

Speed show hits the road

JAMES BRESNEHAN | April 18, 2012 12:01 am

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THE \$20 million Targa Tasmania roadshow unleashed its colour and excitement on George Town yesterday as a field of 230 cars turned their wheels in anger for the first time in this year's event.

The town square came alive to a symphony of exotic cars, everything from a 1934 Jaguar SS Special to a state-of-the-art Lamborghini dream machine.

Promotional girls Ella Simpson and Madi Martin were a hit as they handed out freebies to spectators.

George Town was locked down for the annual 5.26km blast through the streets to decide the running order for day one today.

Bales of hay lined tight corners and marked traffic islands, but that did not stop several cars hitting both.

It is the longest Targa in the 21-year history of the event.

"It's a real test for the competitors," event director Mark Perry said. "Today was just a warm-up for them. The real event starts tomorrow."

Targa Tasmania is the world's biggest tarmac rally and widely regarded as the best.

"There are very few places in the world where you can close off so many public roads and run a world-class competition," Mr Perry said.

"I met a father and son today who had come from Brazil especially to see Targa Tasmania."

Targa starts today and finishes in Hobart on Sunday



STEALING THE SHOW: Targa promotion girls Ella Simpson, left, and Madi Martin add glamour and colour to the first day of Targa 2012 yesterday. Picturee: ROSS MARSDEN