

Rally of Portugal – TAP International Rally – 1971

1971 Rally de Portugal

A report by Luis Cezar Ramos Pereira

Web address: <https://luiscezar.blogspot.com/2010/07/portugal-rally-rallye-internacional-tap.html>

Europeans are big rally fans, as are Argentinians and Uruguayans. In Brazil, however, few people are interested in the sport. They tend to focus more on circuit racing and historic rallies. Very few are committed to preserving rallying as a sport. At that time, rallies were only held in São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul.

In 1971, Brazil hosted its first major rally, the Rally of National Integration. The route took in a stunning course: starting in Fortaleza and finishing in Chuí – a route featuring high-speed sections totalling almost 5,000 km. Despite all the pressure and some questionable shenanigans on Ford's part, one car stood out in particular: the Puma GT 1600, driven by Jan Balder and navigated by Alfred Malowski. And mind you, this was a serious rally, which even led to the death of the driver from Rio Grande do Sul – Zaffari – when he rolled his Dodge Dart. Not to mention that Tite Catapani had to have his spleen removed after rolling his Ford Corcel.

Well, anyway... following this epic feat, the winning duo won 110,000 (in the currency of the time), a Karmann Ghia TC (worth 25,000) – all of which was shared among the team members (Crispin was the chief mechanic) – and as a further prize, an invitation to take part in the International Rally of Portugal or TAP Rally. TAP covered the duo's travel expenses, Varig the cost of transporting the car, Puma provided the vehicle, fuel and oil, and Alfred arranged sponsorship from VDO to cover their expenses in Portugal.

The standard of competition was high and markedly different from that of the Integration Rally; after all, this was an international rally considered one of the best in the world.

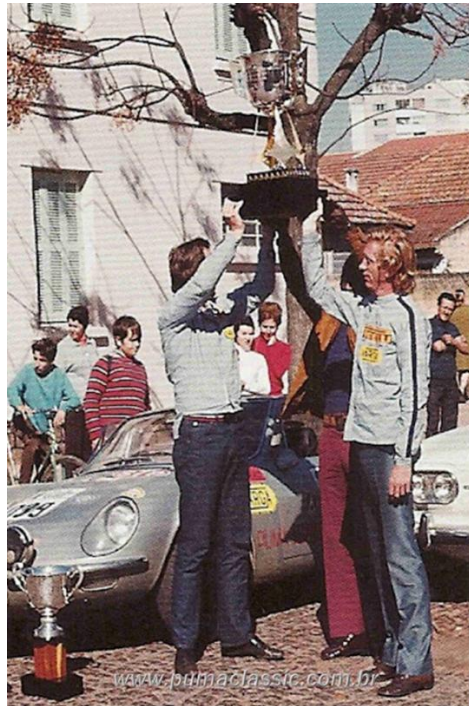


The winning duo of the National Integration Rally

The Integration Rally offered some great and impressive moments: shattered windscreens, fatalities, rollovers, sad and funny situations, and a major conspiracy against the Puma factory, against Puma and against the Puma duo. In the middle of the race, the rules were changed to give the trailing Ford team an advantage. When Jan Balder asked my friend Paulo 'Living Legend' Martinelli, a Ford driver (at the wheel of a Belina), how the race was going, Paulinho replied: 'Sorry, Jan, my boss has forbidden us from

talking to you.' J. Balder asked: "Why?" – and he replied: "I don't know." (This passage appears in Balder's book but is disputed by Paulinho).

On the long straight from Porto Alegre to Chuí, J. Balder felt the urge to urinate – he did so whilst driving. When they arrived at the BR petrol station to refuel (with the engine idling), he poured a bucket of water over it. With soap, to make such an incident more bearable ... but it was bitterly cold, and J. Balder had to drive the Puma with his feet on the pedals to avoid getting wet. Another incident: at one of the stops, co-driver Alfred Maslowski decided to urinate, but it took so long that they set off late – they were behind Greco's car (it took them 9 km to reach the average speed).



National Integration Rally – 1971

From 1967, the ACP (Automobile Club of Portugal) organised rallies. The TAP Rally developed into an international event and, always in compliance with FIA regulations, was included in the World Rally Championship calendar in 1973, the championship's inaugural year. The Rally of Portugal (formerly known as the TAP Rally, Rally of Portugal, Vinho do Porto Rally and TAP Rally) enjoyed a high reputation and was at times described as the best rally in the world (awarded by the BPICA – Bureau Permanent International des Constructeurs d'Automobiles).

