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## Race Brakes - 0800 Brakes: Racing into its 32<sup>nd</sup> year of trading

John Arkley's Race Brakes - 0800 Brakes needs little introduction to New Zealand readers but on a recent visit to his Auckland business John mentioned to *Undercar Review* that he was entering his 32<sup>nd</sup> year of trading which was certainly deemed worthy of reporting on in *Undercar Review*.

Along with your reporter, John Arkley has attended and supported nearly all of the past New Zealand Brake & Clutch Specialists Association's (NZB&CSA) annual conferences and we have enjoyed some great experiences together.



At a brake specialists trade night John Arkley welcome visitors to his Race Brakes - 0800 Brakes sales outlet in Auckland which showcases the products his company handles.

John is always the perfect gentleman both socially and in his approach to business and this is reflected in the appearance and functionality of his business and in the quality of its products and high standard of customer service.

Over the 30 plus years of trading the business has developed its innovative format, starting out as Masterpart Brakes then adopting the 0800 Brakes name for commercial and industrial applications and then adding the Race Brakes name for competition product with the company's extensive range of products and services being consistently retained and expanded on.

This massive range of brake products available from Race Brakes - 0800 Brakes covers competition use, performance vehicles for both on and off road use, historic and classic vehicles, special construction cars, vehicle restorations and classic motorcycles. But it doesn't end there as the company also supplies brake products for transport, industrial, mining, shipping and even aircraft braking applications.

"We're proud to be a New Zealand company which employ's New Zealanders and supplies the best possible brake products to suit individual customer's stopping requirements," said John Arkley. "And, you might be surprised just how many of our brake products are used in every-day motoring across a wide variety of vehicles.

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“If you catch a local bus you can be assured that it’s most probably our brakes that are stopping it! If you have concrete delivered chances are it will be by a truck that relies on our brakes to stop.



*Race Brakes -0800 Brakes handle brake friction materials for a vast range of applications, including trains.*

“But its not just road registered vehicles that rely on our brakes to stop as we also supply to earthmoving and construction companies and even the cranes in our ports. Other applications are marine and anchors and elevator safety brakes,” he said.

Because of regulatory requirements when dealing with these large operators John put the company through the rigorous ISO 9002 quality certification back in 1995 (the first New Zealand company in the brake industry to do so).

“Having the universally recognised international standard ISO 9002 keeps us on toes as to quality systems being adopted and our work procedures give the companies we deal with the assurance of quality, safety and on-time service.

“As stated in the policy, key objectives are to maintain and display an efficient cheerful and competitive attitude to promote the company along with making money and enjoying our job.



*Race Brakes – 0800 Brakes recently hosted a New Zealand Brake & Clutch Specialist Association’s trade night at its premises in Auckland.*

“This extrapolates into competition brakes which is the fun part of our specialised business operation. Being a distributor of top brands of Race Brake product is a pleasure as most customers, ranging from the weekend warrior in his classic car up to the top-end tier-one motorsport classes, don’t see spending dollars on quality as a grudge purchase,” John explains.

Race Brakes currently supply product to the cream of New Zealand race categories, such as the V8 Supertourers, Toyota Race Series (TRS), Formula 5000 and V8 Utes.

Race Brakes - 0800 Brakes is located in Kingsland, Auckland not far (within walking distance) from the famous Eden Park rugby stadium so, this means John Arkley is not short of friends on match-days who use his forecourt for a pre-game beer and BBQ.

Situated on busy New North Road the business has a very large traffic sign erected on the roadside outside the shop and never one to miss a marketing opportunity John has his own portable sign, which is designed in the same road-font (blue background with white lettering) indicating the location of the business, that is placed on sign just below the direction indicators during these busy periods.



*Race Brakes have an ingenious way of directing people to their business by utilising a conveniently positioned street sign.*

Amazingly, John says no law enforcement officers have ever noticed this masterstroke of ingenuity! And speaking of signs, John claims that the ‘RACE BRAKES’ sign at the entrance to New Zealand’s newest race track circuit at Hampton Downs is quite possibly the largest brake sign in the country at 13 metres in length!

Besides putting his marketing skill to great advantage John Arkley is a hands-on manager of the business and uses his love of motorsport, in which he is a regular competitor, to great advantage. John attends many race meetings all over New Zealand.



*People going to the Hampton Downs racetrack certainly know that Race Brakes is there by this enormous sign strategically placed at the track.*

Key staff supporting John includes Steve Currie (operations manager) and James Steenson (sales manager). Steve Currie has over 30 years experience in the brake industry 14 of which he has spent at Race Brakes – 0800 Brakes.



Key staff members at Race Brakes – 0800 Brakes are: John Arkley (left), James Steenson (centre) and Steve Currie (right).

Although the youngest member of the Race Brakes team, James Steenson has an extensive background in race engineering which he puts to good use by assisting race teams at motorsport meetings around New Zealand. It's a very rare day when you don't see one or two Race Brakes SUVs parked by the pits giving technical support to competitors.



Race Brakes has two technical support vehicles that attend race meetings and test days around New Zealand.

James Steenson's father, John Steenson, is an internationally known race mechanic and automotive engineer and has worked on some of the most iconic cars worldwide so James was speeding around racetracks before he could even walk..

"At the racetrack Race Brakes supply technical backup and assistance to vehicle owners, racing teams and drivers," says James Steenson.

"At Race Brakes we carry a lot of spares in stock for our



Another hard day at the office for James Steenson seen here at the historic race-car meeting with girls dressed in 60s retro outfits.

customers that are racing and we take a range in our support vehicles to suit the specific type of meeting that we are attending,

"The accompanying photos of me were taken at the New Zealand Festival of Motor Racing which was celebrating Bruce McLaren, hence why I'm wearing my dad's old McLaren team shirts and sitting in the M23 he built in the '70s for Denny Hulme. Bit of history for me with that car!" said James.

To service its clients Race Brakes stocks the world's leading brands such as: DBA, Ferodo, Pagid, PBR, Goodridge, Mintex and AP Racing.



James Steenson sitting in the F1: M-23 McLaren which his father built for Denny Hulme at the New Zealand Festival of Motor Racing.

In the Race Brakes NZ stable is a R33 Nissan Skyline GT-R V Spec (GODZILLA). Yes, the type that dealt a telling blow to the Holdens and Fords at the Bathurst 1000 some years ago.

This GT-R is setup to compete in Targa road racing and is also used as a test car for brake pads and rotors sold by Race Brakes in New Zealand.

Currently running six-piston AP Racing calipers and large two piece DBA rotors, various disc pad compounds are tested at open track days.

Race Brakes' location in Auckland is only 40 minutes drive from either Hampton Downs Motorsport Park or Pukekohe Park Raceway.

By testing different disc pad formulations under race speeds, temperatures and pressures the staff at Race Brakes are able to give a quantified opinion to customer's requests as to brake performance, thereby backing up manufacturers' claims.



Race Brakes' R33 Nissan Skyline GT-R V Spec test car. Some would call it a perk - but John couldn't possibly comment!

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