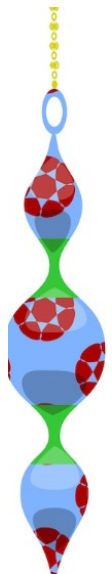




November – December 2024

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Phone: (09) 620-9797



Club Member Brock Gilchrist celebrates second place finish in 2024 Porsche Sprint Challenge Australia Championship

Read the full story inside!

Welcome to our New Members

Auckland Car Club wishes to extend a very warm welcome to the following New Members and their Families and Friends.

We hope you enjoy your association with us and look forward to meeting you Socially and in the Spirit of Competition.

If you have any questions, please ask a committee member. They will be only too happy to help.

New Members – October

Brock Gilchrist
Josh Bethune

New Members November

Kelvin Ferguson
Glen Reynolds
Simon Wi

Rico Brown
Tyler Wichman



Welcome to the November / December edition of the Auckland Car Club News, once called the "Bulletin".

Sadly, this month we have a Vale. This time it is long standing Club member Alan Ferguson who passed away earlier this year. The Vale was written by his son Kelvin Ferguson who is restoring his father's old Torana.

We have an article on new Club Member Brock Gilchrist and his success in Australian Porsche Cup Racing.

Bob McMurray gives his latest view on the Formula One scene with his regular Column, Formula One Cogitations #12.

We have an update on what has been happening with Callum Hedge and Liam Sceats.

Plus, news and views about what is happening with the Production Race Series, plus photos and results from the latest round of The Bob White Memorial Motokhana Series and photos of Round three from Taupo Motorsport Track.

Do not be surprised if one day at the track, or a Club Rally or a Motorkhana one of the editorial team takes their recording device out of their pocket and starts asking you questions about your start in Motor Racing.

If you have something to share or an interesting build underway, then please give us a shout, if the coffee is on then we will be on our way!

As always, please remember that this is your Newsletter, so contributions are not only welcome but encouraged.

You can contact us at clubnews@aucklandcarclub.org.nz

From the Editorial Team, may we wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous 2025 and safe travels wherever you go over the Festive Season.

The Editorial Team.
Craig, Terry, and Robyn.

Quote of the Month

"Accept what is, Let go of what was, and Have faith in what will be".

Comments expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributing columnists and do not necessarily reflect those of Auckland Car Club or the Executive Committee.

Club Membership

Just a reminder that membership for the 2024 / 2025 year is now due.

Membership fees are as follows.

- Regular Member \$90.00
- Youth Member \$50.00
- Senior Member \$50.00



You can go online and renew your membership through the Auckland Car Club on-line portal or make a deposit directly to the Auckland Car Club bank account which is 01-0183-0055476-00.

2024 / 2025 Race Series Dates

Round	Date	Day	Venue
4	23-Feb-25	Sunday	Hampton Downs
5	6-Apr-25	Sunday	Hampton Downs
6	4 May 2025	Sunday	Hampton Downs

2024 / 2025 Bob White Memorial Motokhana Series

Grass Motorkhanas			
Use Your Streetcar			
No Licence or Special Gear Required			
Round	Date	Day	Venue
4	14 Dec 24	Saturday	Kern Road
5	15 Feb 25	Saturday	Kern Road
6	1 Mar 25	Saturday	Kern Road
7	12 Apr 25	Saturday	Kern Road

Presidents Report

Well, here we are just a handful of weeks out from Christmas and the silly season has begun.

It seems many people I have spoken to lately are starting to feel more positive about the economy and their job security and it has resulted in very good numbers at our race meetings so far this season with only our very first meeting at Hampton Downs being a little lightly attended, hopefully a trend that will continue! Our last meeting was at Taupo and usually this meeting can be particularly light on numbers, but we had 95 competitors so it will cover the running costs.



A month or so ago I announced a meeting at the clubrooms to discuss the possibility of starting a new race class for classic cars to run at Auckland Car Club rounds. The meeting was well attended with around 30 people showing up and many more sending messages that they would like to be there but couldn't be due to various reasons, but all offering support and keen to participate.

Basically, the theme for the class is that the cars will need to be manufactured pre the year 2000 and will need to look period correct. The rules will be simple and allow for those building older race cars to do so without having to spend megabucks. The class will allow for any engine configuration e.g. V8, V12, 6 and 4 cylinder and any country of manufacture. Tyres will need to be DOT rated and have some grooves running across the tyre. Slicks and tyres that have grooves only around the radius will not be allowed.

The limiting factor will be a quickest allowable lap time of 1 min 16 sec's. Any lap times faster than this will not be allowed. One warning will be given to cars faster than this, thereafter they will have to move on to an open class such as Racing Saloons. Road cars that are driven to the track will run as part of the overall class points but will be also eligible for their own points. Cars that run in the 1 min 20 sec's to over 1 min 30's bracket will be our main target for participating.

