

Smokin' on the Water

by Brett McQuarrie

Hyped-up for the 2008 Counties Sports Fishing Club Poker Run, sponsored by Franklin Marine

This time last year we were in the final stages of buying the business, there were nerves and anxiety, stress and apprehensions. We took over the business on the 2nd of November 2007 and a week later after some quick phone calls to suppliers we were down the river for our first sponsored event, the 2007 Counties Sports Fishing Club Franklin Marine sponsored Poker Run.



After the months leading into the purchase of the business it was great to be out there on the river and finally taking part in an event that relaxed us and gave us the opportunity to meet new faces and some more familiar faces.

The turnout of boats was impressive, some of the boats on display varied from your average dinghy, jet skis, family sized fishing boats to some jet boats that had more horsepower than a full day's running at the Ellerslie Racecourse.

After checking in at the Elbow Ski Club and receiving our first playing card we ventured down towards Hoods Landing where there was, and is this year, another entry point to the poker run. We made it as far as the marae where we received our second playing card, and to my amazement there were more vessels already anchored up and enjoying some refreshments before the run started at 10.30am.

We had the honour of starting the event at the given time. After partaking in some refreshments ourselves, the clock had reach its desired time, so with the nod of a head from a club official and with flags flying we dropped the hammer and were off.

I thought we had the goods with our little 5.5 tinny complete with a 90Hp Yamaha on the back, but we soon were left in some of those big boys' wakes and had to shimmy to the side of the river to let some competitors pass. This gave us an opportunity to take some snapshots of the boats as they passed by.

Most people were very nice for the camera, with a nice wave and big smiles, but there were a small number who made me laugh when they decided to wave out with their buttocks, poor buggers must have lost their hands in some sort of industrial accident!

So after taking some rather entertaining shots we made our way up the river which, by this time had calmed down to a slight chop rather than the washing machine swirl that it was minutes before. After gathering another card at the Tuakau Bridge we proceeded on to Mercer. When we turned the corner at our destination a great sight confronted us - it was a flotilla of craft that were already

anchored, unloaded and in the Muddy Waters enjoying the refreshments inside and outside of the pub.

This was another good opportunity to meet some new faces and share a few laughs, with passengers of the boats taking full advantage of not having to drive. It was a good chance to check out some of the competitors who made a great effort to dress up in a theme, something which should be encouraged again this year.

One by one the people started to depart and make their way back to the boat ramps they had launched from, then home for a quick shower (maybe) and off to the Waiuku Rugby Club where they collected their last playing card, then handed in their complete hand. Once all had arrived, (some being assisted I might say) the prize giving started.

Needless to say this year's poker run will for us be a much more relaxed one now that we have found our feet and made some great friends along the way. We will have some great prizes up for grabs again along with some terrific prizes donated by other reliable businesses in the area.

For those of you who are interested in participating in this year's event, it will be held on Sunday the 16th of November. We have now received our entry forms - these can be collected at the counter. For those of you who were not aware, we are now located at THE TRACTOR CENTRE on the corner of Heights and Paerata Roads.

We look forward to seeing you guys and girls again and hopefully some new faces as well.

The weather has now finally allowed some of you to clear the dust off your vessels and you may have discovered some things that are in need of repair or even a long awaited motor service. We invite you to take advantage of the discounts that are available to Counties Sport Fishing Club members here at Franklin Marine