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## **Privateer Rider Representing Australia in DAKAR RALLY 2006**

Photos courtesy of [www.motorcycleconsulting.com.au](http://www.motorcycleconsulting.com.au)



On the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005, 35yr old, Christophe Barriere Varju will head off on what can only be described as the toughest race on earth.... The infamous Dakar Rally.

This year's event starts in Lisbon, Portugal and travels over 9000km to the finish, in Dakar, the capital of Senegal. Almost 5000km of "special" stages where competitors can make up time are linked together with "liaison" stages where a competitor must complete the section in a given time to avoid a time penalty.

This year 508 teams will start the race, made up of 240 motorcycles, 188 cars and 80 trucks; in addition there will be 240 assistance vehicles traveling down through Africa as well as aircraft carrying officials and media.

This year's race is returning to the origins of rally raid, the road book, for navigation. GPS functions will be reduced compared to recent years. Other changes include speed limiting the bikes to 150km/hr and a reduced fuel range of 250km between refueling points.

During the 16 day navigational race, over 12 tonnes of media equipment is transported by airplane every day. Video footage is broadcast on 84 channels across 187 countries, a combined total of over 500hrs.

Christophe will be the only Privateer Rider residing in and representing Australia in this year's Dakar Rally.

Now an Australian citizen, Christophe was born in the South of France, but spent most of his life growing up in the Ivory Coast, West Africa. It was there that motorcycle racing began to flow in his blood. Christophe's racing career started in 1984, racing motocross in the Ivory Coast Championship. Over the next few years, his name would become synonymous with motocross in West Africa.



By 1991 Christophe decided to look for further challenges and made the move to San Diego, California. There he earned a degree in Business Administration and MBA. Being at home on sandy circuits helped Christophe to many race wins in Mexico as well as the 1997 125cc and 250cc championship held in Arizona. A move to New York in 1998 prevented him from training and racing for a couple of years.

In 1999 another chapter of his life began when he moved to Sydney Australia. Christophe raced local motocross races, then focused on starting his own business in 2001. By 2004, some twenty years after starting motorcycle racing, Christophe set himself a new challenge.....to complete the toughest race on earth.



Christophe now resides in Nelson Bay where Stockton Beach has become his personal training ground, where not only does he practice riding, but also techniques for extracting the bike when bogged in soft sand.

This change of discipline has Christophe researching every facet of endurance racing. Advice from riders such as Andy Caldecott, Alain Duclos and David Schwarz has been invaluable in mentally preparing Christophe for what he is about to endure. This race is as much about managing your mental state, and body as it is about the machine.

Christophe's goal this year is to finish and learn as much as possible. Future plans are coming together to put in a 3 or 4 rider team from Australia for the following year.

For 2006, Christophe is riding his purpose built KTM 660 Rally, under the BvW Global name but has joined with Team Tony Togo, managed by Tony Voithofer, the KTM importer and dealer in West Africa. This will enable Christophe to have support as well as a shared mechanic during the race.

Obviously the cost of entering such an event is astounding. At this stage Christophe has several sponsors, the major one being his own company, BvW Global. Three other Australian companies, Red Wahoo, Avytar and Oil Industry Catering and Services are helping back his Dakar assault. Christophes is still seeking more sponsorship as we go to press.

Daily updates on the race will be aired on SBS each afternoon, and Christophe's times and progress will be available on the official Dakar website ([www.dakar.com](http://www.dakar.com))



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