



Summernats 34



Overall top judged, Rides by Kam's Barracuda.



Wow, in these times when events are being moved, rescheduled, postponed and cancelled, it's incredible we got Summernats 34 done so well. There was a record 2,500 entrants, a significant number of traders and COVID-capacity crowds every day. A couple of companies were forced to withdraw in the days leading into the event, but the majority stayed and attended with reduced staff – and all reported successful sales and a great time.

It felt like everyone was so happy to be out among the cars and people again, enjoying something they had previously taken for granted. I looked out of the Meguiars judging hall on Saturday morning and was overwhelmed with the number of cars and people lining the roads and car park areas. The Summernats team worked tirelessly to

have all the COVID rules in place and enforce them over the four days.

Scrutineering and judging started on Tuesday to get through the large volume of cars, finishing off on Friday afternoon when the final judging of all the top cars was finalised. We had a new team of judges this year, and due to the pandemic there were several last day dropouts, but they did a great job getting to the final decisions. As there was no event last year, there was more time to spend in the shed, so the quality and finish was probably the best ever on the majority of cars. There were 10 cars that could have been awarded top body, paint, undercarriage, or engine bay, with the final choice coming down to minimal differences. This is why it has been so important over the years to have the best experienced judges – those who

not only know their area of expertise but also build cars and have the feeling and passion for the overall result.

We also had the largest number of unveil cars – 17 in total – with half of them bumping-in on Wednesday and the rest on Thursday. There was such a variety; race, street, custom and full-on elite cars covered up for the big Meguiars Uncover on Friday night. All the unveils were awesome, but there were a couple of standouts. The “Rides by Kam” Barracuda, built in two years after his last creation, “Havoc”, won many awards and was shown and sold in the US last year. Another of the highlights was a '31 Model A Ford built by long time entrant and character of



Judges Choice and PPG Supreme winner, Michelle White's HZ Holden Sedan.



Steve Aldrick's awesome FX Holden.



Jason Mansweto holding the Grand Champion Sword.

the Summernats, "Sash", dedicated to founder Chic Henry. He named it the Chic Henry Ford as Henry Ford built the car for us all and Chic built the best event in the world to have fun with cars. As Chic has been in poor health recently, this was a very touching, emotional moment that fit the event perfectly.

Saturday saw the Tuff, Street and Elite awards handed out. Overall top judged was Barracuda, but Steve Aldrick picked up several top awards for his incredibly built '34 Chev sedan. This car has one of the best body and paint jobs ever done in this country, with almost perfect finish after such a big build. He also had a very innovatively built FX Holden sedan on display. There were at least five other cars that would have made the top 20 any other year but the quality was beyond belief this year. There were still a few of the known builders with new cars in the top 20 but the new breed of builders are coming through with some great cars. Full Throttle Garage from Newcastle and Old Skool garage out of Brisbane both had cars in the top 20.

There were also the Tuff street cars on display. They are always a favourite with the crowd - loud,

aggressive stance, blowers hanging out the bonnet always brings a reaction from the crowd. Skid Row was popular as always, cruising on main street, city cruise through the streets of Canberra, and the burnouts with Masters on Sunday. At Summernats there is something for everyone to enjoy: cars, music, and just catching up with people you haven't seen for the year.

After the judging and people's choice voting is complete, we usually have 12 to 14 cars shoot out for Grand Champion. This year we had 12 cars form up on Sunday morning to run the Go-Whoa and slalom to see who this year's champion would be.

Jason Mansweto's XW Falcon GT won by one point over Jason McGrath's LC Torana and the Beauchamp family's Wild FB custom. The XW looks original until you really look at the car: cut down shock towers in the engine bay to fit the 428 engine, tubbed rear wheel wells to fit the big rubber, concealed roll cage in the interior, which also contributed to him winning top engineered award. This was a popular winner with XW Falcons being one of

Australia's top muscle cars and Jason had all his family and friends there supporting him on the journey.

As soon as we announced the Grand Champion, we honoured Chic Henry by naming the huge grandstand at the burnout track "The Chic Henry Stand", which he had no idea was happening. This is a really important part of our history as his name will be forever on display with the event that he made happen and on the burnout grandstand where he introduced burnouts and made them mainstream competition and such an exciting and popular part of our sport.

As soon as this was done, the burnout pad roared into life with the burnout comp running through with record numbers. The burnout Masters winner was wild card entry Tim Brown in his Commodore.

To reiterate: it was incredible to get this event done! The Summernats team is very resilient and did a great job making sure it all went off well and safely so we can keep going with Rockynats, MotorEx, Red CentreNATS and many other events this year. This team is leading the way and showing how to do large events safely in these times.

Check the website for news and tickets to MotorEx and all the upcoming events and we'll catch you there.

Editor: We are extremely grateful to Brad McDonald of Total Exposure Photography for these awesome images from the event.



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.



Sash's '31 Model A tribute to Chic Henry.



Jason Sander's LH Torana.