

Ori *E*nt Express



*The official newsletter of the Datsun Z Club Inc.
P.O. Box 24-176, Royal Oak, Auckland, N.Z.*

Issue 73, January 2009

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January 2009

Issue 73

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A new horse for the stable

The astute among you will recognise the car gracing this issues cover.

Yes, it's the shiny new Nissan 370z, released recently in Los Angeles. Our own Stuart "This Is Your Captain Speaking" Horne was there to witness the event and gossip has it he's already put his name on the list to receive one.

I'd be next in line if I was, you know, successful.

As I'm not, I will do what many others will also be doing when it arrives on our fair shores mid next year... Rubber necking it as it leaves us at the lights and download pictures off the internet for my desktop wallpaper collection.



Spec's wise, it's got the new VQ37VHR 3.7L 90° V6 making almost 250KW (332BHP). The wheelbase is shorter and wider than the 350 and it's lighter too.

And that odd bar between the rear shock towers is gone so you don't need a 3 step diagram to get your golf clubs in the back any more (seriously, the 350 had one)

I love the new hind quarters, copied unashamedly from the original 240, although I'm less enthusiastic about the nose which looks a lot like a Porsche Cayene from some angles. All in all though, it's a pretty sexy beast and I look forward to seeing some in our club in the not-too-distant future.

Moving on to club news, we just had our AGM which was abnormally docile. I choose to view that as a sign that things are running smoothly ;D

The only major change was the decision to discontinue the monthly club night in Papakura. It has been increasingly difficult to find activities to keep the nights interesting and it was pointed out that we usually have at least one other event every month anyway.



The venue will be retained and the committee meeting will continue to be held there on the first Thursday night of every month, any and all club members are encouraged to attend.

Lastly, many members still have not sent in their membership renewals for 2008/2009. If you are one of these, please do so as soon as possible.

Enjoy summer and the holidays and I hope to see you at our events in 2009!

Pest

Coming events

The 2009 calendar has yet to be formalised, so the following list is pretty short, however keep an eye on the website as more Nog-n-Natter's, cruises and trials will be added over the holiday break.

Galaxy of cars, 2009 + Z Club Concourse de Elegance

When: Sunday 1st February 2009

Where: Motat 2, Motions road, Western Springs, Auckland

The Galaxy of cars 2009 is on again at Motat and the Z Club plan to be there.

Not only will we be hosting a club display, it'll double up as our annual Concourse de Elegance so make sure your ride is extra-extra-shiny!

Gates open 7:30am, all cars to please be there by 9:45am. Drivers are asked to leave vehicles on-site till 3pm. (Please note if you arrive early you shouldn't be stuck in the bulk of the traffic that arrives after 8.30am).

Intermarque Concourse de Elegance 2009

When: Sunday 8th February 2009

Where: Ellerslie race course, Auckland

Public admission is from 10am to 4pm, price \$10.00 each, children under 12 free

If you thought the 2008 Concours show was great even if it did rain all day, 2009 will be a stunner! There will be a full weekend of Classic Car activities, culminating in the Intermarque Concours d'Elegance on the Sunday.

The Z Club will have a display again, if you're interested in showing your car, please contact a committee member.

Z Club Taupo Track Day 2009 – Get In The MMIX

When: Saturday 14th February, 2009

Where: Taupo motorsport park, Taupo

Yes it's on again. Same course as last year, even more track time.

For full details visit the official website, taupo2009.zclub.org.nz

Grass Gymkhana

When: Sunday 15th March 2009

Where: A paddock in the Clevedon area, to be advised

Keith has kindly volunteered one of his paddocks again so it's all on. Which paddock, exactly, is as yet unsure, but it will be near the last one past Clevedon.

For more information closer to the event check the website or contact a committee member.

Mini Car Club Dawn Breaker Trial

When: Sunday 25th January 2009

Where: Starting from the Scout Camp in Connought Road, Greenbay

Meeting at 6am, this fun trial finishes for breakfast. Bring a navigator, pen, clipboard, tank of gas and money for breakfast.