Im Jahr 2000 wurde sie von der FIA zur „Besten Rallye des Jahres“ gekürt. Sie hält einen weiteren Rekord: Der Finne Markku Alén gewann die Rallye am häufigsten (1975, 1977, 1978, 1981 und 1987). Fantastisch! Die Etappe von 1985 ist mir bis heute in bester Erinnerung geblieben, als Walter Röhrls Getriebe im letzten Abschnitt ausfiel und der Finne Timo Salonen den Sieg davontrug. 1971 gewann Jean-Pierre.

In 2000, it was named 'Rally of the Year' by the FIA. It holds another record: the Finn Markku Alén won the rally the most times (1975, 1977, 1978, 1981 and 1987). Fantastic! I still have fond memories of the 1985 event, when Walter Röhrl's gearbox failed on the final stage and the Finn Timo Salonen took the victory. In 1971, Jean-Pierre won.

Nicolas drove a Renault Alpine 1600, with the young J. Todt (later FIA President) as his co-driver. A historical correction is in order: it has always been claimed that the ACP launched this rally with the support of TAP. In fact, this first TAP Rally was a continuation of the rallies organised in the 1960s by the TAP Culture and Sports Group (a rally for TAP employees as an incentive and for team-building). Alfredo

César Torres joined this rally, which began in the 1960s, in 1965, lending the event a more professional touch (he remained in charge of it until 1997).

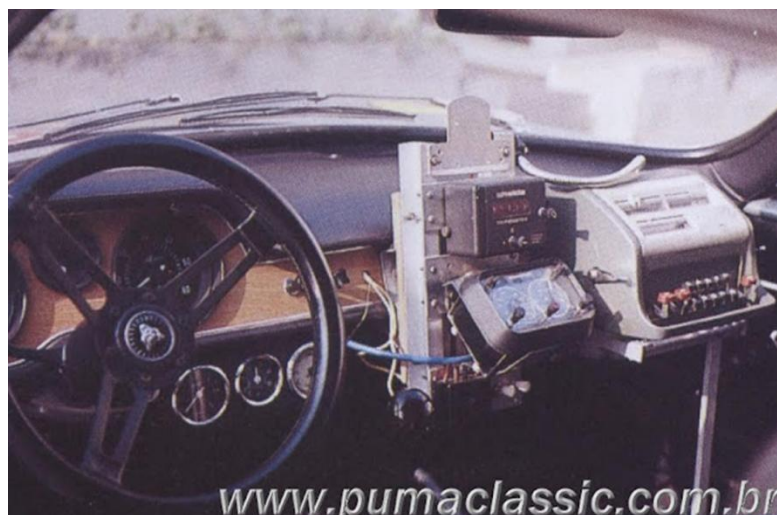
In 1966, the president of TAP opened the event to all participants, not just his employees, and it developed into an international event (the TAP International Rally was established in 1967. By 1969, there were already 190 entries! In 1973, it became part of the European Rally Championship. This was a huge step – from an internal event for company staff to a round of the European Championship and later inclusion in the official FIA World Rally Championship calendar.

It was not until 1975 that the ACP took over the organisation of the rally from the TAP Culture and Sports Group. The event's success drew thousands of spectators to the routes, which caused numerous problems for the organisers. In fact, the high number of spectators and the deaths of some spectators led to the end of Group B high-powered off-road vehicles in rallies.

The 1971 TAP Rally started in Vienna, London, Milan, Frankfurt, Zurich, Amsterdam, Brussels, Paris, Faro, Madrid, Copenhagen, Porto and Lisbon (the fifth TAP International Rally took place from 5 to 10 October 1971 – the first car started at 16:36 in Lisbon – the Brazilian Puma with start number 132 was entered in Group 6, Class 10 – 4-cylinder, 1800 cc. Originally, 150 vehicles were entered.

Before I go into detail about Brazil's first participation in an international rally, I would like to mention that my first participation in an international FIA rally went very much the same way: in both cases, there was a lack of financial support; in both cases, there was a lack of technical support; I received help from the Portuguese with filling in the road book; there was a shortage of fuel; in both cases, there were problems with the tyres; in both cases there were problems with the car (in my case – the electrics, with the Puma – the chassis). In both cases, it was decided to skip the dangerous and almost suicidal final stage to spare the drivers and cars that had tyre problems (and in my case, an electrical failure and miserable navigation were added to the mix).

