



Racetech RALLY WAIRARAPA



28-29 May 2011

Malcolm Stewart Classic Rally Preview.

After a hugely successful first event last year, the Malcolm Stewart Classic Rally has once again proved itself to be a significant part of the Trusthouse Racetech Rally Wairarapa. This year sees a total of 18 classic rally cars taking up the challenge to relive their glory days, and engage in what promises to be some close battles.

The competition for both the Malcolm Stewart Trophy and the Classic Challenge Trophy has been blown wide open after last year's defending champion, Clinton based farmer Derek Ayson, decided not to contest this event, despite his win at the Otago Classic Rally. Added to this is the no-show from both Jeff Judd and Shane Murland, after they suffered big off road excursions at Otago, and have not been able to get their cars ready in time.

This means that the task of winning the silverware has become easier for Marcus van Klink in his Group B replica Mazda RX7, as he takes up position as the favourite. However he will still have to be pushing hard and providing a show for the spectators, with Rob Wylie in his Nissan 240RS seeded right behind him. Especially as Wylie leads van Klink by 7 points for the Classic Challenge Trophy, meaning there will be added incentive for Wylie to stay as close to the lead as possible.

But lets not forget about the locals, out to recover the Malcolm Stewart Trophy from the south. Masterton car dealer Roger Brader will have his trusty and long serving Mazda RX3 once again bashing the roads they know so well, while Jason Timmins has shown recent form in his two wheel driver Mitsubishi Lancer and will be looking to improve from his fourth place last year. Although the Hastings based Timmins isn't exactly local, he has competed in the area many times over many years, meaning that both he and Brader could be dark horses to watch out for.

Ron Davey has returned after a fine third place in last year's classic event, and he has brought with him a gaggle of classic competitors. Gary Smith, Carl Rabbidge, and Ray Wilson all have a long and proud history in the sport, dating back to the 70s and 80s, however the years have not dented their competitive nature and they have already proven that they will be fighting for every second.

Ray Wilson has an extra special reason to be competing at the Malcolm Stewart Classic Rally this year too. With help from Malcolm's wife Sue, Ray has been competing in an Audi Quattro this season, and now at this event Ray, Sue and the team will be promoting the Neurological Foundation of New Zealand, in support of their help for Malcolm. Watch out for the mighty Quattro and the Service van to offer your support to them as well.

The attraction for local drivers to compete, and be free of everyday constraints, on roads they know so well is understandable, but for two locals the challenge and commitment is greater. John Esler and Greg Ordish have not only been getting their respective cars ready for this event, but have been helping to organise the event as members of the Rally Wairarapa committee. Having put a huge number of hours into the event over many years, this is about getting to experience the fun and excitement they know is to be had on these fantastic roads. For Esler this is his second



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attempt after a consistent run last year, and he tells us he will be looking for better results after making improvements to his car in the off season.

Certainly the combination of this classic rally within the overall Trusthouse Racetech Rally Wairarapa creates a multitude of reasons for young and old to be in the Wairarapa on the weekend of 28-29 May. With the fast modern machinery of those contesting in the Brian Green Property Group New Zealand Rally Championship, the classic sights and sounds of the Malcolm Stewart Classic Rally competitors, and the sheer variety of vehicles driven by the regional and club competitors, there is something for everyone at this event. No longer is it a sprint to watch the first few competitors and dash off again, the quality and variety means that it is worth staying to delight the senses even more.

The first official duty will be the Ceremonial Start, Mayoral Reception and NZRC Autograph Signing Session from 6.00pm Friday 27th May, held at the Copthorne Resort, Solway Park, Masterton. Then it is off at 8am start on Saturday morning, as the competitors race their way to the friendly town of Pongaroa, and back again, over 8 closed road stages, to finish the day at 5pm in Masterton. With day two centred in Eketahuna, it is a challenging 9 special stages that will determine who walks away with the silverware when the crews return to finish ramp outside the Copthorne Solway Park at 4:15pm on Sunday. In all, 284km of hot competition and entertainment makes up the challenge.



Roger Brader attacks Rally Wairarapa in 2010
Photo Credit: Jody Seabright



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Fast Facts

- Round 3 of NZ Rally Championship
- Round 1 of Geartech Central Region Rally Series, (points scoring based on Saturdays results only)
- Round 2 of the Classic Challenge Trophy
- 17 Special Stages, 8 on Saturday 28 May, and 9 on Sunday 29 May
- 284km of competitive Special Stages, 158km on Saturday, 126km on Sunday
- www.rallywairarapa.co.nz

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