The Tunnel Run

When: Sunday 12th April 2009

Where: BP Silverdale on the motorway, 6kms north of Oteha Valley Road offramp.

What to bring: tank of gas, money for lunch & toll road/Tunnel, rest of the details tba.

Karaka vintage day

Sunday 30th March 2008

Talk about baking hot, I was only there for an hour and I got buuuurned. Luckily for those who were flying the club banner the Alert motorsport ezy-up was the perfect shield from those harmful rays.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, so here's 3:



Sherlock Holmes Trial

Sunday 27th April 2008

There's a first time for everything, and this was our first attempt at organising a trial. We knew 2 things, we wanted it to be different and we wanted it to be fun.

The result was weeks in the making and many miles driven, but I think we achieved a good result.

Drivers and navigators were given a map but no route, just the location of the first clue. That location led them to another clue and so on until a final "chase" to bring them home to the BBQ.

Along the way our detectives had to answer observation questions and even leave their vehicles to hunt for the murder weapon!

All in all we had a ball thinking up a challenging course (and dressing the part!) and I think those who drove it had an enjoyable time too. We'll definitely be doing it again in 2009, this time with even more twists and brain teasers!!

If you'd like to organise a trial, don't be frightened, it can be as much fun to plan one as it is to take part and the whole club benefits :)

Pest & Rachel



MacGyver Clubnight

Thursday 1st May 2008

Definite thanks to Stuart and Judith for organising a great club night!! Who would have thought we'd be giving McGyver a run for his money!!!

Hilarious is a word that comes to mind instantly! We were about to find out why the ladies needed to bring scissors and the guys needed to bring a hammer to club night, what were we going to be making, you could see the befuddlement written on everyone's faces, and the questions flying around the table. It became evident very quickly.....

Each team was allocated an Island, Fairlady, Datsun and Nissan Island, and the object of our affection was for all four members of your team to reach a fourth island, "Mr K Island", first, in theory 30 metres across the shark infested water to send a "rescue us" fax, without your feet touching the ground/water. Hmmm, easy you think, well a bit more challenging than that. Ah, but then there's a twist, goodness it really sets the McGyver minds to action, you couldn't use the items like lily pads, that's breaking the rules as the Fairlady's found out, so everyone started thinking a bit more creatively. Ok, so you could almost see the cogs ticking over, as each of the 3 teams were trying to figure out how to make the bucket of wood offcuts, 30 metres of rope, go cart tyres, cable ties, a big sheet of paper, newspapers, glue and of course our hammers and scissors work. Hmm, okay, tick, tick, tick. My team the Datsun's decided that cable ties attached to the bits of wood in a loop to fit over our shoes similar to Ski's would be a brilliant idea, then the bit of rope to pull the ski's back so the next team member could make it across to Mr K Island. Rachel and I were hurriedly making a rescue us fax, cutting out letters from the newspaper, rather reminds me of a ransom note out of a hostage movie.

A truly funny night watching the teams using a bit of lateral thinking to create the perfect mode to move their team members across the water. One team thinking that photos of girls from Sex in the City, might be suitable enticement to bribe the rescuers, and the judges. The funniest rescue fax by far had to be "help us, need beer and women" from the Nissan Island team.

What a brilliant night and at least we don't have to deploy these items to repair our Zeds. Hehehe.

Cheers

Bronzee



Tech Night at Auckland Panel & Paint

Saturday 24th May 2008

A huge thanks to Bernie for hosting a most informative night at Auckland Panel & Paint where he works. The effort and knowledge that goes into vehicle repair, especially modern vehicles with many different strengths of steel, caught me by surprise.

If you find yourself in need of panel or paint repair I'm sure Bernie wouldn't mind hearing from you. Auckland P&P is set up to handle everything from a minor fender-bender to a chassis twisting wreck and Bernie's efforts have them doing it in record time.