Cars are always safer with roll cages, but we will be running to Schedule Z rules and cars are able to run without cages though they will still be required to comply with all other Schedules such as Schedule A (safety). Our target date for the first round of this class will be the Auckland Car club round in April. If you are interested or you know of someone who is then we would love to hear from you, I can arrange your C Grade (Competition) licence and get one of the Club's scrutineers to talk you through the safety requirements your car will need to meet.

Changing topics slightly, a quick update on the new clubrooms. Progress has been frustratingly slow due to fire design. We have just changed our fire engineer trying to progress things more quickly.

We have to be out of our current clubrooms by February next year and we have a farewell gathering for our old clubrooms at Stoddard Road on the 7th December, all members are welcome to attend.

We will be moving into our new premises from February although the bar facilities won't be operational until the work is finished, and the bar licence granted.

We are certainly looking forward to getting on with the project at our new clubrooms at Onehunga Mall and hopefully not too far into 2025.

Lastly, our investment with Forsyth Barr is performing very well and the Clubs funds have been steadily increasing.

AUCKLAND CAR CLUB COMMITTEE MEMBERS



President
Brett Davy



Vice President
Mark Sheehan



Vice President
Martyn Wells



Secretary / Treasurer
Craig Holmes



Membership Secretary
Terry Riding



Club Rooms Manager
Steve Morris



Club Captain
Aaron Clarke



Race Chairperson
Paul Burnet



Clubsport Chairperson
Caitlin Chubb



Committee Member
Mike Dias



Website / Facebook
Natalie Waite



Committee Member
Kimberly Wells

Vale Alan Ferguson

It was only recently that Auckland Car Club was advised that long time member Alan Ferguson had passed away. His son Kelvin Ferguson takes up his story.

My Dad Alan Ferguson has always had a love for fast cars, growing up in Mercer my grandfather owned the original Mercer pub.

Dad in his late teens early 20s had a falcon ute with a 460 big block in it which he used to drag at the Meremere drag strip. In his early 30s he bought a LH Torana and along with Terry Gladstone (Auckland Car Club member) they built this race car which would have been around the late 80s early 90s.

That car was an iconic car known as the Marley Torana as Dad owned a trucking company "Rapid Delivery" and he carted Marley products throughout the North Island.



After racing that for a few seasons he moved into Tranzam racing winning the Wellington Street race in 1996. He went on to win the 1999/2000 Tranzam Championship with Craig Baird driving his car in fierce battle with Shane Drake driving Mark Petch's Tranzam.

In 2000 they packed up and went to America to race 4-5 races finishing 2nd at Laguna Seca. After selling his Tranzam to a guy in Australia he ended up building another Tranzam with a corvette body.

He raced this car occasionally in local events mainly at Pukekohe before it was closed and Hampton Downs. Also ran his car in support category at V8 Supercars event Hamilton street race , I would say around 2016-17 Dad suffered a mild heart attack and had a few black outs and they ended up putting a defibrillator in his chest (he thinks this should never of happened and he could of managed with medication) so then he lost his license for a bit and unfortunately his race license which he was gutted about.

A couple of years past and Dad was diagnosed with aggressive oesophagus cancer in 2023. He had two tumours from his brain removed.

He kept fighting and we kept praying unfortunately it kept spreading on April 12th, 2024, Dad passed away age 65. Kelvin is working on a project to restore the Torana and hopes to have it on a track sometime soon.

Auckland Car Club would like to pass on its condolences to the Ferguson family.



