

## “ LE Bitch wins at Zwartkops at Passion for Speed”.

On Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2014, “le Bitch” my Citroen CX2200, won the second heat of the Marque car category at the Zwartkops International Passion for Speed week end.

Yet again, Le Bitch turned out to be a little temperamental. On the Thursday before the race she was in the auto electricians pits having a short circuit sorted out. That done off to the circuit on Friday for registration and a bit of practice and qualifying in the afternoon. When I left for the track at 05h30 it was pouring with rain and I then discovered the lights, that were working when I went to the auto electrician, were not working. In the deluge this made for some exciting moments. Anyhow arrived at the track and the forecast was for more rain later in the day.



Main straight during practice on Friday,

When our turn to practice arrived it was in the midst of a downpour. Undaunted I went out to see what Le Bitch could do in the wet on semi slick tyres. Drawing on my karting experience, in the wet, I managed to turn quite a few laps in the 1m42sec bracket. Not bad considering I drove away from a Cobra and a few Alfa's, not mention MG's. Finding grip on the outside of the corners helped while most others were pussy footing in the corners, taking the normal racing line.

Qualifying turned out to be very interesting, as there was light rain falling when we went out to qualify. After three laps, two Alfa's wiped out in turn 4 this led to a red flag, at which point, I decided I had done enough and sat out the rest of qualifying.

Race day dawned and we had to be on the start line for a 07h15 start for heat 1. Of course not too many spectators had arrived. Nevertheless off we set. After three laps the low hydraulic warning light came on so I aborted the rest of the race. No brakes, no suspension. A little disheartened I had until 17h30, the next race, to sort out the problem.



Turn 8 Heat 1 shortly before retiring with no hydraulic pressure

The diagnosis seemed to be the LHM had overheated causing it to bubble. So the system had to be bled. My thanks to Lourens Taljaard, an ex Citroen club member, who materialised out of the crowd to help me bleed the system. Once done Le Bitch lifted her skirts and on a short test drive the suspension and brakes appeared to be in order.

And so on to heat 2 which started at 17h30. Needless to say most of the spectators had already departed, so not too many to witness a little bit of history being made.



However, I was still in for some more drama. On the way to pre-race paddock, a service vehicle reversed into the right door of Le Bitch. This necessitated duct taping the door closed. One cannot go racing without duct tape and cable tie. That done we took our place on the grid.



Being a handicap race, my break out time was set at 1m39sec less 1.5%. I started 1m54 secs behind the scratch man. With 36 cars on the circuit the closing laps promised to be really congested and exciting as everyone closed in on the scratch man. I managed to catch and pass the scratch man for the lead on lap 4. The nature of the circuit is such that you can see where your rivals are. I could see them, but they didn't seem to be catching me as quickly as expected. This was largely thanks to the huge traffic jam that was developing behind me as the faster cars caught each other. I couldn't believe my luck when I rounded turn 8 and saw the chequer flag being waved. Le Bitch had won!!!



Victory! Turn 1 heat 2.

Unfortunately there is a twist in the tale. Because my break out time was set in heat 1 (1m39sec), I could go no faster than 1m37sec or I would be disqualified for breaking out. Well I blitzed that time and set laps in the low 1m36 sec bracket. So rules are rules and I was disqualified.

But even so, I was first across the line and NOTHING can beat that feeling.

Next Midas Historic Series race is at Midvaal on Saturday 15 March 2014. See you there.