



www.evo-challenge.ie

THE 2009  
MITSUBISHI RALLIART  
EVOLUTION CHALLENGE  
IRELAND  
IS SUPPORTED BY:



# Press Information

## MITSUBISHI RALLIART EVOLUTION CHALLENGE IRELAND PREVIEW - ROUNDS ONE AND TWO



- Quality Hotels West Cork Rally  
14th & 15th March 2009.
- Irish Mitsubishi series gets set to start second season.
- Organisers introduce a 'pay as you go' scheme in response to pressures of the economic climate.

12th March 2009

The 2009 Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge Ireland kicks off this weekend with the Quality Hotels West Cork Rally, the classic Cork Motor Club organised event representing rounds one and two of the official series for Group N Lancer Evolutions.

Having received high numbers of enquires for regulations and entry information during the winter, only four crews have registered for the first event in the Mitsubishi series, a factor that is a direct reflection on the current economic climate, as Evolution Challenge Manager Simon Slade explains:

"We are around 50% down on numbers from that of last year. However, I am pleased to report that we do have more teams joining us later in the season. It is apparent that the whole sport is suffering from the economic downturn – especially in the homologated classes - and I can understand that competitors do not want to commit to a full season without being confident that their finances are secure enough to see them through. Therefore, to help with this, we are offering a 'pay as you go' scheme, where crews can sign up and pay their entry fee on an event-by-event basis."

Even with the reduction in numbers, organisers of the series have pledged to continue their commitment to the sport, especially as there will be more crews joining as the season progresses, such as last year's winners in West Cork, Alan Carmichael and co-driver Ivor Lamont.

"There has been some talk that the series was not going to go ahead this year", said Slade. "It would be easy just to cancel when things get tough, but we are here for the long term and, together with the continued support from our sponsors, I am delighted to report that we are in a position to go ahead as planned."

The highest seeded of the four Evolution Challenge entries is the talented local crew of Keith Cronin/Greg Shinnors, who contested last year's UK Evolution Challenge and during the past year have earned themselves the well-deserved reputation of being one of Ireland's best.

Next of the Mitsubishi runners is Stanley Ballentine, who has recruited local co-driver Donnacha O'Callaghan for this event. The experienced Ulster driver was a major contender in last year's Irish Evo Challenge and so far is the only competitor to return for a second season.

Next in line are Liam Egan/Colin Harkness, who are likely to be serious contenders for the title. Now based in NewYork, Galway-born Egan has committed to a season with the Irish Evo Challenge and will commute across the Atlantic for each of the rounds.

Other newcomers to the series are Thomas White and Robert Murphy, who will be campaigning a James Foley Rallysport Evolution IX and are hoping to gain experience and gather pace as the season progresses, this being their first full year in a Mitsubishi.

*continued...*

The Quality Hotels West Cork Rally gets underway on Saturday morning and sees eight stages before the overnight halt. A further eight stages follow on Sunday, with each day representing a round of the Mitsubishi series.

The Evolution Challenge Ireland offers competitors an extensive prize fund, with the Champion winning a supported drive in a James Foley Rallysport prepared Group N Lancer Evolution X for selected rounds of the 2010 Irish Tarmac Championship. Other prizes up for grabs include vouchers, tyres, fuel and awards on each event and at the end of the season.

Championship organisers welcome new sponsors Carbone Lorraine, who are the preferred supplier of brake pads supplied by Murray Motorsport, who will be providing technical support and preferential prices to Evo Challenge competitors.

The 2009 Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge Ireland is also supported by: Pirelli tyres, Sunoco fuel, James Foley Rallysport, Speedline Corse wheels, PIAA lights, Pacenotes, Sparco racewear and Mitsubishi Motors Ireland.

**Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge Ireland  
Rounds One & Two - Entries in start number order**

- 7 Keith Cronin (Bantry)/Greg Shinnors (Limerick)
- 44 Stanley Ballentine (Strabane)/Donnacha O'Callaghan (Mallow)
- 45 Liam Egan (New York)/Colin Harkness (Beragh)
- 46 Thomas White (Foulksmills)/Robert Murphy

ENDS

**Photo:** Last year's winners of the Evolution Challenge in West Cork, Alan Carmichael and co-driver Ivor Lamont.

For media enquiries and copyright free images please contact the  
Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenge Manager & Press Officer Simon Slade:  
Tel: +44 (0)1935 424873 | Mob: +44 (0)7966 153555 | E.mail: [simon@rpmprmo.com](mailto:simon@rpmprmo.com)

For the latest Evolution Challenge news visit:  
[www.evo-challenge.ie](http://www.evo-challenge.ie)