Schedule of Events

		ClubSport	Race	Rally	
JANUARY					
4/01/2025	5/01/2025	Tasman Revival	Race	NZIGP	Taupo
10/01/2025	12/01/2025	Taupo CFROC	Race	MSNZ	Taupo
17/01/2025	19/01/2025	Hampton Downs CFROC	Race	MSNZ	Hampton Downs
19/01/2025	19/01/2025	Rotokohu Road (Gravel)	Hillclimb	Thames Valley Car Club	Paeroa
19/01/2025	19/01/2025	Waitao Hillclimb	Hillclimb	Motorsport Bay of Plenty	
25/01/2025	26/01/2025	Legends of Speed Meeting (Formula First)	Race	NZIGP	Hampton Downs Motorsport Park
25/01/2025	25/01/2025	Foremans Corner Triathlon - Motorkhana	Motorkhana	Hibiscus Coast Motorsport Club	Kaiikanui road
26/01/2025	26/01/2025	Foremans Corner Triathlon - Gravel Hillclimb	Hillclimb	Hibiscus Coast Motorsport Club	Kaiikanui road
27/01/2025	27/01/2025	Foremans Corner Triathlon - Autocross	Autocross	Hibiscus Coast Motorsport Club	Kaiikanui road
FEBRUARY					
6/02/2025	6/02/2025	Waitangi Day Motorkhana	Motorkhana	Pukekohe Car Club	A&P Showgrounds
9/02/2025	9/02/2025	SACC Interclub Hillclimb	Hillclimb	South Auckland Car Club	Maramara ?
15/02/2025	15/02/2025	Bob White Memorial Motorkhana round 5	Motorkhana	Auckland Car Club	Ramarama
15/02/2025	15/02/2025	Event Finda Stadium Motorkhana	Motorkhana	SCCNZ	North Shore
16/02/2025	16/02/2025	South Road Mangatarata	Hillclimb	Thames Valley Car Club	Mangatarata
16/02/2025	16/02/2025	Crows Nest Road Hillclimb	Hillclimb	Northland Car Club	Hukuranui
22/02/2025	22/02/2025	TACCOC Meeting	Race	TACCOC	Hampton Downs Motorsport Park
23/02/2025	23/02/2025	Summer Series Race Meeting	Race	Auckland Car Club	Hampton Downs Motorsport Park
23/02/2025	23/02/2025	HCMC Rallysprint (NRSS)	Rallysprint	Hibiscus Coast Motorsport Club	??? North (NRSS)
MARCH					
1/03/2025	1/03/2025	Bob White Memorial Motorkhana round 6	Motorkhana	Auckland Car Club	Ramarama
2/03/2025	2/03/2025	Single Car Circuit Sprints	Single Sprints	SCCNZ	Hampton Downs Motorsport Park
8/03/2025	8/03/2025	Pukekohe Car Club Rally (maybe Rallysprint)	Rally	Pukekohe Car Club	Auckland/Waikato
9/03/2025	9/03/2025	Stokes Road (Tar Seal)	Hillclimb	Hamilton Car Club	
15/03/2025	16/03/2025	Thunder at the Downs	Race	NZIGP	Hampton Downs Motorsport Park
16/03/2025	16/03/2025	Pukewera Road	Hillclimb	Thames Valley Car Club	Waihi
16/03/2025	16/03/2025	Mangapai Caves Road	Hillclimb	Northland Car Club	Oakleigh/Mangapai
21/03/2025	23/03/2025	MSNZ Championship Meeting	Race	MSNZ	Hampton Downs Motorsport Park
23/03/2025	23/03/2025	Tar Seal Hillclimb (TBA)	Hillclimb	Pukekohe Car Club	TBA
29/03/2025	30/03/2025	Great Lake Taupo Meeting	Race	NZIGP	Taupo
30/03/2025	30/03/2025	Meremere Autocross	Autocross	SCCNZ	Meremere Drift Track



Brock Gilchrist celebrates second place finish in 2024 Porsche Sprint Challenge Australia Championship

Club Member, Brock Gilchrist has secured an outstanding second-place finish in the 2024 Porsche Sprint Challenge Australia championship, representing Team Porsche New Zealand.

His performance throughout his debut Porsche season demonstrated remarkable skill and determination in a fiercely competitive motorsport environment.

The championship concluded with a thrilling finale at Sydney Motorsport Park over the weekend, where Gilchrist went head-to-head with his Earl Bamber Motorsport teammate, Oscar Targett, in pursuit of a podium finish.



After qualifying in fifth, Gilchrist showcased his determination finishing Race 1 in second place. However, Race 2 saw him finish in 16th place after being pushed off the track. In Race 3, Gilchrist finished in tenth place, ultimately securing the second-place podium finish for the championship season.

Brock to step up to Porsche Carrera Cup Asia

Team Porsche New Zealand are proud to announce that Gilchrist will race in Shanghai later this month to make his debut in the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia, competing for the first time in a 992 Porsche GT3 Cup Car. The event took place at the prestigious Shanghai International Circuit in China from October 25 to 27, where he competed under the banner of Team Porsche New Zealand in collaboration with Earl Bamber Motorsport. This opportunity marked a significant milestone in his racing career as he embraces the challenges of a new series in the latest generation of Porsche GT3 Cup Car.

Brock Gilchrist

"I'm incredibly grateful for the support from Team Porsche New Zealand and everyone who has been part of my journey this season. Finishing second in the championship is a huge achievement and I have grown my skills a lot in the process. I'm excited to continue growing as a driver as I step up to the 992 GT3 Cup car to compete in Carrera Cup Asia later this month."

Earl Bamber, Earl Bamber Motorsport



"It was an amazing season for Brock with limited experience. He was a title contender all year and did Team Porsche New Zealand proud.

Following his successful year, we are really happy to give him the opportunity to take on the final round of Carrera Cup Asia with Team Porsche New Zealand in Shanghai in late October.

We hope this will further grow his experience and continue his learning path with Porsche Team New Zealand"

The Final Curtain Call for Auckland Car Club at Stoddard Road



After more than 5 decades at its present location, it is time to get ready for the Club's move to its new location at 82 Onehunga Mall.

