

Suzuka Dream Cup 2003



Aurora Report

Tuesday 22nd July, 2003

This is the first day in Japan as the team arrived in Nagoya after a long two leg trip from Melbourne.

Five of the eight team members have never visited Japan before so the many differences in the way things look and the vehicles on the road attracted plenty of attention. Singapore Airlines looked after us well but it takes so long to cross Australia that we forget how big the country is. The route from Melbourne to Singapore is directly over Uluru and Broome and it takes nearly six hours to finally leave Australia's coastline.

Not quite a good luck omen was the fact that Singapore Airlines served ice-cream for desert: Aurora ice-cream from North Coburg. The airline distributed a detailed post SARS advisory complete with a clever single use thermometer made by 3M, one of Aurora's major supporters in this 2003-04 program.

We were taken by coach from Nagoya Airport to the Sunroute Hotel in Suzuka. Michiko Sato from the Yomiuri Shimbun together with Harry Imada our assigned interpreter met us at the hotel. We were amongst good friends. A short unpacking session and then we were off to the supermarket for essential drinks and lunch.



The foyer of the Sunroute Hotel, in Suzuka



Michiko Sato, from the Yomiuri Shimbun

We made it to the famous Suzuka track by 1.00PM to meet Kiyoshi Yoshioka from Nippon Express. The Customs officials from Ngoya arrived on schedule and the unpacking and inspection of the Aurora shipping container was completed after a thorough inspection of the contents.

The afternoon and early evening was spent checking the solar array and telemetry as well as fitting the new Eibach springs and setting the suspension ride heights. In fact we were determined to have the car ready to run at 7.30 AM on Wednesday morning. Our new drivers Kon Kotsonis and Damien McArthur completed their formal driver training session and testing to qualify as members of JAF the representative body in Japan of the FIA.



The solar array and telmetry being thoroughly checked



Final inspection of the car



The car on display outside the pit

We were given a tour of the track by the end of the day and welcomed dinner and a good nights sleep.

Damian's Diary

We have been going for two days, but it seems like one long day because of all the time on the plane.

It is surprisingly easy to get a racing licence in Japan--perhaps the examiner went easy on me because I couldn't read the form. Tommorrow I get to drive around the Suzuka race track, which I have been dreaming of since I was here last year. It's a lot bigger than it looks on my Playstation.

I had rice and seaweed for lunch.