Both vehicles (the Puma and, in my case, the Volvo) survived numerous accidents and incidents unscathed. J. Balder's co-driver, Alfred Maslowski, and I are rally fans; like me, he recognised the many fantastic personalities of the rally world at their respective races. In short, many happy coincidences.



Note the dashboard with a Halda Speedpilot, a Halda Tripmaster and a Facit calculator (a poor navigator).

Jan Balder is Dutch, loves speed and was sometimes simply called 'Omelett'. Alfred Maslowski is Austrian and was called "Deutscher" by his motorsport friends. Jan Balder met him at Emerson Fittipaldi's place when Freddy was there trying to collect a debt from Rato. This developed into a

successful duo who, despite all the odds, had to fight hard back then to win a race against the Mondin family.

Before leaving for Portugal, Jan Balder attempted to compete in the 6 Hours of Nova Lisboa in Africa (Angola) in a Lola T70 (I say 'attempted' because the car failed during practice). After returning to Brazil, he competed in the 12th 500 km of Interlagos (Casari-Ford A1 – he was in the Lola T70, which, however, caught fire in Casari's hands). He then took part in the 12 Hours of Porto Alegre – it was only after these 'appetisers' that the duo travelled to the Rally of Portugal.

Jan Balder had just returned from the race in the south when his Variant (a support vehicle) broke down. He spent the night in a hotel and received a call that very evening from Alfred, who urgently summoned him to take part in the TAP Rally. He had actually ruled out this race due to the difficulties involved in taking part, but Alfred (I believe) was the most enthusiastic, and there were only seven days left until the race in Europe. Milton Masteguim from Puma and the mechanic Wilson built a Puma at the factory in a flash, fitted with a thinner (50 kg lighter) fibreglass body and a 1800 cc engine.

J. Balder arrives in São Paulo, changes his luggage and clothes, picks up Alfred and drives to Rio de Janeiro to speak to TAP and fly to Portugal. Alfred worked in a pharmaceutical laboratory; he had prepared a cocktail of medicines and given it to J. Balder to rouse him from his desolate state.

Before we get to the race, let's talk about the Puma. There is a persistent rumour that the factory produced a model called the Rallye (which never existed), and the vehicles produced for mass competition were not referred to as Spartans either (they had thinner fibreglass). What was manufactured specifically for the factory or the Puma dealer (MM) was a vehicle with space for a dry-sump lubrication system, an oil cooler and pantographic windscreen wipers (in addition, an air intake was fitted above the rear fins – on the sides, some vehicles had integrated auxiliary headlights, and some racing versions had the fuel filler neck of a larger VW lorry).

What people say is pure fantasy, particularly the speculation about production figures (20 Spartans, 10 Rallyes, etc. – there are no limits to the imagination). Officially, there was no rally and/or circuit model.

An example: the vehicle that took part in the TAP Rally wasn't even properly prepared for the race. The homologation application submitted by Puma to the FIA and subsequently rejected was a patchwork job. A disgrace! But the motto was: 'Let's give it a go.' I am stating the facts.

5.º RALLYE INTERNACIONAL TAP

CARTA DE CONTRÔLE E IDENTIFICAÇÃO
CARNET DE ROUTE ET IDENTIFICATION
IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL CARD

N.º DO CONCORRENTE
132

Esta carta serve de aplicação de seguro e contém os boletins de infração às regras de trânsito. Ce carnet de route tient lieu d'attestation d'assurance et de carnet d'infraction. This identification and control card serves instead of insurance certificate and breach of regulations book.

EQUIPA TEAM: JAN BALDER/ALFRED HASLÓWSKI

CARRO CAR: PUMA 82 4240

1.º CONDUTOR 1st DRIVER: [Portrait and Signature]

2.º CONDUTOR 2nd DRIVER: [Portrait and Signature]

PARTIDA DE DEPART DE STARTING FROM: LISBOA

ELIMINAÇÃO EXCLUSION

5.º RALLYE INTERNACIONAL TAP

1.º Condição a partir desta actividade

500 pontos pontos points

5.º RALLYE INTERNACIONAL TAP

1.º Condição a partir desta actividade

On their arrival in Portugal, the pair were met by a VW dealer who was to take delivery of the Puma and possibly also provide technical support for the Brazilian car. Once contact had been established, the official entry was made.