But before that, the Club has arranged a farewell for the old Club Rooms at 44 Stoddard Road.

Details:

4:00pm to late
Saturday 7 December 2024
44 Stoddard Road
Mt Roskill

The Club's Executive Committee looks forward to seeing you at the farewell. The usual finger food and nibbles will be provided.

The last official Club Night at 44 Stoddard Road will be Thursday 19 December.

The Club will re-open at 82 Onehunga Mall with a reduced, temporary presence on Thursday 20 February.

ClubSport Corner



Motorkhana Results from Round 3

Sorted by Class Result					Gate Slalom		Square Slalom		Diamond Slalom	
#	Driver	Class	Youth	Female	Run 1	Run 2	Run 1	Run 2	Run 1	Run 2
55	Tony Smitheram	E			00:30.94	00:30.19	00:30.66	00:29.77	00:33.32	00:32.59
1	Gavin Brindle	E			00:32.63	00:40.89	00:39.97	00:36.52	00:47.56	00:37.83
6	Scott Smitheram	E			00:39.47	00:35.34	00:40.50	00:32.33	00:37.07	00:34.90
5	Susan Smitheram	E		Y	00:40.77	00:32.75	00:35.44	00:37.91	00:35.52	00:40.00
13	Bjorn Burton	E			00:41.00	00:40.08	00:36.34	00:35.32	00:37.45	00:36.44
2	Louis Brindle	E	Y		00:46.10	01:19.71	01:11.82	01:40.01	01:03.77	01:10.32
4	Martyn Wells	E			05:55.55		00:37.21	00:42.41	05:55.55	
71	James Manutoifo	E			05:55.55		05:55.55		05:55.55	
7	John Manutoifo	D			00:36.77		00:38.71	00:36.75	00:38.34	00:41.00
37	Jesse Arends	D			00:42.03	00:39.32	05:55.55		00:37.97	00:35.69
70	Lily Foulds	D		Y	01:09.32	00:48.45	00:41.88	00:58.75	01:04.56	01:14.59
87	Sheldon Burrows	D			05:55.55		00:35.01	00:40.69	00:49.63	00:49.13
85	Matthew Smith	D			00:41.75	00:38.50	00:37.01		05:55.55	
74	Kurt Smith	D			00:37.97	00:35.41	00:45.90		05:55.55	
56	Isaac German	C			00:38.44	00:36.58	00:31.71	00:32.88	00:38.85	00:40.21
12	Glen Dalby	C			00:42.00	00:34.90	00:33.03	00:32.63	00:37.32	00:35.06
42	Josh Frings	C			00:33.06	00:31.90	00:34.16	00:33.40	00:35.08	00:39.47
31	Zak Hood	C	Y		00:39.08	00:38.87	00:36.97	00:34.94	00:39.77	00:36.78
97	Ben Boyt	C	Y		00:47.50	00:43.65	00:34.89	00:48.75	00:47.47	00:41.56
79	Gareth Boyt	C			00:44.78	00:47.95	00:37.45	00:34.50	00:45.33	00:40.27
34	Alan Miller	C			00:38.65	00:35.28	00:43.58	00:38.50	00:38.21	
23	Jay Miller	C			00:39.53	00:36.27	00:47.27	00:46.62	01:00.31	00:39.34
83	Ryan Hayward	C			00:50.44	00:40.84	00:38.06	00:42.33	00:39.68	00:37.78
8	Craig Townsend	B			00:32.69	00:30.69	00:30.03	00:29.78	00:33.00	00:32.26
67	Nataly Martini	B		Y	00:39.28	00:38.46	00:35.50	00:33.78	00:46.09	00:42.81
24	Oscar Burney	B	Y		00:39.32	00:39.02	00:42.45	00:35.14	00:40.32	00:38.94
15	Cooper Hall	B	Y		00:33.33	00:32.78	00:33.07	00:30.59	00:39.32	00:37.63
3	Vito Tao	B	Y		00:43.26	00:38.84	00:36.53	00:37.12	01:19.59	00:41.89
81	Chris Coughlan	B			05:55.55		05:55.55		05:55.55	
63	Matthew Rudduck	A			00:38.26	00:36.33	00:36.40	00:35.31	00:38.66	00:37.21

