - 1 Andrea Alfano-Roberto Munitello (Italy);
 - 2 Alessio Marchioli-Riccardo Nascardi (Italy);
 - 3 Augusto Grandi-Riccardo Merlo (Italy);
 - 4 Marco Zanuttini-Ivaidi Calligaris (Italy).
- **Proto Type (Special Class):**
 - 1 Mlakar Alberto-Francesco Sabinovich (Italy);
 - 2 Sandi Blazevic-Sebastian Razman (Slovenia);
 - 3 Petean Walmi-Simone Medeat (Italy);
 - 4 Giuseppe Massa-Gabriele Palazzo (Italy).
- **Team Spirit Award:** Ramingo 4x4-4 Zampe Off-Road (Italy).

✂ For more information on the RFC, call 03-2163 5908/6908 or visit www.rainforest-challenge.com.



Chin up... and now for the up hill winch anchor point.