

Taken for a ride - by Adri Bezuidenhout

(19/9/2011)

I have been taken for a ride on a number of occasions during my life and I didn't enjoy it at all. Then I got the invite from Total to attend their so-called 'A day in the life of Team Total' at the Rallystar Motorsport Academy on the R51 just outside Bapsfontein in Gauteng.

The objective of the exercise was to spend some time with members of the Total rally team and to experience first-hand the thrills of a dash through the rough and dusty section on the facility as a passenger in a proper rally car.



dvj@motorpics



totalpress@motorpics

Not willing to divulge my age, I can boast that I have enjoyed unforgettable trips in rally cars with great drivers such as Sarel van der Merwe, Hannes Grobler, Leif Asterhag and Per Eklund a few decades ago.

At the Total day I had three options. I could go with JP Damseaux, Mohammed Moosa or lady racer Stefanie Botha. I opted for Stefanie and I must admit my decision was based purely on looks, nothing else.

Stefanie is what the Americans call, eye candy. She has an easy smile and big, beautiful eyes. I wanted to experience first-hand what a beauty was capable of in the world of beasts.

Although only 24 years old, Stefanie started navigating at the tender age of 15. She moved from the navigator's to the driver's seat three years later.

Once strapped into the Toyota life explodes into action. The friendly and charming beauty sitting next to me turns into a beast. Lightning-fast steering inputs, left hand grabbing the handbrake to get the Toyota's backend around tight corners, super quick gear changes, heavy braking, it all plays through my mind in slow motion as if I am on screen saver.

During all this mobile madness into which I am cocooned I glance over at Stefanie. Those beautiful eyes are larger, almost laser-like as they scan the bumpy and twisty dirt road ahead. She's in a different world altogether. The world of rallying.

Is she any good? I think she is brilliant. She slows down at the end of the section and we glance at each other. There's the smile again. And those beautiful eyes are back to normal.

I think to myself; for once it was nice being taken for a ride. What's more, many times world rally champion Sebastien Loeb isn't my hero any more. Stefanie Botha is. For more information on the Rallystar Motorsport Academy go to www.rallystar.co.za.