Sorted by Class Result		Double Kidney		Multiple Loop		Spearhead		Results		
#	Driver	Run 1	Run 2	Run 1	Run 2	Run 1	Run 2	Total Time	Overall	Class
55	Tony Smitheram	00:36.01	00:34.19	00:40.44	00:38.64	01:40.14	01:21.84	04:07.22	2	1
1	Gavin Brindle	00:32.97	00:32.57	00:38.96	00:39.00	01:15.03	01:35.64	04:13.54	6	2
6	Scott Smitheram	00:37.27	00:35.65	00:45.02	00:49.84	01:20.14	01:25.33	04:23.38	8	3
5	Susan Smitheram	00:34.44	00:36.88	00:45.52	01:05.06	01:23.05	01:21.51	04:25.18	9	4
13	Bjorn Burton	00:39.25	00:38.89	00:42.50	00:41.41	01:20.65	01:17.78	04:29.92	11	5
2	Louis Brindle	00:57.21	00:44.71	01:01.32		02:08.89		06:56.61	18	6
4	Martyn Wells	05:55.55		05:55.55		05:55.55		30:14.96	29	7
71	James Manutoifo	05:55.55		00:50.34	00:47.19	05:55.55		30:24.94	30	8
7	John Manutoifo	00:50.94	00:39.45	01:04.22	01:06.27	05:55.55		09:31.08	21	1
37	Jesse Arends	00:35.00	00:35.08	00:43.27	00:41.58	01:13.39	01:12.41	09:39.55	22	2
70	Lily Foulds	01:01.69	01:05.05	00:55.71	00:49.70	05:55.55		10:21.83	23	3
87	Sheldon Burrows	00:34.72	00:39.03	05:55.55		05:55.55		19:45.51	25	4
85	Matthew Smith	05:55.55		05:55.55		05:55.55		24:57.71	26	5
74	Kurt Smith	05:55.55		05:55.55		05:55.55		25:03.51	27	6
56	Isaac German	00:34.63	00:34.41	00:41.19	00:40.84	01:07.08	01:05.87	04:08.26	3	1
12	Glen Dalby	00:39.62	00:34.76	00:41.20	00:40.81	01:17.01	01:10.15	04:08.31	4	2
42	Josh Frings	00:41.64	00:36.22	00:40.76	00:40.87	01:20.00	01:14.02	04:11.38	5	3
31	Zak Hood	00:43.07	00:36.45	00:43.26	00:42.25	01:22.51	01:19.21	04:28.50	10	4
97	Ben Boyt	00:39.94	00:43.50	00:52.14	00:50.46	01:53.20	01:19.21	04:49.71	13	5
79	Gareth Boyt	00:36.57	00:36.35	00:47.19	00:44.69	02:10.07	01:42.12	05:02.71	15	6
34	Alan Miller	00:41.97	00:37.31		00:43.97	05:55.55		09:08.82	19	7
23	Jay Miller	00:47.76	00:40.03	00:53.32	00:48.34	05:55.55		09:26.15	20	8
83	Ryan Hayward	00:42.08	00:40.15	05:55.55		05:55.55		14:27.93	24	9
8	Craig Townsend	00:32.77	00:37.33	00:37.56	00:38.22	01:02.31	00:58.20	03:41.26	1	1
67	Nataly Martini	00:38.72	00:37.60	00:45.38	00:44.41	01:29.39	01:24.01	04:41.07	12	2
24	Oscar Burney	00:39.70	00:37.08	00:56.63	00:46.71	02:08.89	01:36.34	04:53.23	14	3
15	Cooper Hall	00:37.52	00:36.52	00:41.26	00:39.76	02:08.89	02:08.89	05:06.17	16	4
3	Vito Tao	00:38.03	00:37.83	00:45.94	00:44.56	02:08.89	02:03.89	05:23.54	17	5
81	Chris Coughlan	00:36.57		00:50.25	00:44.78	05:55.55		25:03.55	28	6
63	Matthew Ruddock	00:35.68	00:34.88	00:48.32	00:42.25	01:19.07	01:10.62	04:16.60	7	1

Some of the Action!

Matthew Ruddock



Tony Smitheram



Same Car different driver, this time Susan Smitheram



Craig Townsend



Oscar Burney



Scott Smitheram



You have to get a good lean on to get around the corners.



Indy NXT Update

Callum Hedge



Callum Hedge will join Abel Motorsports for 2025 Indy NXT campaign.

The 21-year-old has made the move from HMD Motorsports to join Abel Motorsports for the 2025 campaign. He will run with the #17 on his car once again, the same number he used on his way to fourth overall in his rookie season this year.

He tested with Abel Motorsport at Indianapolis earlier this year. “2024 was a great season for me, and I really feel like I learned a lot about not only the INDY NXT car but the series as a whole,” Hedge said. “That should make 2025 a bit smoother, only having to focus on extracting the most out of the car as possible.

“Our goal in 2025 is simple: Contend for the INDY NXT by Firestone championship. (This year) was a time for learning and growing, but now joining Abel Motorsports I feel really confident about our chances of being a (race) winner in 2025 and continuing the great lineage of Kiwi’s in the INDYCAR system”

Hedge’s connection to Abel Motorsports comes from the 2023 Castrol Toyota Formula Regional Oceania Championship, where team owner Bill Abel’s son Jacob Abel competed.

Liam Sceats



Liam had his second and final Indy NXT test for the year at Barber Motorsports Park in Alabama in the beginning of November.