Pauanui Zed Run

Sunday 8th June 2008

I guess my journey that led finally to joining the Z Club on this run began in Aussie in 1984. We had the use of a very tidy 240Z during an all too brief holiday & drove it from Sydney to Brisbane & back. I was hooked. Then sometime in the 90's Dave Turner sold Betty & me a 260z which we had for a couple of years.

However (as happens in real life) it transformed itself into a Honda Accord & I had withdrawal symptoms until in 2005 I bought a 240Z from a guy in Gore. We travelled down on business & spent four days driving it home. Betty (to her credit) smiled every time I asked if she was enjoying herself. Fortunately the gear box & diff lasted the journey!



After the usual deferred maintenance (replacement gear box compliments of Mike Cartmer & a replacement diff) the Red Zed was once again hot to trot. Doing local runs around the Waikato does eventually get boring so I joined the Club.

And then I lost it completely. Mike (of the Paraparaumu spare parts enterprise) Cartmer advertised his Fairlady on the web & the rest is history as they say. Hence our appearance at Drury on the 8th June at 9.45am bright eyed & bushy tailed. What a great selection of machines!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

And what a very pleasant group of people were gathered there at Drury! We were made to feel most welcome & found Dave the Man again after all those years. Then, off we went. It may be old hat to Club members but to me being in a string of Zeds on a run was soooo enjoyable. That lovely design feature (counter sunk Speedo's that passengers cannot read) is so appealing when one is busy going quickly around corners - as one should. And there was the odd occasion when even on straight bits I had to speed up to catch the front runners. The things we are suffer'd to do!

Lunch at Pauanui was fantastic. Great food, some nice wine & a chance to socialise with people who share the same passion about Datsuns/Zeds. Too soon it was time to leave for home. Later, Imogen (bless her indeed) kindly suggested that I write something for the mag so here we are Folks.



It comes with a twist though – how about doing this run thing again but the destination will be “Out in the Styx’s” café at Pukeatua not far from Cambridge. We would like to show you the Maungatautari Ecological Island Trust and invite you to join us for a very pleasant lunch as well. Return can be via Tirau (Latte country) & highway 27 back to the Bombay’s.

Cheers People,
Betty & Neil Mac.

Tech Night at Alert Motorsport

Tuesday 8th July 2008

Thanks to Kelvin and Allan for a great evening at Alert Motorsport. Alert source and sell all kinds of motorsport components from oil coolers to tubing to brake disks and callipers.

Of particular interest was the way they manufacture certified steel braided brake lines to order, perfect for that custom hybrid race rig you hacked together one weekend :P

Thanks guys!

Crystal Cruise

Sunday 20th July 2008

The day started out with a few dark clouds and showers as we all met up at the meeting point in Mt Wellington.

With more than a dozen cars and crews all ready for one of Dales signature cruises. Just one more cloud burst and we were off.

We were set off in 2 minute intervals with simple written instructions to the lunch stop. The cruise took us across town in many different directions over roads we had never been on before, with a few questions to answer along the way.

In usual Dale fashion there were a couple of double back sections just to put a little doubt in your mind if you were going the right way.

The cruise ended up at Crystal Mountain where Dale was on hand to collect a few gold coins for our St Johns account then we all headed inside for a look at the crystals and a bite of lunch.

The day turned out to be a cracker with the sun coming out, almost needed to look for the sunscreen.

Big thanks to Dale for another great outing.

Kelvin

Nosh, Nog 'n Natter

Thursday 31st July

Food! Glorious Food!

This time we gathered at Amphora Restaurant in East Tamaki. We had an excellent turnout as usual with around 20 members.

The usual banter preceded an excellent meal.

Keep an eye on the website for the next one, we're hoping to make this a more regular event.

Winter Wander

Sunday 10th August 2008

It's amazing the roads that are right in your back yard that you might otherwise not even know existed, if it weren't for club trials!

This one, organised by Kelvin, utilised some of the lesser travelled roads around Ardmore and Clevedon. Jones road in particular was a rugged, narrow delight.

