

TARGA FLORIO 40

HUNTER VALLEY NSW 2014

A Kiwi Slant on a visit to the West Island

by ??

Started with a leisurely flight to Sydney, no sparrow fart start this time, arriving at the Holiday Inn at Darling Harbour by two O'clock, wandered around Paddy's market to find that we didn't need anything except a pint or two at the local pub, coffee for Annette.

Thursday started fine but rapidly turned to a consistent drizzle, (just like home), making a mockery of the open upper level of the Red Sydney Tour bus, The Rocks was great, but not the rain, eventually found shelter in the Queen Victoria Arcade, even a Model Shop, not really enough spare cash for anything else, but the building and the coffee was great.

The rain didn't let up and traffic caused a couple of pileups that gridlocked the CBD, finished the bus trip at the Power House museum, it used to be better, but that's only a personal opinion.

Friday morning collected the rental, we will upgrade from a Hyundai I20 next time, the front wheels have just left the bump in the road when the back ones arrive, should have taken the 300C over. We stayed on the old Pacific Highway for a time, no traffic and some great views, but some nitwit has put the speed limit at 60kph, gave up and joined the rush North on the big road, surprising how many trucks pass you over there. Visited the centre of Newcastle, very quiet and lots of empty buildings this time, Satnav found another Model Shop, how cool was that, cruised back to the highway and found the motel, watched the cars arrive and chatted to everyone I recognised or who talked to us. Great BBQ, shame about the rain that caused the chef's to look like something the cats dragged in, still a great meal and evening.

Saturday Breakfast, carried on conversations from the night before, travelled to Fighter World and then on to Tanilba House, an amazing old homestead with a really interesting history and a fantastic setting and view over the bay, really thick walls, heating bill in Winter would be difficult.

<Right: Tanilba House>



Checked out the Swap meet, picked up a couple of must have spares to join the rest of those must haves in the cupboard that I haven't got round to needing yet, one day perhaps, we will have to see who runs out of time first, me or the car.

Back to the motel for a great dinner and a history lesson on the 1974 World Cup rally by John Bryson, amazing that John could remember it all like yesterday, with only some prompts from his son Matt, also a talk by one of the

original designers who worked on the Targa Florio, Alan Nicolson. A few people parted with their life savings at the Auction, some nice books and memorabilia.

Saturday morning we made a deal with Paul and Sue Patten and ditched the I20 to join them in the Discovery to run the "Targa 40 Rally". This was a delightful cruise around the Hunter Valley region, looking for important landmarks and trying to take in the surroundings, you see much more as a navigator than driver, even if I lost it at one stage, the route went one way we went the other, good luck brought us to Pepper Tree Wines, a most enjoyable spot with ample parking seating, wine and food, all you need really. The cruise carried on after a respectable time at the vineyard to a BBQ at Noel and Leonnes place, another great setting with a beautiful outlook and large garaging, all you need really.



Prize giving was a surprise, even with our little extra excursion we managed to come in First equal, a couple of trick questions to pick the winner and I have a very nice trophy for the Toy Room, Paul and Sue generously allowed us to bring it home to NZ. After this long day we gave the bowling a miss and settled for an early night, an age thing I think.

Monday saw us traveling to Maitland to visit an old Goal, very imposing and somewhat menacing, not somewhere I would pick for a restful holiday, a great guided tour with one of the retired guards gave an interesting perspective of life "Inside", not for me or Annette. After another superb lunch we parted company with all the remaining Leyland group, we had been looked after by all, and had some great chats with some of the members that we had seen in the last few trips.



Our trip then continued up to Tamworth where spent a day just cruising around the district visiting outlying villages and generally being nosy, like all good tourists, it takes a while to get used to how big the place is, our tour then carried on to Port Macquarie to stay with one of my many brothers for a couple of days, traveling back to Sydney, stopping off to check out Phil's old car, which was up on a hoist having many varied repairs and alterations in preparation for the next excursion into Asia, it's amazing how many dents you get in the floor pan after a while, the whole car and motor really looked like a Professional Team car with a lot of expertise put into it to get the maximum power out of the minimum weight required, I have a certain amount of pride remembering which parts of the body work I prepared when the car was rebuilt for Phil all those years ago.

A couple of restful days in Sydney catching up with more family and a visit to the amazing Ikea store out by the airport, this is a store that you can buy a complete Flat Pack interior furniture setting, white ware and every other conceivable thing you need, then pull up at the loading dock and load up, amazing, even a restaurant to ease the pain.

Home again at a normal hour and back into the work routine, for those of you who can, make a trip to one of these Aussi gatherings, ask anyone who has been, they make you feel special and really look after you.



<Above: The pictures above give examples of each of the three colours they were produced in. To the right is an Omega Navy Targa . To be correct the green is Aspen Green and the brown is Nutmeg.>