Liam was content with how the test went, finishing P10 overall. Normally, he wouldn't be happy with P10 but in this case was content as given the circumstances that he had never been to the track before, not to mention he still had a lot of learning to do with this new car, this was a very decent showing amongst a top-level field.

This was his first time at Barber, and he was one of only two drivers in the field to have no prior experience on the track. During the build up to the test, many drivers and engineers told him how Barber is renowned to be the most physical and challenging circuit in the Indy NXT calendar. The high speed, high downforce layout rewards those who push hard but is high risk.

Not just the driving side was difficult, but Barber was also a proper test for his physical and mental endurance. Liam was proud to know that the hours of work he put in to ensure he was well prepared and ready for the challenge paid off.

Credit must go to his performance coach, Shane McConigly from [About | CreateLeap](#) for supporting Liam in these areas.



The ideal conditions in the morning session meant that the lap times set ended up being the fastest for the day overall.

The morning session for Liam was spent learning and getting to grips with the new track and still developing an understanding for this car, we know that the overall result from the day wasn't our true showing, and we are not far away at all.

Paul, Liam's engineer, and Liam worked closely all day.

The biggest takeaway Paul found with Liams driving was since this car has much greater amounts of downforce and power to what Liam had experienced before, my focus for the day was on building confidence and getting used to the feel of the car as Liam pushed to the limits through the high-speed corners of the track.

On the engineering side, Paul and Liam believe they uncovered a 'hidden gem' in the way the car reacts better to Liams inputs.

Looking ahead, Liam arrived back home in New Zealand in early November with a new goal of securing funding for a full 2025 Indy NXT campaign. There is plenty of hustling ahead to make this a reality before the final pre-season test in early February at Laguna Seca.

Liam would like to thank everyone for following his journey and for your continued support—it truly makes a difference.



Entering the renowned high speed roller-coaster section of the track

Random Formula One Cogitations #12 By Bob McMurray

Give Formula 1 a minute and there will be a small vacuum of news. Give it a couple of hours and there will be a minor landslide of news and discussion points.

So, give the sport a three week break between races and that vacuum is filled by an avalanche of news, resignations, driver quotes (some sillier than others), FIA resignations (on an almost daily basis these days with many being sackings in reality) revelations and non-stop 'BREAKING NEWS'- not to mention the continuous stream of Red Bull ... errr ... stuff, and that is what we have had since the Brazilian Grand Prix.



Add to all of that the FIA President waking up each and every morning thinking just how he can make himself the centre of attention and then making himself a figure of derision instead, the drivers now ganging up on him – these same drivers who have to somehow avoid tripping over him when they exit the car after winning a race as he seeks the 'front and centre' position for the TV cameras.

Not to forget that the drivers are also so frustrated at the actions of the President that they have, collectively in the form of the GPDA, and I believe for the first time ever, sent him (the FIA) a letter that can only be taken as a warning to him. Quite strong stuff really.

Far too much for me to comment on it all although I can assure you I have plenty of comments to make.

So, as the title of this column states, it is my own 'Cogitations' that shall follow.

First of all, you have to congratulate Max Verstappen on winning his fourth World Drivers Championship in a row no less.

The first one in 2021 was attained under somewhat controversial circumstances, circumstances that I still believe were not so much controversial as a downright contravention of the rules and a blunder of simply epic proportions.

However, win it he did and then two years of winning by simple excellence of both car and driver and then in 2024, winning under very difficult conditions.

Conditions both mental, in dealing with the internal issues of the personnel, issues with a father clashing with the team management, the car issues rendering it uncompetitive and all manner of criticism on him as a person.

He overcame it all in a way that was very typically Max Verstappen, mirroring his driving style. Bullish, demanding, focused and self-centred.

He deserved his title in 2024, albeit with the opposition tripping itself up at every opportunity.

His drive at the Brazilian Grand Prix was testament to his focus and skills which brings me neatly to the 'Red flag tyre rule'.

Is it now some sort of travesty that when the race is red flagged then all cars can change tyres, no

matter how the race strategy for each driver has so far panned out?

It seems ridiculous to me that any advantage a driver has eked out by clever driving and tyre strategy is immediately nullified by allowing all drivers to then take on fresh tyres during a red flag period, as well as allowing all drivers to close up and re-start.

Surely better to restart the race with all cars in the condition they came in to the pits, then do 2 or 3 laps under safety car for cars to come in and change tyres if they want to, or anything else for that matter, then form up for a grid start or rolling start if the Race Director (whoever he is by then) and off they go again.

Got to be fairer than the present rules.

In Brazil (and I take nothing away from Verstappen's superb driver here) he was aided, and, other drivers penalised, by that very tyre change rule.

Just all seems a bit arbitrary and unfair to me.

