

# FROM RUSSIA WITH MUD

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Remote forests, mountains, rivers, swamps and tough terrain make Russia ideal 4x4 country, says Stefan Povolotsky, who witnesses the off-road action







WOLFE





This page:  
Russia's wild  
terrain is gruelling  
for man and  
machine alike







## “It was tough – designed to sap their energy and snap their vehicles”

**P**ro-X (Project Russian Off-Road) organises several high-quality off-road events throughout Europe and Russia. Surprisingly, they are one of only two local organisations that allow entries from foreign nationals. The event that I had the honour of attending was their autumn Pro-X Trophy Boutique, which was held in the Bologoye district, about halfway between the capital Moscow, and St Petersburg.

The landscapes that entrants crossed over, during the week-long competition, varied greatly and there was something of everything. Fortunately, as a spectator, I was also able to appreciate the beauty of the area where the event was being held. Picturesque to look at, but tough to tackle in a 4x4.

Things got off to a colourful start in the local square as there were lots of local dignitaries in attendance. I have been fortunate to attend many off-road events throughout the UK and can now confidently say that the Russians are right up there. As TerraFirma Sales Manager for Allmakes Ltd, I was there at the invitation of our local distributor, Rover 2000, as TerraFirma were one of the headline sponsors. The first thing that struck me about this Pro-X event, apart from the fantastic organisation and setting, were the many families in attendance. I suppose that they don't have a choice as the event is a week long and consists of eight rather tough stages, so if you want to see Dad you have to go off-roading. As a family man I can appreciate this as it dispels the notion that this is a Dads-only sport. One of the husband and wife teams taking part only got married days before the competition and they were treating this trip as their honeymoon.

The mastermind behind the course, event and general organisation was Yuri Selifonov, head of Pro-X, who is fast building a reputation for organising quality, no-nonsense events (with a big party on the last night). The Pro-X Trophy Boutique

caters for all levels and types with several classes on offer from Smart Class (standard unmodified) to Sport Hard Class (highly modified prototypes). As the competition was a week long the key was survival and living to fight another day. Each day offered both driver and navigator a fresh challenge; the only constant was that it was tough, designed to sap their energy levels and snap their vehicles. While it is a competition there is a good spirit throughout and teams are only too willing to help one another, as they know the next day it could be them that needs the help.

There was a vast mixture of challenges from Dakar-style fast desert stages to deep swamp and wetlands. Then they had long winching stages, rock crawling stages and night stages. Finally, to make sure everybody knew how to navigate, they added long road book and navigation sections into the mix.

On some days the competitors covered more than 200 miles in an area with over 3000 lakes and countless swamps and wetlands, which at times must have felt impassable to them. Good navigational skills were a must for this event as spending a whole week lost is not good for you. The event passed through some pretty undeveloped areas and due to its outstanding natural beauty the local governor would love to see it grow.

Hopefully next year we will have teams from the UK and other parts of Europe taking part. I don't see why not as the fantastic camaraderie and team spirit was unlike anything I have experienced in recent years. It will definitely make for one unforgettable adventure – plus you can bring along the family and friends. The event has been designed so that spectators can get close to the action each day.

Over here it does not matter what you drive or how you drive it – every type of 4x4 and driver is most welcome. I for one have already booked my flights for next year. Want to watch or take part? Go to [www.pro-x.pro](http://www.pro-x.pro) to get the details of next year's event or email Yuri Selifonov on [org@pro-x.pro](mailto:org@pro-x.pro).

**Above:**  
Water – and lots of it – is a feature of the swamplands in remote Russia