

Brazilian Businessman, 57, Crosses Strait of Gibraltar Swimming

Contributed by Isaura Daniel
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Swimming across the Strait of Gibraltar non-stop for 22 kilometers (13.7 miles) until touching the Moroccan coast. Such was the objective of Brazilian businessman Alain Levy, 57. And so he did last month. Levy, for whom sports is a hobby, crossed the Strait departing from the Port of Tarifa, in Spain, and arriving at Punta Marsa, on the Moroccan territory, after six hours and twelve minutes of strokes.

The choice of the Strait was a suggestion from Levy's coach, Marcelo Lopes. The coach considered it a difficult, though adequate challenge for the swimmer, given the climate conditions and the distance. As his hands touched the rocks in Punta Marsa, the swimmer had his first contact ever with Morocco. After accomplishing the task, however, Levy took to the boat that accompanied him, and went back to Spain.

"From Spain, I took a plane with my wife and we went to Morocco, to get to know the country. It is gorgeous, I had always wanted to go there," said Levy. The businessman spent several days in the Arab country, where he travelled by car and visited a host of different cities, from Marrakech to Fez.

"The Moroccans are good people, really respectful towards tourists," he claims. He did not, however, swim back to Punta Marsa, because of the distance.

Levy believes that he should do another international open-water crossing in the next few years, but has not chosen his destination yet. Swimming is a personal challenge for the businessman, who works with toy imports in the city of São Paulo.

"Swimming has always been a plus for me," he explains. The other international open-water crossing that Levy did was in the Hudson River, in New York, United States, in 2006. Ever since he got started, though, he has already done 80 crossings.

He faces them as a personal challenge. "Whatever you want to do, you can do it," he asserts. "You don't need to be a champion, you don't need to be the best. Fulfilling your dream is all that matters," says Levy.

In order to cross the Strait of Gibraltar, the Brazilian practiced from January to July this year. The crossing was accompanied by a ship - which the swimmer followed - and by the Red Cross. Levy was the 10th oldest man in the world ever to cross the Strait.

