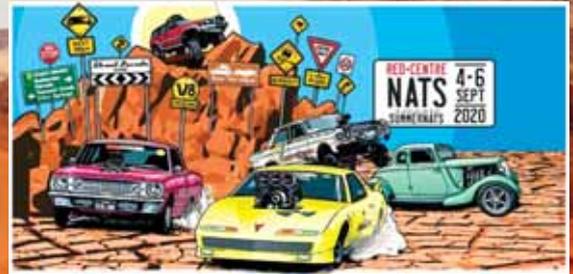




# Red Centre NATS 2020



Finally, after no events since Summernats in January, Red Centre NATS was held from 2-6 September in Alice Springs, Northern Territory. There had not been any COVID-19 cases for several months and they were keen to kick-start their economy with one of their largest events, bringing major income back to the town. Entrants were allowed from the Northern Territory, Queensland and South Australia, and over 700 cars turned up. There was plenty of social distancing at all the venues, from the show and shine, burnouts and drag racing. I was impressed with the crowd at all the venues, especially the street parade. It was obvious people were keen to get out to an event again.

On the Thursday and Friday we conducted scrutineering and pre-judging at Lasseters Casino, with all entrants coming through over the two days. By 3pm Friday all entrants had been through and we set up the show pavilions with the top 100 cars and bikes.

Saturday morning dawned to another perfect Alice Springs day with

plenty of spectators coming to the show and shine and then out to the dragway for drag racing and burnout qualifying. During the afternoon we lined the cars up for the 5pm cruise through the heart of the town. This is, without doubt, one of the key features of this event and the BEST cruise for

custom vehicles that I've seen anywhere. There were over 550 vehicles cruising the 8km circuit through the centre of town, with people five deep along the whole route. There were 4WDs parked along the roadside with tables, chairs, lounges and so on, just waiting to get a look at these awesome vehicles.

Sunday, as always, is the culmination of all the events, with the Burnout Masters final, Road to Red Centre Champion and all the driving events. Competition in the Burnout Masters was fierce with last year's winner, Wal Gersekowski, taking the top gong and a ticket to the final at Summernats in 1 Tuf HG. He is a great competitor from Toowoomba, travelling the country and competing at all the major events throughout the year. All the 4WD and grass driving events were wrapped up by lunch time ready for the presentations.

Earlier on the Sunday morning I had assembled the 13 cars going for Red Centre NATS Champion for a briefing and convoy trip out to the



RCN Champion, Graham Miller with winning car, EH MAD.



The street parade on the Saturday afternoon.



What a great setting for a car show.

dragway. They all had around the same points from judging and people's choice votes, so whoever drove their car the best was going to come out on top. After all 13 had run on the strip, Graham Miller in his EH sedan had emerged as a contender for Red Centre Champion, with a win after running the ¼ mile in 10.04 seconds.

We then convoyed the 10km back to Lasseters Casino for the asphalt Motokhana where Graham ran third and was in the box seat going back to Blatherskite Park for the final grass driving event. He smashed it, coming in second and we had a clear winner. There was great camaraderie with all the drivers. Graham had come from nowhere to wrap up the top award with a great

car and excellent driving skills to be the 2020 Red Centre NATS Champion.

The show is always well supported by Shannons, and Charles Darwin TAFE had a good display of vehicles and an engine build-off where a couple of technicians team up, strip an engine, rebuild it, and fire it up in a set time against each other. As in past years, the whole town supports this event, from the hotels, accommodation, food and fuel facilities. All are so pleased to have us all in town. It brings plenty of money but also a great vibe as there hasn't been a lot of tourists in the Red Centre this year.

This is one of my favourite events in Australia and it still has more potential to grow. There was plenty of

discussion about opportunities for next year and beyond. Originally, I thought 3-4 years might see a decline as the distance could be an issue, but the journey has become a feature, with road trip stories from so many entrants. Next year will be RCN7 with many more to come, so get organised – preferably with your car – and head out to one of the best events you will ever attend.



Owen is a leading figure within the auto re-styling and vehicle modification industry and a Lifetime Achievement Award inductee. He is Technical and Training Manager at Concept Paints.



Luke Mitchell's Top Judged LJ Torana.



Great example of the ever popular XY Falcon GT.



This awesome Bradywine 32 Coupe won top Paint, Engineering and Competition awards.



This FX from Darwin was the first RCN Champion.