Portuguese rally champion Américo Nunes made the entire rally route available, which he and his lead driver had already driven. Ideally, the Brazilian duo should have driven the route at least once to familiarise themselves with the nuances.

The Puma and another Brazilian car, a Ford Corcel, were due to take part in this rally. Ford had agreed to send the car prepared by Bino, Greco's team. Balder and Maslowski were staying at the same hotel as the two Corcel drivers, Geraldo Goldberg and Francisco Roemler. The press from Rio Grande do Sul even sent the journalist Elton Jaegger to Portugal to report on the event.

Two days before the start, the Varig plane landed with the Puma. The Corcel was not on board (the poor chaps from Rio Grande do Sul!). The Puma was brand new – painted green with a yellow stripe. It had been driven by Milton Masteguín from São Paulo to Galeão Airport in Rio de Janeiro. During the journey, he noted down every fault he spotted. He drew up a list and wrapped it around the windscreen wiper. It was, as Jan Balder remarked, a huge checklist, signed by Milton and accompanied by his best wishes.



The Puma Espartan with Jan Balder and Alfred Maslowski as co-pilot

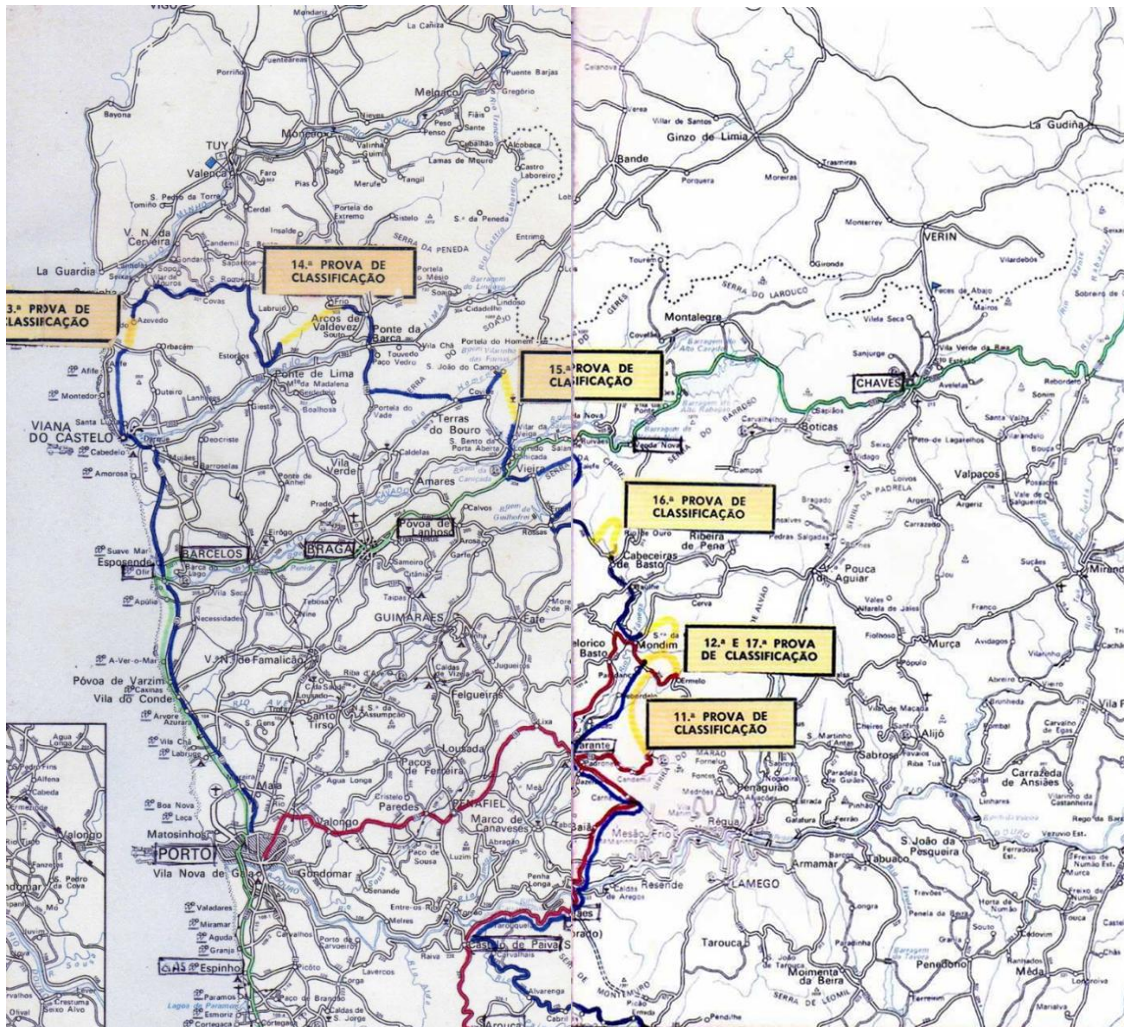
When the Puma was taken for the mandatory inspection, the second spare wheel had to be removed. According to the regulations, two spare wheels were not permitted. The Puma had two different tyre types: 165/13 at the front and 185/13 at the rear. These should have been standardised. The other teams had brought along several tyre types to suit the rally's varying surfaces. The Puma, on the other hand, had only the four factory-fitted tyres, which were not even 50% suitable for tarmac and 50% for gravel.

