

#SHEDRIVES, SHE DISCOVERS

With two successful editions in Mumbai and Delhi-NCR, #SheDrives is proving to be the perfect platform for women to take their driving skills to the next level.



APRC champion Gaurav Gill with #SheDrives participants in Gurugram.

AN INDIVIDUAL'S EXPERTISE behind the wheel and passion for automobiles does not depend on their gender. It is this philosophy that spurred Ford India and Autocar India to come together for #SheDrives - a first-of-its-kind pro-driving school for women. And to help the ladies get in touch with their inner petrolheads, we had none other than Asia Pacific Rally champion, Gaurav Gill, as driving coach.

Mumbai was chosen as the stage for the two-day inaugural event in January and this first-ever #SheDrives meet saw participation by over 80 women from all walks of life. Such was the response to this unique platform that the second leg of the event, held in Gurugram

in April, saw the number of participants grow to well over 120. Not only did the ladies get to hone their driving skills in a stock Ford Freestyle, they ended up having tremendous fun, and returned the next day to have another go at the track.

To help women learn advanced driving techniques at #SheDrives, an autocross track was constructed, consisting of fast straights, tight corners and chicanes. The morning began with Gill taking each of the participants on a sighting lap in a Ford Freestyle, acquainting them with various stretches of the track. This was followed by an all-out hot lap, which showed the participants what it would mean to drive on the edge. All



Level up: Participants in both Mumbai and Gurugram had fun kicking up dust and learning new tricks.



MUMBAI



HONEY SETIA,
TRAVEL AGENT

It's in my nature to do everything and enjoy life. I love the concept of #SheDrives. I was able to learn small things that makes a big difference when I'm on the road.



KYLIN GONSALVES,
WORKING PROFESSIONAL

The experience was way more engaging than I had expected it to be and it was immense fun. I learnt something completely new at #SheDrives.

GURUGRAM



SHIVANI GOEL,
TRAVEL CONSULTANT

I'm passionate about driving. #SheDrives helped me improve my skills and taught me to control a car better. I loved that bit about using the handbrake to drift in the Ford Freestyle.



JYOTSANA ANAND,
EDUCATIONIST

I'm a cautious driver, but the event helped me overcome my fears. No one has ever dispensed these nifty tips and tricks to me. My timing improved by almost a minute between the first and second laps!

women then drove around the dirt track and their performances were timed.

Having set a benchmark, the participants moved to a slalom course where they practised various skills such as tackling corners on dirt, dealing with understeer and oversteer, and using the handbrake to drift sideways (in a controlled manner, of course). Finally, they were given a second shot at a hot lap to see if they could shave crucial seconds off their time.

With practice coming to an end, it was time for the participants to put the pedal to the metal. But before that, topics like the right line to take around the track, acceleration, and braking were discussed with the instructors to wring the most performance out of their

cars. The one thing that stood out was how all participants felt comfortable and reassured going hell for leather in the Ford Freestyle. Thanks to the Ford DNA, it was immensely driveable and, like all Fords, an excellent handler. The general consensus was that they all felt safe in the car.

How did the participants fare? Well, nearly all of them bettered their lap times by a considerable margin. Even Gill was impressed - and that is no small feat. According to Gill, the time spent on the circuit was not just about fun. "The new insights into driving techniques will also help the participants become better and safer drivers on the road, and that's a wonderful thing," he said.

By the end of the day, there was a grin on

every participant's face. All of them felt that the very concept of a driving programme exclusively for women made them feel comfortable about signing up for such an event. The philosophy behind the event especially resonated with Sangeeta Patil, a businesswoman from Mumbai. "I was always fascinated with racing and rallying and wanted to take part in them. But I never got a chance to do so. So, this was a good opportunity for me to learn something different."

With both the Mumbai and Gurugram legs witnessing a high turnout, the #SheDrives pro driving school will soon make its way to another city. Keep an eye out for announcements on our social media channel.