

After a long and time-consuming preparation, Brendan and Rhianon are ready to contest their first Alpine Rally which starts in Bairnsdale (Victoria) today.

Brendan and his team of willing helpers have spent the past twelve months building a Datsun 1600 which Brendan will drive in Australia's most iconic classic rally this weekend.

The event is held every two years and attracts around 100 entries and has always been a 'bucket list' rally for Brendan. Despite the long hours of preparation just to get to the start line, it's all been worth it for the thrill of competing in the event.

Normally a three-day event, this year's rally will be shorter but will still include around 200 kilometres of stages. The Alpine Rally gets underway this afternoon (Friday) with a 9 kilometre stage followed by a short 1.5 kilometre special stage in Bairnsdale.

The competition will start in earnest on Saturday, with the remaining 190 kilometres to be covered on mostly tight, twisty forestry stages.

Brendan and Rhianon (Gelsomino, co-driver), will start as Car 3 on the road and have admitted it will take a bit of time to get used to using route charted instructions again. The pair are more comfortable with pace noted events and it's been a number of years since they entered a route charted event, so the first stage of the rally will be a chance to familiarise themselves.

The Datsun 1600 - nicknamed Datzilla - in which the pair will compete, came about thanks to Brendan's quest to build the ultimate club rally car. Whilst the car is a regular Datsun 1600, it has been fitted with a modern driveline.

The past twelve months have been dedicated to building the car, and the past three months have been particularly hectic as the deadline to the rally approached.

"It's been a massive effort to get to the start line," Brendan said. "Without the help of so many people who have put in a huge amount of time, we would never have made it.

"I've always wanted to compete in the Alpine Rally and see what all the buzz is about so to be here ready to go is a huge thrill but also a bit of a relief!

“Our aim for the weekend is get to the finish but if we manage to get a podium result, that would be outstanding.”

Part 2 of Brendan’s vlog about the Datsun build will be released on YouTube today. You can also view it on the [home page](#) .

Brendan would like to thank the following people and businesses for their tremendous support with the project:

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