Unfortunately my Zed was feeling under the weather (left the interior light on draining the battery, no time to jump) so I navigated for the better half in her Pulsar, hardly a high speed motor! That's my excuse for our lowly placing and I'm sticking with it!!

For the record, the results:

1st Imogen and Nathan

2nd Dawn and Darryl

3rd Dave and Janice

4th Gaye , Heath and Randall

5th Rachel And Luke

6th Grant, Rozanna, Ethan and Troy

Pest

Matching Green Classic & Sports Car Club

Matching Green now that's a name to conjure with, it is a beautiful small village situated in the north of Essex, England with a large green at its centre. Once a year the Matching Green car club hold their annual summer classic & sports car club show, that has been taking place for last 14 years (unfortunately last year was rained off). The village is only accessible on three of four sides through very pretty narrow lanes and a road.

This year the day started off a good English summer morning, wet but by 9.30am the weather had improved to dry. As my wife and I arrived at the entrance to the green Dave Robinson in his striking yellow z33 approached from the lane in front of us, we followed him to the allocated Z Club parking area, soon after Chris (Croeso) in his special body shape blue z32 and Charles Leekam in his red z31 drove in and parked up. We exchanged salutation and pleasantries, at this point Mike Feeney appeared nonchalantly carrying his canvas fold away chair over his shoulder and declared he was Z car less but his estate car was in the pub car park, good place for a quick get away.

Ann and I collected our umbrella from the car and went walk about, there was an assortment of stalls displaying their wares consisting of plants and flowers, china bric a brac, used car parts, the obligatory ice cream van and food and drink marquee etc.

At 11am the show was officially opened, the master of ceremonies introduced the members of the club with their cars, giving us interesting snippets of the history of both cars and club. Throughout the morning various cars were paraded in the ring from Rolls Royce to baby Austin's the Green Goddess's each relaying their stories. Later there was entertainment with a young man who will shortly be on X factor, he was an excellent ballad and swing singer. We would like to see him do well. He was ably supported by his family at the ringside. The junior members of the club performed on their little motor bikes and a clown did various acts for the children.

The car I always find mentally fascinating is the baby Austin 7, when looking at the size and imagining a family, Mum and Dad and three children with all their food and drink plus equipment going off for the day at the seaside or two spinsters with dog driving into town to see their relatives for Sunday tea, or even three portly gentlemen popping down to the pub for a constitutional half, those were the days.

It was an enjoyable day out seeing all those well loved and cared for cars presented by their owners in such immaculate condition.

Please Z clubbers if possible come and join us next year in the UK for the event.

Reddel 300 from the Z Club in the UK <http://www.zclub.net>

Putt Putt Run

Sunday 14th September 2008

So I arrived at our start at Bastion Point, that odd yellow thing in the sky was out (I seem to remember it's called the sun, but then don't quote me on that) and there was blue stuff skyward, even pretty wispy cloud, maybe Zpring is finally here, allowing me to enjoy it all until the rest of the crew arrived. If I say it quietly it might stay.

“350z” rocks up in his behemoth Jaffa 240z, I don't think that beast of a Zed can go anywhere without lots of admiring glances.

Once everyone arrives we get ready to set off, me thinking I will meet the others at the Mini Putt as neither of my navigators could make it. Thankfully Kermit had a spare backseat navigator, *pew*, so Cinderella does get to complete the trial after all, thanks to the last minute co-pilot who was excellent, giving instructions clearly and concisely.

After we'd done a few loop de loops, haha (you evil child 240z, were you trying to make us giddy around Parnell and Remuera?) we headed off toward Mt Wellywood/Wellington, you know as they say on a clear day you can see for ever, well it's a lovely view from up there. As you probably know the drive up Mt Wellington is rather fun and on the way down seeing all the massive development below in the old quarry. 350z caught up somewhere around Sylvia Park, hearing the supercharger wail every time we moved off from the lights, always fun to have a Zed convoy even if it's a small one winding our way through the back streets of Mangere with our end point for nosh just down the road from the airport Mini Putt to wait for the others to finish.

