

TARGA FANS SET FOR DRIFT TREAT THIS WEEKEND

Motorsport enthusiasts who make the effort to catch some Targa Hawke's Bay action this weekend are set for a special treat - demo runs by top New Zealand drifter Cam Vernon.

Just before the competition cars are due to race through Stages 1 and 7 on Saturday and Stage 8 on Sunday Vernon will 'drift' through the closed roads at speed in his 6.7-litre V8-powered Nissan Silvia S15 drift car.

The Ramarama, Auckland, contractor is no stranger to drifting Targa event stages, having been part of the original Targa-4-Touge promotion at the Targa Bambina event in 2012.



Drifting has its roots on roads in Japan (the Japanese word 'Touge' means 'canyon') very similar to the ones used in Targa events here and Vernon and Targa New Zealand event director Peter Martin came up with the T4T initiative to promote closer links between competitors in the two disciplines.

"It's all about building bridges between the various groups in motorsport," says Vernon. "That, and putting the sport in the public eye in a safe, controlled environment to show what a drift car can really do."

The two-day (Sat/Sun) event starts and finishes in Havelock North (at the Village Green) and incorporates 15 closed special stages covering 378.5 km and a total of 585.2km of touring stages across Hawke's Bay.

A single-day event-within-an-event on the Saturday, the Rally of Hawke's Bay, has also been organised in conjunction with the Hawke's Bay Car Club and will run as part of the larger event.

Saturday's seven stages are centred on Havelock North with a morning service at the Pettigrew-Green Arena in Napier and an afternoon one at Otane before a return to the Village Green for an overnight parc ferme.

The first stage, the 20.95km Waimarama one, starts on Okaihau Rd then turns right into Maraetotara Rd with good viewing spots accessible off the main Havelock North-Waimarama Rd with the road closure starting at 7.00am

The final stage on Saturday, the 27.92km Kaokaoroa, starts on Te Aute Trust Rd then turns left into Middle Rd for the run down to Havelock North with road closures starting at 2.45pm

The first stage on Sunday morning, the 8.32km Tuki Tuki publicity stage, starts at the northern end of Tuki Tuki Rd and heads south to finish near the intersection of Waimarama Rd with the road closed from 6.45am.

Full itinerary and stage map details are available in the latest issue of NZ Classic Car magazine.

The new Targa Hawke's Bay event has attracted 59 entries in the competition classes and 11 in the concurrent but non-competitive Targa Tour.

Sharing joint favourite status after impressing at the Targa Rotorua event in May are Leigh Hopper and co-driver Michael Goudie from Orewa, and Jason Gill and Mark Robinson from Auckland.

Hopper and Goudie led the field on the first day of the Rotorua event in Hopper's newly-built Subaru WRX Impreza only to crash out of the event on the first stage on Sunday morning.

Gill and Robinson (Mitsubishi Evo 9) were never far behind on the first day (the gap overnight was just 36 seconds) and took over a lead they would never lose when Hopper went off the road.

With work rebuilding the Subaru still going on Hopper and Goudie will contest the Hawke's Bay event in a leased Mitsubishi Evo 10.

The Rotorua event also saw the Targa debut of a second new Porsche GT3 RS in the hands of five-time Targa NZ winner Tony Quinn and regular co-driver Naomi Tillett

With Adelaide-based Tillett unavailable, circuit-owning entrepreneur Quinn will have young Kiwi co-driver Kieran Anstis reading the notes this weekend.

Targa New Zealand events are organised by the Ultimate Rally Group with the support of sponsors AndrewSimms.co.nz, Chicane Racewear, Ecolight, Global Security, Kids In Cars, Metalman.co.nz, NZ Classic Car magazine, Race Brakes, Racetech, TeamTalk, TrackIt and VTNZ.

For more information go to www.targa.co.nz.

CAPTION

Set to entertain spectators on selected stages of the new Targa Hawke's Bay event this weekend is drifter Cam Vernon in his V8-powered Nissan S15 drift car. Photo credit: Fast Company/ProShotz.

Prepared by FAST COMPANY on behalf of the Ultimate Rally Group. To find out more about the various Targa events go to the Targa NZ website at www.targa.co.nz. To talk to Targa Event Director Peter Martin tel 0-9-298 8322 or 0274 525 643. To get in touch with event media man Ross MacKay from Fast Company tel 021 677 919 or e-mail on ross@fastcompany.co.nz