Ain’t no volcano high enough for Falken

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Classic Mini Adventure, with maximum durability from Falken Tyres…

They tell us:

(All words and photographs from Falken Tyres).

- 4,000-mile journey in 1974 Mini to attempt to summit the world’s tallest volcano sees zero punctures using Falken road tyres.

- Crossing the driest region on the planet, Ben Coombs’ 4,000-mile road trip through Uruguay, Argentina and Chile saw Falken’s standard tyres overcome sand, boulders and volcanic ash.

- The 1974 Mini momentarily became the highest car on the planet and achieved the feat without encountering a single puncture using Falken’s standard FK-07 10” road tyres.

  Ben Coombs’ ‘Mini6000’ trip saw him drive the self-prepared classic Mini out of a shipping container in Montevideo in Uruguay, passing first through the Argentinian central plains to reach Ojos del Salado, the world’s tallest volcano in Chile’s Atacama Desert. Despite having previously travelled the length of the Americas in a TVR Chimera and crossing Africa in a Porsche 944, ‘Mini6000’ was arguably his most challenging adventure to date.

  As well as experiencing temperatures plummeting to -20˚C, searing sandblasting winds, whilst lugging 200 kg (441 lb) of extra kit in and on his 600 kg (1,323 lb) Mini – including what turned out to be a superfluous lot of three spare FK07 tyres, Ben and his supercharged Mini faced the unpredictable and life-threatening consequences of climbing to 6,000 m (19,685 ft).

Even at half this altitude, both Mini and driver were contending with 25 per cent less air to breathe. In full knowledge of the perils he would face and wishing to ensure he was going into this harsh environment as best prepared as possible, Ben didn't want to compromise on tyres. "I wanted to use a respected brand of tyre and opted for Falken," says Ben. "Perhaps surprisingly, we didn't want an aggressive tread pattern sensing they would dig in so opted for sand crawler boards or winching when the sand and ash got deeper."

As tyre sizes creep ever bigger, Falken continues to support classic car owners by offering smaller pattern sizes including a wider range of 12" and 13" tyres more commonly found on 'modern classics'. Each is designed to deliver excellent wear and grip, whether it's a trip to a local club meet in the park or summiting a volcano.

With some of the newer rocks encountered on the steep slopes of Ojos del Salado just 30,000 years old and the last lava flows said to have been around 11-12,000 years ago, Ben was impressed with how the Falken's resilient sidewalls coped with the younger and sharper rocks. "At times we ran lower tyre pressures to gain traction, yet we never had a single puncture. Whatever the surface and even on the rougher, rutted tracks, the tyres were the one thing we never worried about," adds Ben.



Despite daily maintenance to contend with the altitude strangling the Mini's engine of air, including regularly increasing the carburettor jet's size in line with the increasing altitude, it was a struggle to get enough fuel through to start the A-Series lump and keep it running.

With both the support Range Rover and Mini now at an altitude higher than any other road in the world, just 100 m (328 ft) shy of the 6,000 m (19,685 ft) target, the carburettor's float finally stuck, preventing the engine from firing. Tantalisingly close, Ben headed down through the boulder field, getting the car to level ground where it finally burst into life and could start the no-less challenging descent and onward 1,500-mile return journey, via Patagonia, all still whilst relying on the original Falken rubber.

With the Mini and its still-fresh spare tyres now safely back in the UK, Ben is already plotting his next

adventure and is set to rely on Falken tyres once again for whatever comes next. “I’d definitely consider Falken for our next Mini Adventure,” concludes Ben.

For more details on Ben’s adventures please check out www.planetpub2pub.com



Falken Tyre Europe

Falken Tyre Europe GmbH is the European affiliate of Japanese tyre manufacturer Sumitomo Rubber Industries Ltd. (SRI). With more than 40,000 employees, it is the fifth largest tyre manufacturer worldwide. Tyre production is distributed over 12 production facilities, with more than 116 million tyres sold per year. The Falken brand was established in Japan in 1983; in 1988 the first branch office was opened in Germany. From its location in Offenbach, Main, the company markets and sells a complete tyre portfolio for passenger

cars, trucks, pick-ups and SUVs as original equipment and for the entire European retrofitting market. More than 220 people from 24 nations work for Falken Tyre Europe, and a distribution network of approx. 8,000 tyre partners across Europe handles the sale and fitting of its premium products. All Falken factories comply with the ISO 9001, IATF 16949 as well as environmental standard ISO14001.

For more information visit www.falkentyre.com