All fed up and somewhere to go, we headed off to the Mini Putt. Now me and a putter certainly aren't well acquainted so I was thinking, this should be absolutely hilarious, I think I surprised myself a few times, some of the crew being very good with quite a few hole in ones putting the rest of us to shame, with the distraction of the blow hole, and the shark, deer detttt, deer detttt (really that was Jaws music, you know). It's an excellent course and anyone who's been thinking of going, definitely go for it!!

Super fun day and many thanks to 240z for organising the day, it was a blast and setting the trial by yourself, skills dude, skills, very well done.

To top the day off, had a quick stop on the way home, came out of the shop, and low and behold there was a shiny 2007 Gunmetal 350z, the owner walking back to the car, had a quick chat, found out he'd had one of the early models first and handed over a club card. I hope we see you at a meet soon. Cool

Pretty much a perfect day in the Zed!! Very Happy

Cheers

Bronzee

Maungatautari Trust Cruise, bush walk & lunch

Sunday 5th October 2008

An invitation to cruise through the Waikato countryside is one I don't turn down, but had I known the weather we were going to encounter I'd have thought twice. We were liberally doused on the 2 hour trip to the destination, and again on the walk from the cafe to the wildlife sanctuary (about 1km). The wind was in on the act too, attempting to blow me clean off my feet.

But enough of the negative. Despite the conditions we had one of our best turnouts ever with 8 or so cars making the trek from Auckland and another 4 joining us in Hamilton including NeilMac, our intrepid guide.

That made for quite a convoy with three 240/260 2 seaters, two 2+2's, a 280z, two 350's and sundry others. I must sadly admit I was one of the sundry's, forced to bring the Primera as the Z's battery was flat and no time to jump it :(

Once at the sanctuary the rain lifted and the wind was held at bay by the trees, so it was really quite nice tramping along through the bush. There are several tracks to choose from of differing distances, you could easily spend a whole day wandering around. As it was, given the weather, we headed straight for the highlights. A tower has been erected in the middle of the bush, up into the treetops. They also have a quarantine cage set up for introducing new birds to the sanctuary which is often populated with new arrivals. We were unlucky though and the cages were empty.

Once we'd had our fill of nature, we again braved the elements back to the Cafe for warmth, shelter and hot food.

NeilMac promises he will organise a similar event but in more favorable conditions so that we can better appreciate the beauty of the area. Frankly I'm dead keen.

Pest

Targa 2008

I try not to let an opportunity pass me by, so when fellow club member Andy Mygind said he was considering entering the Targa and needed a spanner man I was quick to put up my hand. Frankly I'm stoked that I did as what eventuated were two of the most interesting, challenging and exhausting times of my life.

Why two? Well we thought we'd start small with the Targa Rotorua. Being a 2 day event based entirely around Rotorua it was a great place to learn the ropes. Oh, did I not mention that none of us had ever been involved in a Targa event before?

As it turned out Rotorua was the perfect primer. I figured out the best way to pack the station wagon so that everything we needed most often was easy to get out, and just as importantly, get back in. I also learned that an eagle eye for a BP that carried Ultimate would have been handy, it's a shame I didn't have one! Luckily Andy finished the last few stages of the last day, but it must have been running on fumes!

We finished 3rd in our class, not bad for a first attempt I reckon.

The main event is a five day driving marathon, for both the competing drivers and their crews, covering over 1200km of new zealands best A, B and even C roads. Starting with registration, scrutineering, etc at the new Manukau events center. The first day was a shakedown/exhibition with 2 laps of a twisting course through the carpark of the Manakau shopping center. Though these initial stages were not timed, most people were still giving it the full wellington including Steve Millen, our club patron, in his orange Ford GT. The cars stayed at the events center overnight, then it was an early start to get to Te Awamutu by 9.45am for the first pit stop.



