



Colombres Rally 2025

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Two members' road trip to the renowned Colombres rally 2025.

Four blokes, two members, three classic BMWs and a Laverda RGS, all pre-1988, made the journey to the 2025 Colombres classic bike rally in northern Spain last September/October 2025.

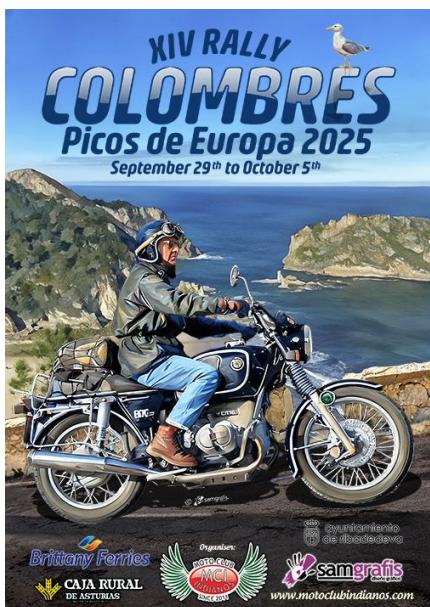


Figure 1 - M-C Indianos
Colombres Rally poster 2025

The Colombres rally is widely lauded as one of the best classic bike rallies in Europe. It has its roots in an any-age machine rally, started in the 1979 by Club Moto-Piston. The rally soon outgrew its home in Santilla del Mar, between the towns of Colombres and Santander in Northern Spain and later moved venue to Santander. Whilst at Santilla del Mar, in 1987, Moto Piston introduced a spin-off rally purely for "ancient motorcycles" which, has survived the move to Santander but seems to be less popular than the Colombres rally.

In 2019, realising the loss of revenue to the local economy to Santander, the rally was resurrected by a fledgling club, Moto Club Indianos, from Colombres. It has been held in that town since.

Rally entrance is restricted to machines made before 1988. It is entirely non-competitive and, provided entrants stay ahead of the sweeper vehicle, (the van which collects broken down machines and takes them back to base to the "Shed of Shame"), bikes cover the provided route in their own time and at their own pace. There is plenty of opportunity to stop for a leisurely coffee when the bum gets numb. M-C Indianos provide the daily route on road-book compatible sheets and a QR code to a GPX file for Google maps – which didn't work very well due to the limitations of Google Maps. Road signs at every deviation from route are also marked with a small direction arrow.



Figure 2 - La Parra Restaurant Bar

Whilst most of the daily runs start from the town square in Colombres, the administrative centre for the rally is actually at a truck-stop restaurant called La Parra, about 10 minutes ride from Colombres.

Daily runs range from 60 to 160 miles, over a range of scenery and roads from faster sweeping roads running along river valleys with the river on one side and towering peaks on either side; to narrow twisting roads over mountain passes and flat roads along the coast and beside the sea.

All routes end at the La Parra truck-stop, where a “free” glass of beer is included in the entrance fee and awaits riders at the end of the ride. Most days are about 100 miles and entrants can expect to ride about 900 miles in the week.

Every day, meeting at Colombres square, a passport is stamped, which is examined at the end of the week, where six stamps are exchanged for an exclusive rally badge.

On the Friday there is an optional 300-mile run. Registration for this run is extra and at additional expense. On the same day, there is a 165-mile run for those with more tender backsides or who do not relish the early start. The 300-mile run is timed, with prizes for those completing it in the fastest time. 300 miles must be completed at an average of about 30mph which, for the twisty mountain roads, is quite a feat of endurance for bikes, riders (and butts). In case anyone is tempted, you need to be aware that there is no sweeper wagon provided for this route (it is on the 165-mile route) so, if your trusty steed complains, coughs and becomes less than trusty, you are on your own for recovery!



Figure 3 - Rally passport with daily stamps

As for my attendance at Colombres with Adrian, it is still fiercely contested between us as to who invited whom, but one way or another, I agreed to accompany him on this rally. It had been on my bucket-list since 2019, when my wife, Anne, and I were on our own tour of the Picos mountains on our GS1200. We travelled from Portsmouth on the same ferry as the rally entrants for that year, out to Santander and back. All of those we met on the ferry and during the week at cafes, raved about their experiences.

