

Lukas Baumann drives 36,000km to Melbourne Cup

By Kelly Ryan Herald Sun November 02, 2009 12:01am

- Man drives from Zurich for Melbourne Cup
- Travelled 36,000km
- Dreams of crossing Cup finishing line

HE has dodged bullets and bombs, slept in searing deserts and deep snow.

But, after seven months on the road and 36,000km travelled, it's neck and neck whether Swiss Lukas Baumann and his trusty, old Volvo get to cross the finish line at the Melbourne Cup - having driven to the event from home in Zurich, the *Herald Sun* reports.



Lukas Baumann has driven an old Volvo from Zurich to be at Melbourne Cup / Rebecca Michael

The crazy businessman and passionate horse lover decided early this year he wanted to be at the race that stops the nation.

But there was a twist. He wanted to drive here.

He quit his job, sold his apartment and hit the road in the 15-year-old, four-cylinder vehicle he bought second-hand from his father.

Everyone who knew him told him he was mad. His mechanic said the car would never make it.

Having celebrated his 39th birthday last week, he and his left-hand drive Volvo have arrived just in time for Tuesday's race. The car's had a wash and Mr Baumann has borrowed a suit for the special event.

Now comes the crunch. "Having come so far, I want them to let me drive over the finish line to make the trip complete," he said yesterday.

He knows it will be hard, well, probably impossible, to get the go-ahead.

"Lexus is a major sponsor of the Melbourne Cup and they might not like a Volvo there. But they can cover all the badges, just to let us finish our dream after our very long journey."

There are many layers to Mr Baumann's obsessed odyssey.

He is a successful horseman who has travelled the world competing in three-day events.

He is an intrepid traveller who back-packed around Australia on a working visa in 1996 when he attended his first Melbourne Cup.

"I remember standing in a path where all the roses are and thinking this is so good, I will be back."

The dream of being at the 2009 Melbourne Cup took him on a journey which has since become the dream.

"All the wonderful people I have met, the things I have seen, the fact that I have eaten street food and not even been sick."

Comments on this story

heleneb7 of Lightning Ridge N.S.W. au Posted at 5:00pm November 03, 2009

If you think of writing a book, i would love to read about your adventure. Let as know if you got to the finishing line? I admire you madness! Helene

Steve of Perth Posted at 3:30pm November 03, 2009

I agree that it would have been an adventure, but it's not true to say that he used less petrol then by flying -- in fact he used approximately three times more ... however, he certainly wasn't asleep, or watching a movie, or waiting in the transfer lounge. An adventure indeed! Well done!

sam fripp of melbourne Posted at 11:47pm November 02, 2009

I met Lukas in Zurich the week before he left - told him he was MAD. Thought it would be the last time I shook his hand unless it was in a 6 foot box! I am both amazed and thankful that he has mad it and truly wish Lukas and all his supporters Gods' speed down the final metres at Flemington. What a fantastic achievement in today's world.

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