



A WHO'S WHO TOP 10 FOR TARGA RALLY ROTORUA.

Queen's Birthday weekend will see Targa competitors descend on Rotorua for 318 kms of Special Stages and 500 of Touring. There are 40 competitors in the Modern Class, 28 in the Classic Class, 4 in the new BMW E30 Cup and 13 in the Targa Tour.

It's the Modern Class where the tarmac rally stars are and the seeding list will read:

- 1) Headed by the Queensland based Scotsman **Tony Quinn** in his super potent Nissan R35. Quinn is a Targa regular back to defend his 2009 Modern Title but this time around Quinn will be joined by Sue O'Neill as co-driver instead of Naomi Tillett.
- 2) **Neil Marshall** from New Plymouth seldom ventures out of the Taranaki and he's ranked as New Zealand's fastest tarmac rally driver. We saw how quick he can be in the 6 day Dunlop Targa last year.
- 3) **Richard Mason** is twice NZ Rally Champion amongst many other titles. Richard will be driving the late Stacey Hopper's Subaru Impreza and will be partnered by Simon Kirkpatrick who is a shareholder in Hopper Construction.
- 4) **Clark Proctor** is next in the Nissan Escort. Never far from the front, Clark drives this hybrid turbo car hard and spectacular.
- 5) **Brent Early**, a former rotary competitor, now has the ex Joe McAndrew Nissan R34.
- 6) **Jason Gill** will also be up the front in his deceptively quick Mitsubishi EVO9 GT.
- 7) **Leigh Hopper** in the Subaru Impreza will be partnered by his 24 year old son Gray. Gray was present when his 27 year old brother died in the light aircraft crash up near Marsden Point and received burns to his arms whilst attempting to get Stace out.
- 8) The **Giddy** brothers will also be there in their Impreza. The brothers have decided that Rick is now the permanent driver and Joel the co-driver/navigator.
- 9) **Mark Whyte** is back in his turbo Altezza after a couple of year's absence.
- 10) **Ross Johnson** has switched from the Porsche 996 Turbo to a Porsche GT2, 2-wheel drive which is 100kgs lighter.

There are several other significant changes in the Modern Class.

The **Dobbe brothers**, Adrian and David, have for many years run a Holden Commodore, VN GTS 3.8 (6 cylinder.) They will be lining up in a Nissan Skyline GT R32 – the orange one that features in a broadband television advertisement.

Mike Walsh makes his first driver appearance in the ex Richard Mehrtens Mercedes Benz CLK55 AMG. This is the silver car and not to be confused with the Mehrtens's CLK63 AMG Black Series, which is in fact painted white !!

Gary Murphy is back in the BMW M3 after taking last year off.

A new entry is **Rob Bray** and **Paul Burbury** in the Suzuki Swift that Angus Fogg ran in the Hamilton Street Race.

A strong contender for a win in the Classic Class is the pairing of **Mark Parsons** and **Mal Clark** who are 'resting' the Rover P6 V8 this time. They will be in Mark's 1978 TR7 V8, the very last TR7 V8 to be built. Mark my words (sic) that this 32 year old car will be laying down times that would have it in the top 10 of the Modern Class.

Brent Emerson is back again in the trusty 'Track Drive' Commodore to defend his 2009 Classic Title after a major rebuilding due to a minor indigestion at the Dunlop Targa event last year. Sheryl Hanright is still in the 'hot-seat' to keep him on the straight and narrow.

Missing from the Classics is the **Kirk-Burnnand** brothers, Chris and Barry who have been at every Targa over the 15 years – they are overseas. Their potent BMWs will be there in the hands of sons Carl and Mark. Co-driving for Carl is his cousin Steve – Mark's brother.

Vehicle scrutineering and driver / co-driver documentation is on the Friday from 3pm.

Saturday 05 June sees the Targa Tour cars away first from the Novotel with racing categories away from 8:10am. They head south then return to Rotorua for lunch, then off to Kawerau and back. They will compete over 6 Special Stages but a distance of 164kms. Made up of three special stages that are repeated, one is just over 35kms long and the other 36kms. Plenty of time for drivers to get into the groove.

All cars will be back for the Show and Shine from 4.30 till 7 in Tutanekai Street and the Village Green - opposite the Novotel. They will also be joined by the Capri Car Club and there will be live music and a family carnival atmosphere, supported by Rotorua Council.

Sunday sees the competitors go over the Kaimai Ranges into the Waikato to run in 9 Special Stages totalling 154 kms.

This year's Targa Bambina sets a benchmark for timing crews with verified results available within minutes of the last car finishing. Minor hiccups happen but as Timing Manager, Gina Fabrello, says; "Rotorua should run like Bambina, our volunteer crew base has grown and the training is all sorted."

The base on the Village Green will see communication changes. Commentator Jamie McCarthy will be using a roving microphone for the first time and they will be trialling a dedicated digital radio channel. They will also be testing raw footage input onto the website.

Comprehensive maps are in this month's New Zealand Classic Car magazine. If you can't be there, keep up to www.targa.co.nz

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