The Las Vegas GP was a really good watch, and that track seems to encourage some good racing.

Maybe the cold, the dirty track, the nighttime racing, inter team rivalry all combined to make it entertaining but I thought it worth the view.

I was at the first series of Las Vegas Grands Prix, actually the Caesars Palace version in 1981, you know, the 'Carpark' event and the hype, although nowhere near the current version, was impressive at the time.

That event lasted from the '81 version until the final 1984 version.

The current Las Vegas Grand Prix has a contract until 2025 although there is a ten-year agreement in existence.

I honestly cannot see the Las Vegas Grand Prix lasting much more than the 2025 season.

The city quickly tires of events and the disruption it causes is still a major issue and is the subject of a class action suit brought by some 35,000 parties.

It will soon become 'old hat' and fade away in my opinion.

Talking of 'fading away'

Currently we seem to have a rush of F2 drivers joining the grid all of a sudden, meaning some of the 'old guard' have to move on.

Not before time in some instances it has to be said.

You can pick a few really.

Hamilton – He has to really prove himself in 2025.

Alonso – Still has what it takes but waning a bit these days. Mind you, who can blame him by having to drive a clearly uncompetitive car in 2024 and teamed with the boss's son who demonstrably these days seems to model himself on that Harry Enfield character 'Kevin – The Teenager'. (Never seen him? Then see

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=297384700601141> and perhaps you will get my drift here.

Perhaps add Alex Albon to that list as he seems to have had his own castle shaken by the arrival, at least initially, of Franco Colapinto, speaking of whom, he has the resemblance of a young Senna, but seriously, has he the talent that merits the hype?

I for one am not sure.

What I am sure of though is, on performances in total up to now, he ain't no Senna.
Way too many cars damaged

Who else can we think of to add to the list?

Obviously, the grid has had a cull already with Zhou and Bottas no longer on the regular roster for 2025 and Magnussen cast adrift yet again, so I guess that's it.

Oh yeah, I was forgetting, the ongoing saga that is Sergio Perez.

He has used so many excuses for his lack of performance that he is now reverting to page number 1 of the book, as in 'blaming the strategy'!

This is now an ongoing saga worthy of an Oscar nomination, produced and directed by those experts of drama and suspense, 'HornMark Productions Incorporated' being orchestrated under the working title of 'Serging for the real Perez'.

Another epic drama in the ongoing series of the 'Lord of the Red Wings' following on from that suspenseful, gripping, multi episode extravaganza starring 'Hollywood Heartthrob' Daniello di Ricciardo (and soon to be made into a Netflix series) 'Game of Racing Thrones'.

Having thought more of the situation, perhaps it is best described in the manner of those old British 'Carry On' films.

'Carry On Cocking It Up' anyone?

How can such a powerful team continue to make a farce out of choosing drivers.

I still have this nagging doubt over Red Bull's view on the future of Liam Lawson.
Perez stays, Colapinto arrives at RB (goodness knows why!?) and Lawson ?

The various scenarios could work well for him but equally could see him out in the cold.

I think he is in an increasingly uncomfortable position and the pressure that he is likely feeling, the pressure seemingly deliberately being piled on him by the management, cannot be helping his mental security in driving.

He deserves better.

It obviously doesn't help that he seems to be mentioned after each race for some indiscretion or another.

Enough of all that for now.

In far more important earth-shattering news –

Formula 1® welcomes KitKat® as its Official Chocolate Bar partner.

Got to get the priorities right, eh?

What is occupying my thoughts for now and the coming weeks / months is the TGRNZ GR 86 and CTFROC summer events held under the 'Next Gen' promotion banner ((just how many acronyms can I get in one sentence) and the future looks bright for both those series.

The new GR 86 Championship got off to a great start at Taupo with the biggest field seen so far over the last few years compared to the TR 86 version.

A huge group of new, young and exciting talent look set to battle.
I look forward to it all.

Production Race Series



Entry cost update

You may have noticed differences in entry fees between rounds with Auckland Car Club and NZIGP. Here's a simple explanation to clarify how it works:

Auckland Car Club Rounds

For rounds with Auckland Car Club, the Production Race Series "buys" a grid for a fixed fee. This means:

- The Series takes on all the financial risk, while Auckland Car Club gets a guaranteed, fixed income.
- All your entry fees go directly to Auckland Car Club, which keeps a running balance sheet.
- At the end of the season, a "wash-up" is done, and any remaining funds are profit shared.

However, don't get too excited about "profit sharing" – this small amount is entirely used for:

- End-of-Season Awards and other Series running costs.

The Series is strictly not-for-profit, run entirely by volunteers. No one takes money from the Series, and we never will.

NZIGP Rounds

For NZIGP events, we haven't purchased a grid, which means entry fees are higher. However, these fees are still discounted compared to other classes.

