



By the time you are reading this, Vicki and I will be joined by Cruzin photographer Dale Haberfield to share the Bonneville USA Speedweek experience. In the company of about 100 other Aussies, Dale and I will be gathering stories from our American friends for future Cruzin the Salt columns and for the 2014 Cruzin salt feature – stay tuned!

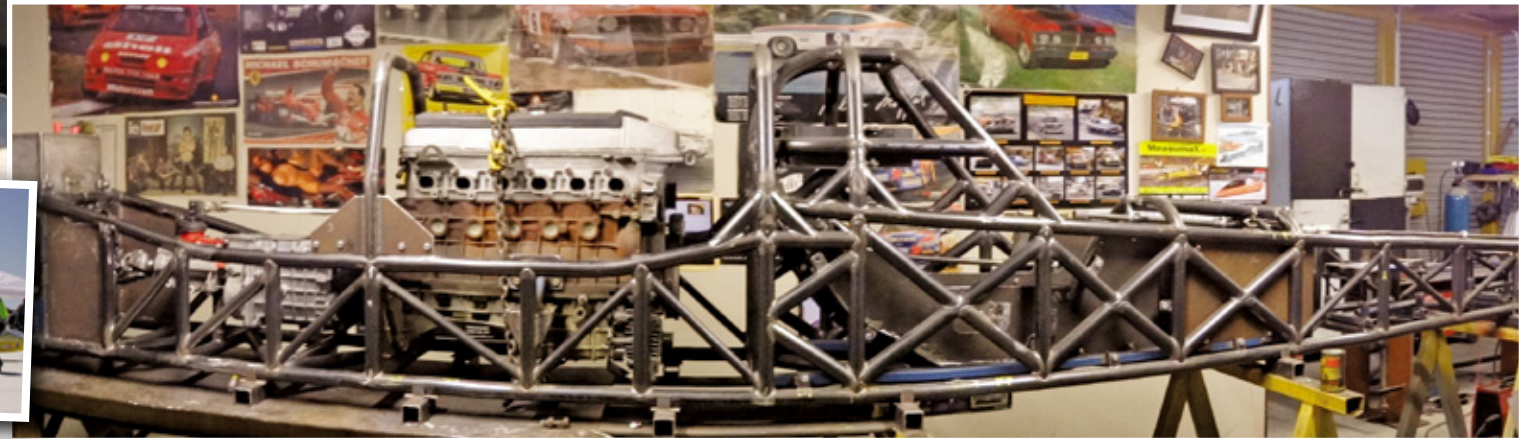
This year is promising to be the year of the big streamliners. Hopefully we will get to see the first 500mph pass by a wheel driven vehicle. This accolade is being vigorously pursued by many high profile teams including Poteet and Main's Speed Demon, Marlo Treit's Target 550, Dan Thompson's Challenger 2, Team Vesco's Turbinator II and the Carbinite streamliner. All are desperately trying to be written in the history books as the first 500 mph wheel driven vehicle.

In Australia preparations are well under way for the DLRA 25th Anniversary Speedweek March 23rd to 27th. It will be a special event, invites have been sent out to all founding members and there are many new vehicles making their first appearance.

One such vehicle is Craig Rogers' Lakester. This guy is either dedicated or crazy. I just got off the phone to him. It's Saturday morning, it's 8 am, it's minus 3 degrees in his shed and he's been there since 6 am working on his lakester.

Craig Rogers is on a deadline. He wants his lakester to debut at DLRA's Speedweek 25 in 2015. He's always been a car nut, heavily involved in V8 Supercars with his mate Hayden Ivers. Craig and Hayden heard about salt lake racing and decided to take a look. First year, they offered themselves as volunteers to DLRA and ended up as helpers on the start line. Second year, they heard that Greg Butler needed a crew and offered themselves to help out.

Craig had seen enough, he thought, I can do this. He said the best thing he liked about salt lake racing was that he could build a machine to whatever his imagination came up with as long as he kept it within the guidelines of the



rule book. He saw a photo of a black lakester that raced at Bonneville and had to have one. That black lakester was GOT SALT, a very successful American 325 mph record holding race team.

Craig purchased an old rear engine rail that hadn't been raced for 25 years, thinking he could convert it into a slippery streamlined record breaking salt car. After cutting the old racer in half to accommodate a new power

plant and to upgrade the safety systems, he found the wall thickness and pipe diameter of the rail would not comply with the DLRA rule book. So after a long discussion with the DLRA Chief Tech Inspector Bob Ellis, Craig decided the only way he could finish the build was to sideline the old rail and start from scratch.

After weeks of sleepless nights, plans for the new improved lakester started to take shape. Craig has designed and built the new car

mostly by himself in his shed at home in very cold Ballan, Victoria. It is 30 ft long (9 metres) with a 21 foot wheelbase (6.5 metres). The Lakester rides only 12mm off the ground and has no suspension. The steering is a neat funny car rack and pinion made by Strange Engineering.

For the power plant, Craig is getting Spencer Race Engines to screw together a 6 cylinder BA Falcon block and head matched to a

FG Typhoon manifold with a big arse turbo. Spencer Race Engines are expecting around 850 horsepower from the combo. Craig is using a Tremec 5 speed with a 9" full floating diff. Craig came across Spencer Race Engines in his line of work and could not believe how fussy they were in their workshop. He thought if they were only half as fussy with his engine, he wouldn't have a problem in the world, so they got the job.

Craig's first ever drive on the salt will be when he debuts his 850 hp lakester. That is going to be one hell of a drive!

Craig intends to learn a lot at Speedweek 2015 but not expecting big speeds. If the quality of the build is anything to go by, big speeds won't be far away.

See you at the salt!
Norm Hardinge



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