In discussing logistics with Adrian, I had intended to take a 1978 BMW R60, a very low mileage (8000 miles from new) family bike (bought in the 1980s by my late brother in law. I acquired the bike around 2020, still with the same 8000 miles on the clock. I had owned the bike for many years but had recently donated it to my son. When I asked son, Brett, if I could borrow the bike, he declined! Because he, too, wanted to go to the rally, with me.



That left me without a machine (I do have a very unreliable 1956 R50 (gearbox needed if anyone has one) but I was sure it wouldn't make the 900 miles in a week). I was therefore “forced” (with a wide grin), to source and purchase another classic machine. It coincided with Richard Evans finally succumbing to my constant nagging and deciding to very reluctantly part company with his green 1976 R90S. The deal was done and I became the new owner of “Kermit”. The history of the green R90/s is another story.

[Read the article on the home page of the website.](#)

Figure 4 - Kermit in the mountains near Sotres

In the meantime, Brett had mentioned on a family Wassap group that he and I were going on the rally. Interest in attending with us was quickly expressed by my two brothers, my brother-in-law, a nephew and the son of Anne's step-sister. Big gulp! How was I going to break this to Adrian. Was he going to regret agreeing to take me if he knew I came with half of my extended family? Thankfully, when reality clicked in, the relatives dropped out one-by-one; until there remained just one brother, Steve on his Laverda RGS and son Brett on the R60. Adrian would take his R80 G/S and I did suggest to him that he might like to change his surname to Martin - in the interests of neatness you understand.

On the rally, Adrian, Steve, Brett and I chose to stay in the Mirador hotel. 2 minutes by bike and 15 on foot, from La Parra. This was one of the more expensive of the options available, but did represent 3-star comfort to our ageing bones. Cheaper accommodation is offered by M-C Indianos. Entrants can, of course, arrange their own accommodation.

When it came to getting to northern Spain, Brett and I discovered that the Brittany Ferry from Portsmouth to Santander cost roughly the same for a van and trailer as for two motorcycles. This was a no-brainer, as we could take all the kit we wanted, hot, cold, wet dry etc., together with spares and consumables like; oil; spare inner tubes etc. and basic tools, and also provide a means of getting any of the 4 bikes homes, should one or two of them decide to let us down. Flexible tickets allowed us to swap ridden and trailered bikes if necessary.



Figure 5 – Rear of Mirador Hotel and its beach.



Figure 6 - Sotres, high in the Picos country park

On the up-side, the weather was fabulous until the very last day, when the rain came down in stair-rods. The only sub-optimal occurrence was that Adrian was unable to ride for three days, confined to his hotel bedroom with tummy troubles, which were not food related we are sure.

As for the daily rides, all were spectacular but perhaps a highlight was the "cheese run". We rode a circular route around the mountains, with stunning roads, with an up-and-back deviation to the village of Sotres, a beautiful little village nestled high up in the Asturian mountains.

The area is famous for its gorgeous Cabrales blue cheese; quite expensive in the UK, but served every day with crusty bread as a choice for lunch. A very generous and varied lunch, with local hot and cold food, is provided every day along the route.

On the subject of food, M-C Indianos also provides a buffet dinner on Thursday evening, with a locally sourced and inspired menu. A giant paella was front and centre, the same giant paella being provided in Colombres Square, for lunch, as a finale on Saturday.

What did it all cost? Per person it worked out at about £1250 per person. That includes the return ferry from Portsmouth to Santander, with 4-berth cabins, the 3* Mirador Hotel on a bed and high-quality breakfast basis (much cheaper options are available). Bikers' special 3-course evening meal served nightly at the hotel, with wine, bread and water; rally entry with all lunches and Thursday evening meal. Not included in this price is insurance and fuel.



If you have a classic bike, are itching to ride on impeccable roads though spectacular scenery, usually in decent weather, with many like-minded enthusiasts, add it to your bucket list