

Local rally heroes ready to shine on Saturday

- **Local stars sell Rallyday seats for charity**
- **Davis: 'We've baked one heck of a cake...'**

Motorsport's fastest and most famous will descend on Chippenham's Castle Combe circuit for Rallyday on Saturday and joining them will be some of the south-west's highest profile drivers.

Now in its 16th year, Rallyday has become an annual fixture on the sporting calendar and nowhere more so than with Pontrilas driver Phil Collins. At the height of his power, Collins was a force to be reckoned with in the British Rally Championship. Now, though, his time behind the wheel is more about putting smiles on faces.

And he'll be doing just that when he fires up his Ford Escort at Rallyday on Saturday. And those with the widest smiles will be the people sitting next to him. Having paid for the privilege at a charity auction, Collins will be busy handing out rides of lifetimes.

"I've been coming to Rallyday religiously for the last 10 years," said Collins, "and I love it. It's a great place to meet everybody and catch up again after another year, but as well as that it's one of the fairly rare occasions when we get to drive a rally car quickly in this part of the world.

"There aren't many rallies for us to do down here which is why it's so important that we support Rallyday. Saturday's always a great day out, we raise quite a bit of cash for the local charities and the fans get to see some of the best rally cars around. I love it. We get sent out onto the track in batches of around 15 cars and I always hang around at the back of the pack, just so I can try to overtake a few of the cars in front and give my passenger value for money for their donation – not to mention keeping those watching on entertained."

There will be more than 200 rally cars at Castle Combe on Saturday and more than 1000 rally-oriented cars being driven and displayed statically. Alongside Collins' Escort, the world's fastest rally car will share the same stage when Welshman Elfyn Evans and his M-Sport World Rally Team-mate, Estonian Ott Tänak drive a Ford Fiesta WRC for the first time in public anywhere in Britain.

Rallyday organiser Tom Davis is thrilled with such a packed entry for Saturday. He said: "Having M-Sport's World Rally Championship-leading Ford Fiesta WRC here with us is incredible and a real coup for Rallyday. But that's the icing on the cake for us as organisers – and it's one heck of a cake that we've baked this year!

"We love having the guys like Phil [Collins] coming back to us year after year. As much as anything, this is their day and they really put on the show every September; the local crews are the backbone of Rallyday and we really appreciate them and the contribution they make.

"We have a whole load of local businesses that get involved with this event and help to make it happen; Saturday's a day when Chippenham, Wiltshire and the south-west puts on the biggest show of its kind in Europe, if not the world.

"And one of the best things for the local fans is that it's a free day out for the children with under-17s getting in for nothing. There is always a big emphasis placed on the family element of Rallyday. Yes, we're a show focused on rallying and off-roading, but we have plenty to keep every member of the family interested and engaged all day."

Tickets are available for Rallyday on the gate, priced £25. Under-17s get in free and rally car rides are available for £30.

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