Let me describe to you the glamorous life of a Targa crew; Arrive at the pit stop and drive around till you find an empty spot. This is not so simple as finding a spot at the supermarket however, the spot need to be big enough to fit the crew car and the race car with elbow room to work in (not always an option) and flat enough that the car can be jacked up and not fall off the axle stands (which happened to us on Targa Rotorua!) Thankfully as we were running near the start of the field the pit areas were usually not too full when I arrived, but I can imagine that for the later teams it must be a nightmare!

Once you've found that perfect spot (or more likely, just any place vaguely flat) you unpack the Tarp, the jack, the axle stands and the fuel. If it's raining and it's a longer stop (usually lunch) then you put up the easy-up canopy as well. Usually you have about 10 minutes to do all this, depending on how long it takes to find a spot and how heavy the traffic was on the way. On at least one occasion I'd barely pulled on the handbrake when Andy and Abbie (His

daughter/co-pilot) rumbled up behind me!



Thanks to the quality of Nissans engineering (and Andy's too) we were rarely in need of anything more than fuel throughout the entire trip, although we did catch some loose nuts early on that were close to making a break for freedom.

Once the pit time is up and Andy had headed off it was the reverse of the previous. Pack everything back into the car, drive to the next stop, lather, rinse, repeat.

Now all that may not sound all that exciting, but really it's the bits that don't go to plan

that make it interesting. At the end of the first day in park ferme in New Plymouth, Andy decided that his gamble to run his older exhaust system was not paying off. Having anticipated this, Andy had me driving with the new one strapped to the roof of the crew car. So began several hours of effort to disconnect one exhaust (everything from the headers to the tip) and bolt on another. Anyone who has worked on an L series engine with a standard head (intake and exhaust on the same side) will know what a mission it is to get them on and off!

Day one ended around midnight.

Day two was probably the most relaxed of the trip, it included 2 runs of the "lost highway" with Lunch at Whangamomona. Because the only access to the pit stop was the actual special stage, we had to be out there early, before they closed the road, and back later, after they opened it again. This meant most of the day was spent lounging in the sun watching the Targa cars arrive and depart, with a damned good cooked meal in the middle! Better yet, as the road was briefly reopened after lunch before the first of the return runs, our crew (Andy's partner and other daughter and I) took the chance to stop on a side road half way through the stage, to watch the cars go past at full noise!



Allan Lewis' V8 240 at 200km/h

Day three was back to normal with a pit stop in Waverly, then lunch in Marton and two pit stops in Hunterville. The afternoon would have been quite relaxing, had it not been for the fact that I unpacked the easy-up cover onto the roof of the car at Marton and then drove off with it still up there. Needless to say it didn't stay up there very long. I retraced my path back to Marton after the first Hunterville pit stop to no avail, the cover was nowhere to be found :(

Back to Hunterville again for another pit stop then to Wanganui for the night.

Day four was as hectic as I think it could possibly get, with eight special stages and seven pit stops. First a 10 minute stop in Norsewood then another in Dannevirke and on to Mangatainoka. Yes, that's where the Tui brewery is, in fact that's where our Lunch pit stop was. Yes, I bought a tee shirt.



The next stop was Pongaroa and here's where it gets interesting again. I knew that it wouldn't be possible to do both the Pongaroa stop and the next one at Alfredton School, there simply wasn't enough time to drive the distance. So I had made arrangements to have the 2nd stop covered by our 2nd crew vehicle. However half way to the stop I discovered that the road to Pongaroa was closed! I had no choice but to drive straight to Alfredton and wait for Andy there, hoping they didn't run out of gas on the 50-odd km of special stages they had to traverse. The car must have been running on vapours again, but they made it!

On to Gladstone for a 20 minute stop then Taranaki Wharf in Wellington for park ferme and the night.

Now up until this point the weather had been glorious. In fact the only reason I'd unpacked the easy-up at all was because I needed to get at something underneath it. Day 5, however, was a different kettle of fish altogether. Wellywood was turning it on for us in the form of drenching rain and gale force winds (or as wellingtonians call it, a light breeze from the south) I was really regretting loosing that easy-up cover!

