

GS and 'Squash' go to Mexico

An adventurous spirit is common to every GS rider – but one British woman is even bolder than most when it comes to taking on incredible challenges. Squash Falconer, who has ridden since childhood and began learning to drive at the age of six, using an adapted car on the family farm, is passionate about pushing the boundaries.

Her latest adventure saw her travel to Baja, Mexico to cover 4,000km in just two-and-a-half weeks. Squash – christened Louise – and her BMW F 800 GS tackled off-roading, dirt tracks and long days, with the whole experience caught on camera. Squash, who is best known for riding to Mont Blanc, climbing the peak, then paragliding from the top, had her adventures filmed for Mexican TV series Rodando por Mexico (which translates as Rolling across Mexico).



Co-presented by locals Paco Garcia and Andres Martinez, both of who have a passion for BMW motorcycles and their home country, the series is all about showcasing Mexico's culture, history, wildlife and landscapes – as well as the BMW Motorrad enthusiasts who explore it.

Squash's bike was professionally customised for the trip, as were Paco and Andres' machines. The GS' bright red, green and blue 'plumage' honours indigenous Mexican macaw, the guacamaya, while Paco's bike was styled as a jaguar and Andres' as a crocodile. Throughout the trip, the machines were reliable on even the toughest terrains.



“I was invited to go on the trip and I wanted to go because I love BMW motorcycles and was excited to explore a country that I hadn't seen before and knew very little about,” explains Squash.

“I was totally amazed by the diversity in Baja. We left a city, then the next thing, we were riding alongside the ocean on a coastal road. Then, within a few hundred kilometres, we were in the middle of the desert surrounded by huge cacti! The roads were a delightful surprise – they're in great condition and wonderful to ride along.



“We did some off-road riding as well, to the Sierra San Francisco. I was really nervous, but the bike wasn't and it rode over the terrain with no problems! We also spent a couple of days riding mules down into a canyon to see cave paintings, which were more than 10,000 years old. We camped in the middle of nowhere, under the stars and it was a really wonderful experience.”

The trip also took Squash to some pop culture icons – one of which came as a complete surprise. “One day, we stopped off at a hotel for lunch – but it wasn't any hotel, it was the actual Hotel California! It was mind-blowing to be in the place where the Eagles' song was actually written – I knew the song, of course, but I had no idea the hotel actually existed!”

There were other unexpected delights throughout the trip, including whale watching, snorkelling with sharks, and an impromptu visit to a piano museum, where a visiting world-class pianist moved the motorcyclists to tears with a rendition of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata.

While the trip was full of surprises, the performance of Squash's BMW F 800 GS was completely consistent. She says: "The bike coped perfectly. We rode a huge distance, including off-road and it never faltered. The trip was always going to be on a BMW motorcycle – it was a crucial part of the invitation to ride across Mexico and, for me, a huge part of the attraction of doing the trip.



"After choosing a GS for my Mont Blanc challenge I knew they were reliable, comfortable, fun and brilliant bikes that would also get the job done, whatever the conditions and terrain!"

"I've always had an adventurous spirit and the GS bikes totally fit in with that. I have a can-do attitude and always just go for it, and the GS encapsulates that very same attitude. They represent exploration and adventure – it will be the rider who has to stop first."

When not exploring the world, Squash is a regular speaker at schools and events, and says she hopes her willingness to try new experiences will inspire others. "I think the world of adventure is very much dominated by men and I hope that if young girls see another woman doing it they'll realise it's an option for them too.

"It's my aim to inspire everyone to go for their dreams though, not just women. It doesn't matter how big or small a dream is: with the right mix of self belief, preparation, planning, training and imagination, people can be amazed by their own potential."

Squash has already taken part in a series of high-adrenaline adventures so far this year, besides her Baja trip. She skied the total vertical drop of the combined height of seven summits in Aosta, France – an incredible 43,000ft (13,100 metres) – in aid

of the Ski the World fundraising challenge, which raises money for UK children's charity Make a Wish.

There are plenty more projects on the horizon. This month she will participate in the Love Velo Mont Blanc cycling challenge, which involves cycling 176km with over 4,000m of vertical climb. She will also ride the Albertville Etape – a stage of the notoriously tough Tour De France.

The summer will see Squash scale two of Europe's highest mountains – Mont Blanc and Mount Rosa – on a single expedition, involving cycling, mountaineering and 'flying'. "I can't give away too many more details at the moment," she says.

The year is scheduled to end with a trip to America, where the intrepid rider aims to explore California and deliver a speaking tour.



For more information, including a blog detailing her adventures in Mexico, visit www.squashfalconer.com.



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