We are working with NZIGP to arrange grid purchases for the upcoming rounds at Hampton Downs (March, April, and May). The challenge is that purchasing grids upfront requires significant funds, which the Series doesn't currently have. If NZIGP accept that all entry payments will go directly to them, and we get the numbers we need to cover the grid cost we will not have an issue. If we do not get the 34 Cars Per Grid required to cover costs, then the Series needs to pay the outstanding balance in 7 days which would mean that Martyn & Kim personally have to fund the race series the shortfall.

The Financial Reality

Each grid purchase comes with risks. For example:

- Taupo was a financial loss for the Series, which wiped out all the excess funds from Rounds 1 and 2 and more. The Series is currently in a negative balance to Auckland Car Club, and we hope to make this up at the remaining two Hampton Downs rounds with the Club.
- Despite this, the Series keeps entry fees as low as possible-thanks to our partnerships, Auckland Car Club rounds, we are able to offer entry fees as at around \$200.00 cheaper than other classes.

Why your support matters!

The ability to continue purchasing grids depends on strong participation and the relationships that we have built. Hopefully NZIGP will allow us to pay for the grids after the events, enabling us to keep offering affordable racing opportunities.



Congratulation to Phil Finlay.

Phil has taken home the NZKW Spot Prize award of \$50! His stunning green Nissan 350Z has been an exciting and welcome addition to the Series.

As a newcomer to circuit racing, Phil has been enjoying the challenge and has embraced the step up from test days and other events. He's found his racing home with us and is here for the long haul.

A massive thank you to NZKW for 10 years of incredible support for grassroots motorsport. Your contributions make moments like this possible.

Congratulations again, Phil – we can't wait to see what's next for you on track!



Turkey of the day – Round 2

Today's prestigious Turkey of the Day award goes to none other than Marco, who treated us to an absolute masterclass in "creative driving" during the wet race at Hampton Downs!

Starting with a bold attempt to gain more traction, Marco tried a reverse entry approach into Turn 1

After parking midway through the corner (completely on track, of course—always the professional),

Marco took the opportunity to observe how the less adventurous drivers handled the turn. Despite his best efforts, the crowd wasn't convinced, as everyone stuck to the boring old front-first method.

But Marco wasn't done. Oh no!

Shortly after rejoining the race, the Ground Investigation-sponsored Porsche decided it was time to live up to its name... by conducting some gravel trap analysis.

While we appreciate the dedication to working closely with your sponsor, Marco, we kindly ask that future "investigations" be conducted off the circuit and outside race time.

Excellent commitment, Marco—truly next-level multitasking. Keep up the good work!



Zestino New Zealand Hottest Driver of the Day – Round 2

The Zestino Hottest Driver of the Day for Round 2 goes to Mike Jamieson, who delivered an incredible performance marked by blistering pace and consistency, even as the weather threw its challenges his way.

Mike's ability to adapt to changing track conditions while maintaining-fast lap times was nothing short of spectacular. Rain or shine, his focus and skill kept him ahead of the pack, proving why he's a force to be reckoned with in the Production Race Series.

Congratulations, Mike! Your dynamic driving and unwavering determination have earned you the title of Zestino Hottest Driver of the Day!



GOOD NEWS FROM ROUND 3 COMING SOON!

Round 3 in action from Taupo Raceway



CLUB INFORMATION

Regular Club Night

The Clubrooms at 44 Stoddard Road, Mt Roskill, Auckland, will close for the final time on Thursday the 19th of December and **will re-open at 82 Onehunga Mall with a reduced, temporary presence on Thursday 20 February.**

Licence examiners are usually available to assist new Members with licence exams. Several members of the Executive Committee are usually available to discuss any issues or provide assistance.

VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

There's a spot for you to learn more about the sport you love and take your turn with those who put in their time to help you go racing. Contact secretary@aucklandcarclub.org.nz for more information.

RACE DAY HELPERS REQUIRED

We are always looking for more helpers for our one-day race meetings at Hampton Downs and Taupo and Auckland based Motorkhanas.

This is not necessarily flag marshals, but more administrative roles in the office.

- Documentation, Timing Assistants, Timing sheet runners, Dummy grid assistants
- Race results copy assistant, Transponder hire out & return, Race Day photographers.

Full training is provided, and you are not committed to attending all the season's race dates.

Lunch and refreshments provided.

It's always a great day for all involved, you get to meet more members and make good friends.

If you would like more information about how to get involved, or if you have any questions, please contact secretary@aucklandcarclub.org.nz, or Craig Holmes on 021 889 488 or call into the Clubrooms on Thursday night from 7.30pm to chat with any of the committee

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- Step 4 Follow the prompts

If you require assistance please email - membership@aucklandcarclub.org.nz and we will come back to you.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP CURRENT

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 Facebook www.facebook.com/race.rally.clubsport
 Instagram Auckland_Car_Club
 Motohub Auckland Car Club



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