



COSTA SMERALDA

REPORT & PHOTOGRAPHY: HUGH BISHOP

Family way

Driving the Martini Lancia Delta HF 4WD, Juha Kankkunen kept the Costa Smeralda crown safely in the Finnish 'family', as last year's winner Henri Toivonen would surely have wished, although his younger brother Harri was in Sardinia, too, but was forced to retire after just one stage. Poor Patrick Snijers was also able to catch an early boat home once more, as could Fabrizio Tabaton and Mauro Pregliasco, all going out on the first day. British honours were upheld by the Audi Coupe Quattro of David Llewellyn who was just unable to match the pace of Dario Cerrato's Totip Lancia.

As usual, the all-gravel Costa Smeralda Rally was based at the select resort of Porto Cervo on the north-east coast of Sardinia. Shortened to comply with the latest FISA requirements, the rally was still held over three days with some 17 stages totalling 420kms. Juha Kankkunen set the pace from the beginning, taking 4secs from Cerrato over the opening stage, with the further Lancias of Patrick Snijers and Fabrizio Tabaton close on their heels. Harri Toivonen had the doubtful honour of becoming the first leading retiree when the Mazda gearbox failed, leaving him stranded in the middle of the second test near Telti. Kankkunen was fastest on this, too, from Gianni del Zoppo's little Fiat Uno Turbo.

Tabaton lost third spot on the next stage when his centre Ferguson differential bedded after it dumped all its oil. Snijers in the Bastos/Tre Gazelle car was swift to follow him to the bar, slipping a rock on the next long stage.

He lost 10mins, driving out on a flat tyre, and then his transmission failed, promoting David Llewellyn to third in the Emilio Radaelli organised Audi Sport Europe Team Coupe Quattro, just ahead of Mauro Pregliasco in yet another Lancia, del Zoppo and Andrea Zanussi, who was having his first drive in a front-wheel drive car on gravel—a Peugeot 309 GTi.

The battle for GpN dominance was also between two Lancia Deltas, the young son of 'Tony' Fassina, Alessandro, in his Totip car losing the edge temporarily to Gianfranco Cunico.

By the end of stage 6 things were beginning to look pretty grim for Lancia, though, as Pregliasco was missing, believed to have a centre diff failure. However, at the end of the day, the leading Lancia duo were still there, even though there were some strong rumours suggesting that the second place car of Dario Cerrato may not have been the same car with which he started...

Cloudless crystal blue skies again greeted drivers for the second day's rallying with a strong wind reducing any dust problems. Kankkunen was a little slow to wake up. Having set fastest time over every stage the first day, he was beaten by Cerrato by 1sec on each of the first two stages, before he was reminded by Juha Piironen that there was prize money for winning each stage! Despite his best efforts, Llewellyn, who was obviously at a power disadvantage, could make little impression on the leading duo, and when the sump was holed in one section through a quarry, David decided to ease the pace and settle for third, being comfortably ahead of the 80 Quattro of the Alessandrini brothers also in a Radaelli car.

Kankkunen eased his pace sufficiently to tempt Cerrato to attack a little, but after a quick spin on the very smooth, yet slippery, 'marble' covered stages around Tempio Pausania, he decided it was better to take the points for second place.

By the regrouping back on the quayside in Porto Cervo, little had changed on the leaderboard, Kankkunen having extended his lead to just over

David Llewellyn now holds fourth place ahead of Kankkunen.

2mins, with Lancias still holding the Group N category as well, with Cunico from Fassina. But whereas little would change on the overall scene on the final leg, Group N was destined to be turned on its head: first Cunico left the road four stages from the finish, with Stefano Fabbri retiring his GpN Lancia on the same stage with a strut failure. Then Fassina, too, went off, leaving GpN to the two Mazda 323s of Maneco and Tulini, Tulini's having been rolled the first day.

Given reliability, there was never any doubt about the two Juhas taking the laurels, but it was very nice to see that, even though Kankkunen is World Champion, he and Juha Piironen—as a way of saying thanks to the hard working mechanics—hired two power-boats for the day after the finish and took them all out for a rather alcoholic lunch.

Oreille still maintains his ECR lead, but Cerrato's second spot brings him to within just 5pts, and a similar amount ahead of the luckless Snijers, who could well end up forfeiting the series for a second year to an Italian.

COSTA SMERALDA RALLY (I)

European Rally Championship, coefficient 4

Italian Rally Championship, round 2

Pos	Driver/Co-driver	Car	Group	Result
1	Juha Kankkunen/Juha Piironen	Lancia Delta HF 4WD	A	4h46m14s
2	Dario Cerrato/Geppi Cerri	Lancia Delta HF 4WD	A	4h47m29s
3	David Llewellyn/Phil Short	Audi Coupe Quattro	A	4h54m49s
4	Paolo Alessandrini/Ai Alessandrini	Audi 80 Quattro	A	4h58m10s
5	Andrea Zanussi/Poppy Amati	Peugeot 309 GTi	A	5h00m27s
6	Gianni Del Zoppo/Pierangelo Scalvini	Fiat Uno Turbo	A	5h06m41s
7	Maneco/Bucci	Mazda 323 4WD	N	5h11m31s
8	Tulini/Degli Innocenti	Mazda 323 4WD	N	5h13m36s
9	Aghini/Farnocchia	Peugeot 205 GTi	N	5h14m08s
10	Grazioli/Grazioli	Lancia Delta HF 4WD	N	5h11m27s

European Championship positions: 1. Oreille, 110pts; 2. Cerrato, 105; 3. Snijers, 100; 4. Llewellyn, 99; 5. Kankkunen, 80; 6. Servia & Foubly, 60; etc.