By all accounts the weather made for some interesting driving too. Did I say interesting? I meant TERRIFYING! Cars were leaving the road left, right and center. We had more losses on day 5 than in the previous 4 combined. Three stages in the morning culminated with lunch at Southwards car museum. We had some time before the cars arrived to go through, if you're a motorhead that place is nirvana! They even had a '70's Datsun 180b downstairs (I'm a fan, can you tell?)

One more stop in Maidstone park in Upper Hutt then back to Wellington for the finish. The last stage was abandoned as the sea was washing up over the road and no-one thought to bring water wings!

All in all a fantastic 5 days out and about in (mostly) incredible spring weather. I even got a tan! To anyone else who gets the chance to take part in this kind of event in **any** capacity, take it, you'll have a ball!

I have to say thanks again to Andy and his family for letting me tag along, you guys were great company and I really really appreciate it.

Pest

Get In The Matrix!



CLUB NZ



*Track Day, Taupo 2009
Saturday 14th February*

Mustang, Cobra & Zed cruise to Clevedon Markets

Sunday 16th November 2008

Much anticipation as it's not often we get to cruise with American Muscle cars, the 3 Zed convoy started our day in Takapuna in the sunshine. No rainshine for this picnic, almost too good to be in our cars, ... did I say that?! We joined the motorway and headed over to Highbrooke Business Park in East Tamaki to be greeted by not only Mustang's, but Cobra's too!!! What a great surprise! All the American beasts sitting there shimmering and glowing in the sunshine, looking like something out of a car care product company advertisement, sunglasses definitely required!

This was looking to be a large convoy to keep together on our excursion out to Clevedon, numbering 39 cars at this point, 24 Mustang's, 8 Cobra's & 7 Zeds. All being highly organised we set off on our trail through the far Eastern suburbs creating a lot of attention from surrounding motorists, pedestrians waving and taking photos. Most amusingly, 4 people on bicycles pulled up to watch all the cars. As we passed slowly, one of the wives retorts to her husband, "have you seen enough cars yet?" I had a little chuckle to myself thinking how often I've heard that phrase before. We reached the southern most end of Howick and passed down the hill into Whitford Road and head out towards the Whitford/Brookby area over some stunning roads, giving the cars the chance to use more than two cylinders.

We arrived at Clevedon Markets and formed two orderly lines on the village green displaying the beasts for the admiring crowds and headed to investigate the markets ourselves, while a few more Mustang's and Zeds joined us, growing to 47 cars as we chilled out and had our new found delicious goodies for lunch.

Lunch munched, we decided to head off on mass, for our traditional Maratei ice cream with the bonus of cruising along Coast Road to be greeted by the leftovers of a triathlon, cars everywhere! Whose bright idea was this anyway, ducking for cover. Hehe. Icecreams melting quicker than we could devour them, it was time to head home, but Zeds being Zeds, we took one more little photo opportunity at Formosa.

Another stunning Auckland day, bring on the rest of Summer cruising!!!!

Cheers

Bronzee

Annual Mini Club Economy Trial

Sunday 30th November 2008

Well the title says it all really, you know that the words Zed and Economy aren't exactly synonymous, but Nathan and I were up for the challenge. I mean, you've got to give it a go aye, we'd show those Minis who'd use the most petrol, oops there goes that word economy into the ether.

We arrived out at BP Drury in ample time to have some nosh whilst all the Mini crew arrived. Gary (Minimad) our trial master arrives and waves out, with his usual gleeful smile, Dr Evil has nothing on our trial Master. What does he have in store for us this time, cups of water at the start line again, that must be full at the end, abstract clues that get the old grey matter working, we were about to find out....

Gary starts with the drivers briefing. What? You're kidding me? No tricks, no finding random clues, no ice blocks sticks, no getting out of the car, no nothing. Is Gary running a temperature, should we send for an ambulance??!! Oh, but wait there's more!! It can't be that easy? Well seemingly so, bar finding the signs he'd made and placed throughout the course, but getting the words written on said signs and where they were placed. Well does this mean at every grouping of real estate signs we're going to be craning our necks to see if there's a sign stuck to the back??!!

