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MEDIA RELEASE

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Who to watch in Australasian Safari 2011

International motorsport legends, motor racing royalty and national champions will compete with local competitors in the 2011 Australasian Safari from 22 to 30 September.

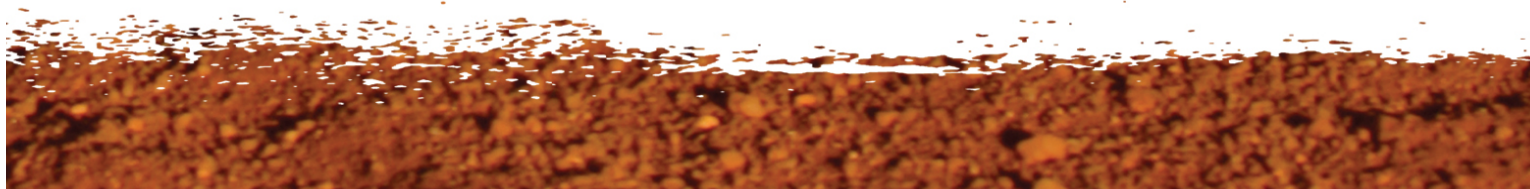
Key competitors to keep an eye out for include:

Auto

- V8 Supercar champion **Craig Lowndes** returning for his second year to defend his title after taking out the auto division in 2010 at his first off-road event. Craig's co-driver in 2011 is **John Panozzo**.
- Also as part of the PWR Holden rally team former V8 Supercar driver **Paul Weel** will drive with his father **Kees Weel** as co-driver. Kees was Lowndes' co-driver for his 2010 win. Both Lowndes and Weel will drive a PWR-prepared Holden Colorado.
- **Steve Riley** is making a welcome return to Safari this year, racing again with the Cairns Coconut Holiday Resort Team after winning in 2008 and 2009 outright with co-driver **John Doble**. This is the first time Steve and Craig Lowndes will meet up, making for an exciting battle.
- Thailand's **Rachan Trairat** is competing in his first Australasian Safari, following ten years racing in the Asia Cross-Country where he came first in the 2009 race. He will be in good hands with well-known Safari co-driver **Harry Suzuki** doing his navigating.
- **Terry 'Tangles' Conner** is back with daughter **Jodi Conner** after placing second overall in 2009. They missed last year's Safari, and are looking forward to experiencing this year with a number of family members in tow.
- After being forced to pull out on the second leg of the 2010 Safari, well known rally driver **Tony Quinn** is competing again in 2011. With co-driver **Toni Feaver** they are aiming to make it to the finish line this year.
- Australian rally champion, Perth's **Rob Herridge**, competing in his first Safari flying the flag for Subaru and Maximum Motorsport in the new Production class.

Moto

- Three-time Dakar winner, Frenchman **Cyril Despres** will be making his Australasian Safari and Australian debut. An international motorsport star, Cyril will come to the Safari direct from winning the Rally dos Sertoes in Brazil and will ride a KTM 450RR.
- Three-time Safari winner and four-time Finke winner **Ben Grabham** is racing in his fifth Safari, also on KTM. Brother **Damien Grabham** is also competing again in 2011 for Husaberg Rallye Racing. He's had a great competitive year winning two out of three rallies he has raced and came second at the third. He is ready to take on the best.



- Swedish rally princess **Annie Seel** is competing in her third Safari. The only individual female racer, Annie has previously raced in five Dakar rallies and was the Dakar 2010 Female Champion.
- Competing in his first Safari and first Australian event is Italian **Manuel Lucchese**. A professional rally racer and moto journalist, Manuel is currently the top Italian racer in the world at just 22 years old. He has a big following in the off-road racing scene in Italy.
- 2009 winner **Jacob Smith** is set to make a comeback after breaking his leg in last year's race. His brother **Todd Smith** placed second in the Moto Division in 2010, and will also be racing to win. Both will race for GHR Honda.
- **David Schwarz**, one of Safari's most experienced competitors, has an unequalled record of eight Top 10 Safari finishes, and has competed twice in Dakar and is preparing for his third.
- UK-born, Dubai-based **Sam Sunderland** is a hot young rider who will give the champs a run for their money, having beaten Raid World Champion Marc Coma on two stages at the Dubai rally earlier this year.
- 2011 Condo winner Queenslander Rod **Faggotter** who is using Safari as Dakar 2012 preparation.

Quad

- Seasoned veteran **Paul Smith** is back to defend his title for his third Safari. He has more than fifteen years of offroad competition experience, including competing in 11 Finkes and three Condos, as well as the two most recent Safaris.
- Organic almond farmer **John Maragozidis**, won the 2008 Safari Quad division and says he has covered more competitive desert kms on a quad than anyone else in the country.

Also keep an eye out for:

- **Murray Young** (62 years old), Safari's oldest competitor this year, bringing a wealth of rallying experience to the auto division.
- The return of Safari legend, local **Ivan Erceg** who, despite crashing badly and breaking ribs and his shoulder in 2010, is back in form and is sure to again be the talk of the bivouac with his Grizzly Adams looks and larrikin charm.

A full [competitor list](#) and more information is available at www.australasiansafari.com.au

Updates are available on their [Facebook Page](#) and on Twitter at [@austsafari](#). Also check out last year's event on our YouTube channel – [AustralasianSafari](#).

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