Furthermore, only a few spare parts fit in the car. The second spare wheel and a windscreen were kindly carried by the support vehicle of the VW dealer, who was looking after a Porsche 911 and a German VW 1302. The Puma had to order the remaining parts from a VW dealer in Portugal.

Before the start, the Portuguese Formula 1 journalist Domingos Piedade handed Jan Balder a message from Emerson Fittipaldi: "Omelete and Alemão, give it your all and good luck!" On the first day of racing, Balder veered off the track because he was tired and bent the steering column. He later adjusted the front-wheel alignment by eye. Above 5200 rpm, the carburettors were running far too rich, causing the Puma to misfire. As is well known, the carburettors are located near the mudguards, which makes changing the jets difficult.

After the first stage, the team received news of a burning BMW 2002 and another car that had crashed into a ravine. Balder quickly pulled on a fireproof suit. His co-driver asked: "Is that all you've got with you?" Balder nodded, to which Alemão replied: "Then drive that scrap heap up slowly." By "drive up", he meant the planned mountain climb – Serra de Boa Viagem – and by "scrap heap", the Puma. They managed the climb well. The Puma took 5 minutes and 3 seconds, which earned it 52nd place. The Alpine took 4 minutes and 8 seconds; the BMW from Group 1, 4 minutes and 38 seconds; the Datsun from Group 2, 4 minutes and 12 seconds; the Porsche from Group 3, 4 minutes and 23 seconds; and the Porsche from Group 4, 4 minutes and 14 seconds.

The Puma was well ahead of the 120 vehicles, 30 of which were factory cars. The problem was the lack of a spare fuel canister. The enlarged fuel tank held 80 litres. They had to stop to look for fuel. Another competitor, who had no money, gave them 20 litres. This caused the Brazilian duo to lose around 10 minutes. Another report mentions 15 minutes. As a result, the Puma dropped from 36th to 102nd place out of the 106 remaining vehicles. To make matters worse, the bulkhead in the vehicle floor began to tear. You could see the road through the pedals.



Before the final and before the announcement of their elimination, the duo took part in a 5-lap race on the cycle track at the José Alvalade Stadium in Lisbon (Sporting Club de Futebol). They removed the air filter to lean out the mixture and pumped the tyres up to 40 psi! They broke the record and finished 19th with a time of 1:36.04 minutes, ahead of the Porsche 911S driven by Portuguese champion Giovanni Salvi (1:36.72 minutes).

Jean-Pierre Nicolas set the fastest time in his Alpine (1:26.59 minutes). They watched the end of the race from the press room. In the end, only twelve of the original 120 cars reached the finish line. Three teams were subsequently disqualified.

Jan Balder describes the Puma as follows:

“That convinced me that the Puma has potential for European rallies. With a slightly more powerful engine, lighter mechanics – perhaps those of the VW 1302 – and excellent support during the race, I am certain of its success.”

