



Manuell wins Ashley Stitchbury Award



Paul Manuell, driving the bright orange ORIX Fleet and Finance NZV8 Commodore, has won the 2009 Ashley Stichbury Trophy which is awarded to the driver who has both a natural driving talent and displays a sportsman-like attitude to fellow competitors. Manuell is the only second time winner of the award; previous recipients include Kayne Scott, Angus Fogg and team mate Andy Booth. Manuell also finished a credible fifth in the BNTV8 2008/09 National Championship from 36 entries.

"This season has been the hardest-fought and most competitive championship in which I have been involved in recent times and I am extremely pleased with our team's performance throughout the series which netted us a pole position, a race win and four podium results. In addition we were only one of four teams to achieve a 100% finish record by completing all 21 races throughout the seven round championship. Our only blemish was

the final round which began as a real challenge for us after losing our strong engine to a freak failure on Friday and the replacement backup engine was unfortunately down on power - not ideal at this level of competition at the high-speed Pukekohe circuit," said Manuell. "Despite qualifying in 12th place, we still managed to secure an eighth and an 11th placing in the first two races - however we could only manage 19th in the final reverse grid race after a power steering failure.

"We completed the championship as second placed Holden, one spot behind team mate Andy Booth with whom I again thoroughly enjoyed working throughout the championship. We both share very similar driving styles which makes our testing and qualifying performances extremely informative and beneficial," said Manuell.

"I would like to express my sincere thanks to our valued sponsor group whose support and energy is most appreciated - without each and every one of you, our campaign would not be possible and I trust you all enjoyed the journey as much as we did," said Manuell. "I would also like to extend a thank you to Wayne Anderson, our

team owner and manager, in addition to our small group of dedicated engineers who extract the maximum performance from our car without compromising reliability throughout the entire series - and that's no mean feat given the punishment I put the car through!"

ORIX, in conjunction with Big Ben Pies and their respective sponsor group, again hosted a large group of guests at Pukekohe over the weekend, taking the season total to over 2000 guests, all enjoying the ORIX and Big Ben hospitality unit and feed-back from Manuell and Andy Booth.

The next event on the calendar is the Hamilton 400 Supercar event in April. "This one-off Trophy event is non championship and I am really looking forward to again competing on the challenging street circuit especially in front of a huge crowd", said Manuell.

Final points (top ten of 36): Scott (Ford) 1179, McIntyre (Ford) 1170, Baird (Ford) 1048, Booth (Holden) 983, **Manuell (Holden) 832**, Fogg (Ford) 789, Bell (Ford) 711, Anderson (Holden) 694, Brook (Ford) 647, Edgell (Ford) 631.

Next event: NZV8 Trophy race, Hamilton V8 Supercar meeting April 3-5.



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