Anyway, we waited until all the last Mini had gone and set off last, the directions being easy, just your normal 3L, 2R, 1L etc, surely there's got to be a trick somewhere..... Given Gary had spent most of the week winding us up about how much fun he'd had setting the trial. It didn't take us very long to come up behind our first Mini, now these guys are serious about economy, coasting down hills, traveling at 20 or 30kph and having made alterations to their cars to ensure maximum economy, no breakfast the whole works. Now we'd accepted that there's no way we can possibly compete with cars that only hold 20 odd litres of petrol and weigh 600kgs or less, so had a lot of laughs along the way and enjoyed the stunning driving roads and the glorious Franklin scenery.

All signs accounted for and directions all correct, our 113kms covered in 1 hour 55 minutes, we reached the end point at BP Bombay, with only one other team there, but we'd left last!! Ok, that's not quite what we expected, where were the rest of the teams??? Gary with that evil gleeful smile yet again, ok, what's he done this time??!! We know we passed a number of Minis going the opposite direction, assuming that they'd goofed the directions. Then Gary's face lights up even more, and puts in front of me two pages, I looked at the directions, they're both different!!!! Haha, a master stroke of genius. 2 sets of instructions, 2 different lots of signs, so he'd know if we'd cheated, confuse them enough and they'll follow the one in front. Now we're smart, oh yes we are, and we stuck to our instructions.

This being the 3rd Mini Club Economy Trial I'd participated in, the first co-piloting for Kelvin in his 240z, last year Nathan co-piloted for me in my 350z, and this year I co-piloted Nathan in his 300zx, so does this mean that next year I have to have another Zed, hehe, I don't think I could stand the stress or do I have to co-pilot for someone else??!!

Awesome day out, and does this mean that next year the instructions will be even harder just to make up for it, should we be wary, would I actually need the torch, the pocket knife and plastic bag and assorted bits I'd prepared this time??!! Who knows, only 2009 will tell, in the interim, be afraid, be very afraid.....

1st Andrew from Taupo 30.84km/ltr

2nd Gavin & Chanel 22.79km/ltr

3rd Rex & Susan 19.06km/ltr

2nd to Last Zilver & Bronzee (Z Club) 6.3km/ltr (By a country mile the most uneconomic) Twisted Evil

(They really are very serious about economy these guys)

Cheers

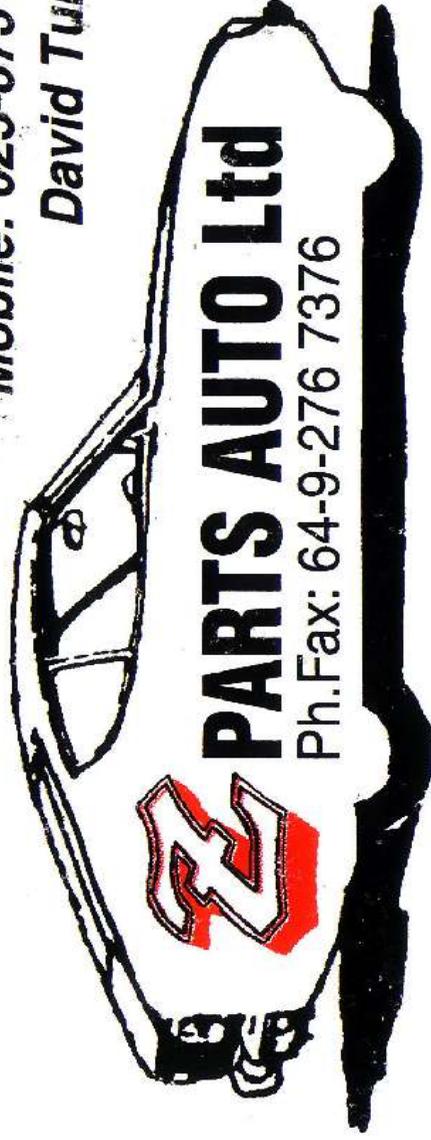
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