Final classification:

1. Nicolas / Todt – Alpine Renault A110 1800cc
2. Lampinen / Davenport – Lancia Fulvia HF 1600cc
- 3rd place Neyret / Terramorsi – Alpine Renault A110 1800cc
4. Sonde / Manfrotto – Fiat 125 S 1600cc
5. Haimback / Biebinger – Opel Kadett 1900cc
6. Fowkes / Kirkhan – Ford Escort BDA 1600cc
7. Greder / Fouquet – Opel 1904 1900cc
8. G. Pereira / J. Marçal – Opel 1904 1900cc
9. Luybregts – Luybregts – DAF 55 (it is reported that this was a Datsun 1600cc)

Let's turn to the form that PUMA submitted to the FIA. The FIA rejected it; the Puma never had FIA homologation and competed in the prototype category. I would like to highlight a few points from the FIA form (it was full of 'or's):

- PUMA describes itself as a Puma GTE with a 1,584 cc engine (in reality, however, it had a 1,800 cc engine);
- A fuel tank capacity of 40 litres is stated, but in reality the tank held 80 litres;
- The wheel diameter was 355.6 mm, 330 mm or 381 mm (14", 13" or 15");
- The wheel width was 139.7 mm or 177.8 mm (5 1/2" or 7");
- The compression ratio was 7.2:1, 8.5:1, 9.0:1, 9.5:1 or 10:1.
- Wet sump or dry sump lubrication.
- The flywheel weighed 7.94 kg or 5.7 kg.
- The crankshaft had a diameter of 69 mm (9.0") or 78.4 mm (10.0").
- The piston had a displacement of 52 cm³, 47 cm³, 43 cm³ or 38 cm³.
- The carburettor was a Solex-Brosol 32 or a Solex 40/P-II2;
- 70 hp or 90 hp at 4,700 rpm or 4,900 rpm (maximum speed 5,000 rpm or 5,800 rpm);
- Top speed 160 km/h or 180 km/h

The specified equipment included: 80-litre fuel tank; bodywork approximately 50 kg lighter; no interior fittings; front wheels with a diameter of 330 mm or 381 mm; wheel width 5 3/4" and/or 7"; Girling or ATE power brakes; Cylinders with a diameter of 88 mm, 90 mm or 92 mm; displacement 1700 cm³, 1800 cm³, 1900 cm³, 2000 cm³ or 2200 cm³; compression ratio 8.5:1, 9.0:1, 9.5:1 or 10.0:1; Combustion chamber volume of 52, 47, 43 or 38 cm³; optional dry-sump lubrication with 8.5 litres; lightweight flywheel weighing approx. 5.7 kg; Solex-Brosol H 40 EIS or Solex 40 PII/2 carburettor; electric fuel pump considered optional; P1, P2 or P3 control (the two auxiliary headlights were not installed).



Now one understands why the FIA rejected the data sheet with its many ambiguities. They did not even know the actual displacement, as PUMA stated 1600 cm³ on the first page, whilst the internal description spoke of 1700 cm³ to 2200 cm³. The claim that the car was spartanly equipped reduced the weight by only about 50 kg, which makes no difference with an engine of this size.

PUMA did not have the financial resources to fund a top-class car for such an important rally – the driver-co-driver duo were fantastic, as they did not know the route and put in an outstanding performance despite having a rather inferior car.

Luis Cezar



Luis Cezar Ramos Pereira is a Brazilian rally driver who is particularly well known in the field of historic rally events and classic rallies. He regularly took part in rally events with classic cars and is also involved as an organiser and director at such events.

For example, he competed in the IX Rally Internacional – Campeonato Brasileiro in 2009 in a Volvo Amazon 122S, securing a place in the overall standings.

At the Rallye Internacional 1000 Milhas Históricas Brasileiras, a well-known classic rally regularity event in Brazil, he not only competed as a driver but also served as Diretor da Prova (event director) and organiser.



Highlights from the 1000 Milhas Históricas Brasileiras

Rallye Internacional 1000 Milhas Históricas Brasileiras

This rally is one of Brazil's most significant historic regularity events. It is organised by the MG Club do Brasil and is an internationally recognised rally for vehicles built between 1919 and 1980 with FIA Historic/FIVA status.

Distance & duration: Approximately 1,500–1,800 km over several days through various Brazilian states (SP, RJ, MG, RS, etc.).

Start & finish: Often from Shopping Iguatemi in São Paulo.

Participants: Alongside many classic car drivers, well-known names such as Formula 1 world champion Nelson Piquet have also taken part in the rally.

Luis Cezar served as Diretor de Prova (Sporting Director) for this event for several years and played a key role in securing international recognition for the rally. At the 2nd and 3rd editions of the 1000 Milhas Históricas Brasileiras, he not only took part as a competitor but also acted as director and spokesperson for the event, gave interviews and assisted with route planning and organisation.